

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)

Minutes of Executive Committee Meeting
Thursday, January 25, 2018
Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC)
60 Congress Street, Large Conference Room
Springfield, Massachusetts 01104

Present were:

Walter Gunn, Chair – Longmeadow
Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown
Lynn Arnold – Holland
T.J. Cousineau - Blandford
Marilyn Gorman Fil – Monson
Michael Marciniec - Palmer

PVPC Staff:

Tim Brennan, Executive Director
Lisa Edinger, Accountant
Joshua Garcia, PVPC Municipal Services Coordinator
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
Larry Smith, PVPC Senior Planner – Environment and Land Use Section
Lynn Shell, Support Staff

Guest:

Patrice Squillante, CPA, Melanson Heath & Company, P.C.

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on December 21, 2017

The January 25th Executive Committee meeting was called to order at 4:03 p.m. by the Commission Chairman Walter Gunn. Mr. Gunn welcomed everyone in attendance and called for a motion to approve the minutes of the December 21, 2017 Executive Committee meeting.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 21, 2017 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING AS PRESENTED.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any comments, corrections or questions concerning the minutes of the December 21, 2017 Executive Committee meeting but none were forthcoming.

THERE BEING NO QUESTIONS OR COMMENTS, THE MINUTES OF THE DECEMBER 21, 2017 EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING WERE UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

2. Presentation of the PVPC's Fiscal Year 2017 Audit Reports as Prepared by the Commission's CPA Firm Melanson Heath & Company P.C.

Mr. Gunn welcomed Patrice Squillante, Certified Public Accountant from the Commission's CPA firm, Melanson Heath, and he noted that Ms. Squillante will be presenting the PVPC's final Fiscal Year 2017 audit reports. Ms. Squillante first reviewed the PVPC's Annual Financial Statements for the year ended June 30, 2017. As regards the Statement of Net Position, she explained that these are the consolidated financial statements where all the funds and grants are grouped together and where the PVPC's long-term liabilities and assets are listed. Ms. Squillante noted that the PVPC's Unrestricted Net Position is being driven by the PVPC's Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) Trust Fund and Net Pension Liability and she stated that this is continuing to become a larger deficit as the OPEB liability increases. Ms.

Squillante next turned to a report entitled *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission, Governmental Funds Balance Sheet June 30, 2017* which she noted more closely resembles the PVPC's internal financial records. Ms. Squillante talked about the PVPC's Unassigned Fund Balance and she explained that this is the unreserved surplus in PVPC's General Fund. She stated that the PVPC is heading in the right direction, noting that this amount was a negative number in Fiscal Year 2015. Ms. Squillante also talked about the Assigned Fund Balances which includes funds for special projects and a board-designated reserve surplus to address future liabilities. Ms. Squillante noted that it has been the intent of the Executive Committee to accumulate some surplus funds since the PVPC has not really had any. Mr. Brennan remarked that the Commission has been increasing its local assessment fees over the past two years and he noted that there has been small growth due to this effort. Ms. Squillante recommended that the PVPC continue to increase assessments as well as any other fees that could contribute to PVPC's unrestricted surplus. She underscored that anything the PVPC can do to increase the surplus would be helpful.

At this point, Ms. Squillante noted that the issue with the Massachusetts State Retirement Board (MSRB) has not yet been resolved and she stated that the last bill the PVPC received from the MSRB was for calendar year 2015. Ms. Squillante noted that the amount that the MSRB claims that PVPC owes them is almost \$800,000. Ms. Squillante reported that given the uncertainty as to whether the PVPC will actually be required to pay this obligation, Melanson Heath has not included this as a liability in the FY 2017 financial reports however it is addressed as a footnote to alert any reader that there is a potential MSRB liability. Ms. Squillante pointed out that there are two completely separate liabilities related to the retirement system. She explained that the *Net Pension Liability* listed on the Statement of Net Position, is the PVPC's share of the Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System unfunded liability and she noted that this is a liability that all municipalities must identify and report. Ms. Squillante also stated that she wanted to point out that Melanson Heath modified how the Community Economic Development Assistance Corporation (CEDAC) program is being reported. She noted that CEDAC's position is that any loans receivable that PVPC issued, plus any cash specifically identified with CEDAC, are owed to CEDAC and she stated that there is now a subtle difference in how this is being reported in the financial report. Ms. Squillante also discussed the PVPC's *Supplementary Schedule of Indirect Costs and Indirect Cost Rate* which appears on page 49 of the Financial Statements noting that an explanatory footnote had been added on page 50 of the applicable audit report.

Finally, Ms. Squillante reviewed the Planning Commission's FY 2017 Management Letter as prepared by Melanson Heath. Ms. Squillante reported that the Management Letter has only one comment which is a repeat from the prior year, namely, *Prepare for New Single Audit Guidelines Over Procurement and Expand Current Policies for Subrecipient Monitoring*. Ms. Squillante explained that this comment simply recommends adjusting PVPC's policies and procedures over subrecipient monitoring and modifying the wording on the PVPC's procurement procedure to ensure compliance with federal guidance. Ms. Squillante remarked that if the Planning Commission were to have a finding, it would no longer be deemed a low risk auditee, however she noted that the PVPC is still classified as a low risk agency for audit purposes. Mr. Gunn asked if this is so indicated in the report. Ms. Squillante stated yes and pointed out that on page 8 of the Independent Auditors' Reports, under *Schedule of Findings and Questioned Costs*, it is noted that the PVPC is qualified as a low-risk auditee.

