

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)

Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, March 22, 2018
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
60 Congress Street, Large Conference Room
Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Walter Gunn, Chair – Longmeadow
Judith Terry, Vice-Chair – Chesterfield
Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown
George Kingston, Treasurer – East Longmeadow
Mark Cavanaugh, Assistant Treasurer – South Hadley
Lynn Arnold – Holland
T.J. Cousineau – Blandford
Marilyn Gorman Fil - Monson

PVPC Staff:

Tim Brennan, Executive Director
Lisa Edinger, Accountant
James Mazik, Deputy Director for Operations/Community Development Section Manager
Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner/Environment and Land Use Section Manager
Dana Roscoe, Principal Planner/Transportation Section Manager
Lynn Shell, Support Staff
Lori Tanner, Senior Economic Development and Policy Analyst

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on February 22, 2018

The March 22nd Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Commission Chairman Walter Gunn. Mr. Gunn welcomed everyone in attendance and called for a motion to approve the minutes of the February 22, 2018 Executive Committee meeting.

MOVED BY JUDY TERRY, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any comments, corrections or questions concerning the minutes of the February 22, 2018 Executive Committee meeting but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MINUTES OF THE FEBRUARY 22, 2018 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WERE APPROVED WITH TWO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEMBERS, INCLUDING DOUG ALBERTSON AND MARILYN GORMAN FIL, ABSTAINING FROM THE VOTE.

2. Warrant/Financial Reports

Mr. Gunn noted that copies of the February 2018 warrant had been distributed to Executive Committee members and he asked PVPC Accountant Lisa Edinger to comment on the subject warrant. Ms. Edinger proceeded to highlight several of the larger payments including check #16380 in the amount of \$55,488.27 payable to the Springfield Water and Sewer Commission and check #16386 in the amount of \$202,454.59 payable to the City of Chicopee DPW for Connecticut River clean-up projects. Ms. Edinger stated that check #16397 in the amount of \$20,000 and payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/GIC is a partial payment on PVPC's quarterly portion for health insurance coverage and check #16398 in the amount of \$8,776.74, also payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/GIC, is for the PVPC's employees' share of health insurance. Finally, Ms. Edinger highlighted check #16414 payable to Wright-Pierce in the amount of \$9,819.40 which she explained is for the consultant's work on a Connecticut River water treatment

feasibility analysis project.

Ms. Edinger next referred to a report entitled *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Financial Summary Profile* and she noted that this report summarizes PVPC's account balances as of March 22, 2018. Ms. Edinger first provided some background information on how she generates this report and then briefly reviewed each of PVPC's account balances. Ms. Edinger also reported that PVPC had finally received FY2018 District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds in the amount of \$254,069 as well as \$150,000 for a new IT Service project grant, noting that \$300,000 of those funds have been deposited into PVPC's General Savings Account. After Ms. Edinger had completed her financial report, Mr. Gunn moved to take up the next agenda item.

3. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute, Effective April 1, 2018, a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Department of Transportation That Will Activate a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5303 Grant to the PVPC Which Supports the Planning Commission's Transit Planning Work Tasks and Responsibilities

Mr. Gunn called on Dana Roscoe, PVPC Principal Planner and Transportation Section Manager, to address this agenda item. Mr. Roscoe stated that this is an annual contract for federal transit planning funds and he explained that the contract runs from April 1, 2018 to March 31, 2019. Mr. Roscoe stated that there is a very modest increase in the contract amount, noting that the total amount has increased from \$218,000 last year to \$223,665 this year.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 3.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE, EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2018, A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$223,655 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION THAT WILL ACTIVATE A FEDERAL TRANSIT ADMINISTRATION (FTA) SECTION 5303 GRANT TO THE PVPC WHICH SUPPORTS THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S TRANSIT PLANNING WORK TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions or comments regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to File the Planning Commission's Annual Partnership Grant Application With the Economic Development Administration (EDA) to Encompass Fiscal Year 2019 and to Commit \$15,500 of PVPC Local Funds Toward this EDA-Supported Economic Planning Project

Mr. Gunn called on PVPC Senior Economic Development and Policy Analyst Lori Tanner to address this agenda item. Ms. Tanner stated that this is the third year of a 3 year grant award cycle and she noted that she will shortly need to submit the third year grant application to the Economic Development Administration (EDA). Ms. Tanner pointed out that the PVPC is required to make available the grant matching funds which are made up of local cash funds as well as in-kind services. Ms. Tanner also noted that the matching funds have increased from a 30% match to a 40% match of the Commission's total EDA grant award. Ms. Tanner stated that she will be submitting the grant application in late April or May when the EDA sends out their formal grant solicitation.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 4

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY JUDY TERRY, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO FILE, NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE AN ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) SECTION 203 DISTRICT PLANNING GRANT SUBJECT TO A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE WORK PROGRAM, BUDGET AND CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, ENCOMPASSING FISCAL YEAR 2019 WHICH THE PVPC WILL CARRY OUT OVER THE ANTICIPATED JULY 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2019 TIME PERIOD. FURTHER, THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR IS HEREBY AUTHORIZED TO COMMIT UP TO \$15,500 OF PVPC LOCAL FUNDS TOWARDS THE MATCH REQUIRED FOR THIS EDA-SPONSORED PLANNING PROJECT IN FY 2019.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Brennan mentioned that if the interim federal budget is approved, there will be an increase in the planning program of approximately \$1.8 or \$1.9 million but he pointed out that this is only until the end of September. Mr. Brennan suggested that it would be helpful to explore whether or not EDA planning funds will be increased prior to the end of FFY 2018.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute Effective April 1, 2018, a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the City of Springfield to Conduct Pedestrian Counts in Springfield's Metro Center as Required Under a Massachusetts Department of Public Health Year 4, 1422 Grant Award Program

Mr. Gunn called on Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner, Environment and Land Use Section Manager, to address this agenda item. Ms. Ratte stated that this is PVPC's fourth year collaborating with the City of Springfield on their 1422 grant-funded program to promote access to healthy food and physical activity. She added that the PVPC is also helping to implement the City's Complete Streets Plan. Ms. Ratte stated that the City of Springfield had planned to hire the PVPC to conduct pedestrian counts for a contract amount of \$8,000 but they have included other work and have increased the contract amount to \$20,000. She explained that there was a staff turnover in Springfield and the City is now asking for help to convene their Built Environment Committee and to help with the City's street lighting program.

MOVED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE, EFFECTIVE APRIL 1, 2018, A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$20,000 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD TO CONDUCT PEDESTRIAN COUNTS IN SPRINGFIELD'S METRO CENTER AREA AS REQUIRED UNDER A MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH YEAR 4, 1422 PROGRAM GRANT AWARD.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the subject motion but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), in Conjunction With the Western Region Homeland Security Advisory Council, to Undertake a Functional/Access Needs Daily Response Planning Project

Mr. Gunn called on James Mazik, Deputy Director for Operations and Community Development Section Manager, to address this agenda item. Mr. Mazik stated that this is an emergency preparedness project that involves identifying the issues related to individuals with functional/access needs and determining how first responders should assist them. Mr. Mazik explained that during a public health or emergency response situation, as for example during an evacuation, individuals with mobility issues and functional disabilities may require special assistance. Mr. Mazik explained that the first responders must know how to interact with people who have functional/access needs which can include a range of issues such as sensory deprivation or autism and noted that each individual's disability can require a different approach.

After Mr. Mazik had responded to several informational questions raised by Executive Committee members, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 6.

MOVED BY JUDY TERRY, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT NOT TO EXCEED \$25,000, WITH THE METROPOLITAN AREA PLANNING COUNCIL (MAPC), IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE WESTERN REGION HOMELAND SECURITY ADVISORY COUNCIL, TO UNDERTAKE A FUNCTIONAL/ACCESS NEEDS DAILY RESPONSE PLANNING PROJECT.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the motion for agenda item 6 but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

7. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Town of Blandford for Interim Town Administrator Services

Mr. Gunn again called on Deputy Director James Mazik to address this agenda item. Mr. Mazik noted that the Town of Blandford is in need of interim Town Administrator services and he pointed out that this was also discussed at a previous Executive Committee meeting. Mr. Mazik explained that the Blandford Town Administrator has left and the Town is looking for someone to work in the office for no more than 12 hours a week in order to take care of the basic municipal paperwork; interact with the Selectboard members; attend required meetings, and perform whatever tasks are required based on the actions taken at the regular meetings of the Selectboard. Mr. Mazik stated that at the request of the Blandford Selectboard, PVPC has put together a proposal for a PVPC staff member to work 12 hours a week in Blandford through June 30, 2018. Mr. Mazik stated that the PVPC may also assist Blandford with the Town's search for a new Town Administrator and he noted that there are other areas where the PVPC could play a useful role, including the Regional Accounting project, an IT project and several building related issues.