At this point, Ms. Squillante stated that she had concluded her presentation of the PVPC's Fiscal Year 2017 audit report and she congratulated PVPC's management team for the great work they have done and the strides they have made over the past several years. There being no further questions for Ms. Squillante, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to accept Melanson Heath's Fiscal Year 2017 audit reports of the PVPC.

MOVED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO ACCEPT THE PVPC'S AUDIT REPORTS ENCOMPASSING THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S 2017 FISCAL YEAR (I.E. JULY 1, 2016 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2017) AS PREPARED BY THE PVPC'S CERTIFIED PUBLIC ACCOUNTANT (CPA), MELANSON, HEATH AND COMPANY, P.C. INCLUDING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OUTLINED IN THE CPA'S FINAL FY 2017 MANAGEMENT LETTER.

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.

Mr. Gunn and Mr. Brennan thanked Ms. Squillante for her report and Mr. Gunn then moved to take up agenda item 3.

3. Warrant/Financial Reports

Mr. Gunn asked PVPC Accountant, Lisa Edinger to comment on the December 2017 warrant. Ms. Edinger stated that there is nothing out of the ordinary that she needed to report but she noted that there are two payments that she would like to highlight. Ms. Edinger first referred to check #16290 payable to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts/GIC in the amount of \$26,308.75 and she stated that this is PVPC's employee share of health insurance for the September through November 2017 time period. She explained that GIC changed their billing system and, as a result, they are very much behind in their billing. Ms. Edinger also highlighted check #16292 payable to ESRI, Inc. in the amount of \$7,928.08 which is a yearly maintenance fee payment for the Commission's GIS software.

Ms. Edinger next turned to the PVPC's 6 month budget report for the time period encompassing July 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017 and she stated that the PVPC, through the mid-point of FY 2018, is on target and under budget. In reviewing the report, Ms. Edinger pointed out that the PVPC budgeted at a much higher amount for *Additional Rent* and she stated that this amount will be lowered. In addition, Ms. Edinger noted that *Membership Fees and Dues* are always high at this time of year given that payments are typically made at the beginning of the July 1st fiscal year or the beginning of the calendar year. Ms. Edinger also stated that the FY 2018 budget line item for insurance will need to be increased because there was an increase of \$1,000 from last year but she noted that this yearly expense has been paid and so there will be no further charges needed for the remainder of the current fiscal year.

Ms. Edinger next provided a brief summary of PVPC's account balances as of January 25, 2018 as outlined in a report entitled *Pioneer Valley Planning Commission Financial Summary Profile*. After Ms. Edinger had completed her review of the report, Mr. Gunn moved to take up the next agenda item.

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the City of Springfield to Advance the City's Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Initiatives

Mr. Gunn called on Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner, Environment and Land Use Section Manager, to address this agenda item. Ms. Ratte noted that the state has launched a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Program. She explained that communities could apply for planning assistance to build on their hazard mitigation plans and bring local stakeholders together to understand their vulnerabilities in weather related hazards as well as other disaster events. Ms. Ratte stated that six communities in our region secured this funding including the City of Springfield which has selected the PVPC to assist them. Ms. Ratte noted that the contract amount of \$26,000 will pay for PVPC staff to conduct the required community planning process. She also noted that the City received additional funding which they will use to advance work on their Green Infrastructure Design Guide. Ms. Ratte stated that most of the communities will receive \$16,000 which will enable eligible cities and towns to hire a certified MVP consultant, such as the PVPC, to facilitate their planning process. Ms. Ratte stated that the work will require an 8-hour or two 4-hour meetings plus a large community-wide meeting to educate the public about this work. In addition, the PVPC will also need to produce a 10 page vulnerability report for the community being assisted.

After Ms. Ratte had responded to a series of questions raised by Executive Committee members, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 4.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$26,000 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD TO ADVANCE THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS INITIATIVES.

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.

5. (a) Authorizations for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) to Coordinate the Development of an Off-site Mitigation Guidance Manual for Stormwater in Concert With Multiple, Statewide Project Partners and a Companion Contract With the Center for Watershed Protection

Mr. Gunn again called on Principal Planner Catherine Ratte to address agenda item 5 (a). Ms. Ratte stated that she is

reporting on behalf of Senior Environmental Planner Patty Gambarini who was unable to attend today's meeting. Ms. Ratte noted that Ms. Gambarini has been consistently engaged with the Massachusetts Stormwater Committee and working collaboratively, she managed to secure funding to develop an Off-site Mitigation Guidance Manual. In response to a question from Mr. Gunn, Ms. Ratte stated that the manual will be developed in our region and it will apply to our region but it will also be shared with the statewide committee.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 5 (a).