Following a brief discussion, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 7.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY JUDY TERRY, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED TWELVE THOUSAND FOUR HUNDRED TWENTY DOLLARS AND NO CENTS (\$12,420.00), WITH THE TOWN OF BLANDFORD TO PROVIDE INTERIM TOWN ADMINISTRATOR SERVICES FROM APRIL 1, 2018 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2018.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the motion for agenda item 7 but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO FURTHER COMMENTS OR QUESTIONS, THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

8. Confirmation of Venue and Plans for the PVPC's 2018 Annual Meeting and Elections Scheduled for Thursday, June 14, 2018

Mr. Brennan confirmed that the PVPC's 2018 Annual Meeting will be held at the Irish Cultural Center (ICC) of Western New England which is located in West Springfield. Mr. Brennan reported that the ICC's 2nd floor conference center will not be ready for about 2 years but he noted that the ICC is happy to allow the PVPC to take over the main downstairs space for the evening of June 14th. Mr. Brennan stated that the ICC's Executive Director Bo Sullivan and their Board Chair Sean Cahillane have volunteered to give a presentation about the Irish immigrants coming into this region and they will also talk about the ICC's relationship with the Government of Ireland. Mr. Brennan added that the ICC received a grant from the Government of Ireland to try to conduct a cross border project about their connections. As regards potential recipients for the Planning Commission's 2018 Regional Recognition Awards, Mr. Brennan suggested that the PVPC recognize State Representative Stephen Kulik from the Town of Worthington, and State Representative John Scibak from the Town of South Hadley, who are both planning to retire and step down from their legislator roles and who have both done a lot to help our region during their tenures. Mr. Brennan asked Executive Committee members to let him know if they have any objections to this idea and he stated that he will also solicit PVPC staff for any ideas they might like to offer. Mr. Brennan noted that one of the items of business at the Annual Meeting is the nomination and election of the PVPC's Executive Committee officers and at-large members and he asked Chairman Gunn if he would like to start thinking about polling Executive Committee members. Mr. Gunn stated that he plans to ask Executive Committee members if they would like to continue to serve on the Executive Committee.

9. Personnel Issues Including an Update on PVPC Staff Recruitment Efforts

Mr. Brennan reported that the PVPC has completed its recruitment for a Transit Planner and he announced that Julia Carey-Ruiz, who is from the New York City metro area, has been offered this position and she will begin working at the PVPC as a Transit Planner Specialist on April 17th. Mr. Brennan noted that Ms. Carey-Ruiz will be replacing Transit Planner Dave Johnson who has had health issues and has decided to retire effective on March 31st. In addition, Mr. Brennan reported that recruitment is underway for a Data Analyst who will work with Principal Planner Molly Goren-Watts in PVPC's Regional Information and Policy Center. Mr. Mazik added that the PVPC has also advertised for a part-time Financial Coordinator to fill the position of former staff member Marie Brady who sadly passed away in January.

10. Executive Director's Highlights Including an Update on Ongoing Efforts to Work With the Commonwealth's Retirement Funding Obligations Working Group

Mr. Brennan reported that in May there will be an informational session with at least one and perhaps two Cannabis Control Commission (CCC) Commissioners and he stated that the PVPC will try to combine a Valley Development Council meeting with a Regional Roundtable meeting. Mr. Brennan noted that the CCC regulations for recreational marijuana have been finalized and they will be formally published on Friday, March 23rd.

Mr. Brennan stated that the PVPC is continuing to work on the issue of the substantial service cuts being proposed by the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA). Mr. Brennan stated there is great concern about how these cuts, combined with a 25% fare increase, will adversely affect PVTA ridership and he noted that the forecast is for a ridership loss of 12-16%. In addition, Mr. Brennan pointed out that 60% of PVTA's ridership does not have any other option for transportation. Mr. Brennan remarked that focus is on an advocacy campaign targeting the legislative delegation to fix this problem in tandem with the new state budget for July 1st and he noted that State Senator James Welch from West Springfield, along with State Representative Aaron Vega from Holyoke, have decided to take this on as a lead issue for the western Massachusetts legislative delegation.

Mr. Brennan announced that there will be a MARPA meeting in Boston on March 23rd and he noted that at least one Commissioner from the Cannabis Control Commission will be there as a guest. Mr. Brennan also reported that two members from the U.S. Census Bureau will be there to talk about work related to the 2020 U.S. Census. Mr. Brennan stated that MARPA will try to get a dialogue started, noting that some of the issues thus far relate to funding, personnel and the content of the questionnaire. Mr. Brennan explained that some of the questions that will appear on the census have to do with immigration and there is concern that some people may be inclined not to respond. Mr. Brennan next reported that MARPA's Annual Legislative Awards Dinner will take place on Tuesday, May 1st from 5:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. in Worcester and he stated that the award recipient is Congressman Jim McGovern. Mr. Brennan asked Executive Committee members to let him or Indrani Gallagher know if they are interested in attending this event. He stated that MARPA is hoping for a good turnout from all 13 Regional Planning Agencies across Massachusetts.

Mr. Brennan next reported that the New England Knowledge Corridor (NEKC) Partnership is planning a Mayors' Economic Forum, entitled *Mayors Meet Millennials* which will take place on April 26th from 7:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. at Goodwin College in East Hartford, Connecticut. Mr. Brennan noted that a previous Mayors' Economic Forum was held in 2016 which was very popular and NEKC was asked to present this conference again. Mr. Brennan stated that this time the event will focus on millennials as a component of the economy and the workforce and various related issues. Mr. Brennan noted that 2 mayors from Massachusetts will be participating and there will be 3 mayors from Connecticut. He also stated that Carrie Saldo, host of WGBY's *Connecting Point*, has agreed to be a panel moderator. Mr. Brennan noted that this is a sponsored event so there are no fees involved.

Mr. Brennan next talked about the rail passenger priority of adding service north of Springfield for the Cities of Holyoke, Northampton and Greenfield which would include two trains per day in the morning and two in the evening. He pointed out that there is currently only one train per day. Mr. Brennan stated that this would be a pilot service and it will be necessary to prove that this service is worthy of staying in place. Mr. Brennan noted that the PVPC has been working on this with the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) and Consultant Dan Hodge.

Mr. Brennan remarked that he has been advocating for funds in the next Environmental Bond Bill to be set aside for the continuation of the Connecticut River Cleanup and he noted that the Baker-Polito Administration recently filed their Environmental Bond Bill. Mr. Brennan pointed out that there are no more federal earmarks and this is the only way to keep the funds flowing to Connecticut River CSO clean-up projects. Mr. Brennan stated that the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Matthew Beaton, will be attending a Connecticut River Cleanup Committee event in Springfield on April 11th.

Mr. Brennan announced that the next full Commission meeting will take place on Thursday, April 12th and he noted that one of the guests will be Christine Klutchman, Program Director of the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) Housing Choice Initiative. Mr. Brennan remarked that there are a lot of difficulties with this program particularly for the rural municipalities and he stated that the PVPC worked with Linda Dunlavy at FRCOG who is leading the charge to come up with alternate criteria that could be used for rural municipalities. Mr. Brennan reported that the state has agreed to look at the alternate criteria but they will not entertain using them for the first funding round. Mr. Brennan stated that another key agenda item for the April 12th Commission meeting would include a

staff presentation on the transit cuts to PVTA and the advocacy campaign that we have running here in the Pioneer Valley region.

Ms. Terry asked if Ms. Klutchman will give a presentation at the Commission meeting that explains the Housing Choice Initiative. Mr. Brennan responded that Ms. Klutchman will give a presentation however he noted that this is also an opportunity to highlight the fact that there are some flaws with this program. After a brief discussion, Mr. Gunn suggested that when sending out the notices for the April 12th Commission meeting, it might be helpful to include a fact sheet about the Housing Choice Initiative. He stated that this would provide the Commissioners with an opportunity to prepare for the discussion and to think about the questions they would like to ask. Mr. Cousineau agreed with Mr. Gunn's suggestion. Ms. Terry also felt that the Commissioners should be provided with the Housing Choice criteria. Mr. Brennan noted that this issue was also taken up with the Valley Development Council (VDC) and he hoped that some VDC members will attend the April 12th Commission meeting.

Finally, Mr. Brennan gave an update on the ongoing efforts to work with the Commonwealth's Retirement Funding Obligations Working Group. Mr. Brennan noted that the official representative in this group for the Regional Planning Agencies (RPAs) is Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRCP) Executive Director, Janet Pierce. Mr. Brennan reported that a meeting was scheduled for December however it was cancelled and subsequently it was rescheduled and then cancelled twice in January. Mr. Brennan stated that he would like to try to keep this issue on the record noting that the RPAs continue to inquire as to when the meeting will be rescheduled and when a recommendation will be shared. Mr. Brennan stated that this matter will be discussed again at the March 23rd MARPA meeting.

11. Other Business

Mr. Gunn asked if there was any other business to discuss. Mr. Kingston announced that the Town of East Longmeadow has hired a new Director of Planning, Constance Brawders, who will begin working for the Town beginning on April 9th. There being no further business for the Executive Committee to conduct, Chairman Gunn adjourned the March 22nd Executive Committee meeting at 4:55 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the March 22, 2018 Meeting

1. Executive Committee March 22, 2018 Meeting Agenda and Suggested Motions
2. Executive Committee February 22, 2018 Meeting Minutes
3. PVPC Warrant: February 1, 2018 through February 28, 2018
4. PVPC Financial Summary Profile as of March 22, 2018