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$50,000 CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION (DEP) TO COORDINATE THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN OFF-SITE MITIGATION GUIDANCE MANUAL FOR STORMWATER IN CONCERT WITH MULTIPLE, STATEWIDE PROJECT PARTNERS.

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.

5 (b) - Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Center for Watershed Protection to Assist With the Development of an Off-site Mitigation Guidance Manual

Ms. Ratte noted that agenda item 5 (b) is related to agenda item 5 (a). She stated that the PVPC secured funding in the amount of \$50,000 of which \$48,300 is being used to hire the Center for Watershed Protection to conduct work on an Off-site Mitigation Guidance Manual with the remainder of the grant funds allocated to the PVPC to oversee and manage this work. Mr. Marciniac asked what is meant by *off-site mitigation*. Ms. Ratte stated that this relates to stormwater problems that are not on the site of the project. Mr. Marciniac then asked if there is any guidance for handling problems that are on-site since this is where the problems start. Ms. Ratte explained that local Department of Public Works (DPW) staff typically address the on-site problems. Mr. Marciniac stated that in his community there has not been a successful on-site mitigation plan in the past 5 years. He underscored that the mitigation measures routinely fail and the sediment runs into all the nearby streams and rivers. Mr. Cousineau similarly expressed concerns about overflow from the road salt which the state applies during the winter months to the roads near Cobble Mountain Reservoir in the Towns of Blandford and Granville. Mr. Cousineau stated that this is affecting the water supply and he felt that at some point the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will need to take action. Mr. Brennan suggested that the PVPC ought to try to work on these issues and Ms. Ratte stated that she will alert staff member Patty Gambarini about the concerns about on-site mitigation measures that have been raised by Mr. Marciniac and Mr. Cousineau.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 5 (b).

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$48,300, WITH THE CENTER FOR WATERSHED PROTECTION TO PROVIDE TECHNICAL EXPERTISE NEEDED IN DEVELOPMENT OF AN OFFSITE MITIGATION AND PAYMENT-IN-LIEU-OF STORMWATER PROGRAM GUIDANCE DOCUMENT.

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.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs to Develop Model Subdivision Regulations That Incorporate the Most Contemporary Policies and Design Elements of Low Impact Development (LID), Complete Streets and Stormwater Management

Mr. Gunn called on PVPC Senior Planner Larry Smith to address this agenda item. Mr. Smith stated that this item covers two grants that the PVPC submitted to the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs (EOEEA) and he explained that the first grant is to develop model subdivision regulations. Mr. Smith noted that for most of the communities in our region, the subdivision regulations are very old and the proposal is to develop a model set of

subdivision regulations that could be applied across the state. Mr. Smith stated that a cash or in-kind match is required for this program adding that the in-kind match cannot be volunteer board members but must be paid community staff, and he noted that PVPC was able to find six communities who could provide the local cash in-kind match. Mr. Smith stated that the project will be conducted over 2 grant cycles and he explained that the first cycle which runs until the end of June 2018 is to get everything up and running and to start working on a draft. He noted that the major work will occur from June 2018 until June 2019 and at the end of that timeframe there should be a model bylaw available that everyone can adjust as needed for their communities. Mr. Smith stated that the second grant is to update the Town of Hatfield's Open Space Development Bylaw and to develop an Accessory Dwelling Unit Zoning Bylaw which builds on a couple of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) projects in the Unified Planning Work Program that PVPC started with Hatfield during the past year. Mr. Smith added that the Town was able to provide the required cash match. Mr. Smith then responded to several questions raised by Executive Committee members.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to address agenda item 6.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$50,200, WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENTAL AFFAIRS IN ORDER FOR THE PVPC TO UNDERTAKE AN EOEPA PLANNING ASSISTANCE GRANT PROGRAM TO ASSIST THE COMMUNITIES OF AGAWAM, BELCHERTOWN, EASTHAMPTON, LUDLOW, SOUTH HADLEY AND WARE TO DEVELOP MODEL COMPREHENSIVE SUBDIVISION REGULATIONS INTEGRATING ELEMENTS OF LOW IMPACT DEVELOPMENT, COMPLETE STREETS, GREEN STREETS, HEALTHY COMMUNITIES AND STORMWATER MANAGEMENT AND TO UPDATE HATFIELD'S OPEN SPACE DEVELOPMENT BYLAW AND DEVELOP AN ACCESSORY DWELLING UNIT BYLAW.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any further 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 Sign and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contract Amendment With the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) Which Will Allow the PVPC to Retain a Travel Trainer Intern and Provide Supplemental Title VI Compliance and Technical Assistance as Required by the PVTA

Mr. Gunn called on Principal Planner, Transportation Section Manager Dana Roscoe to address this agenda item. Mr. Roscoe stated that the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) was awarded a grant to hire a Travel Trainer and the PVTA Administrator has asked the PVPC to use those funds to retain a Travel Trainer Intern. Mr. Roscoe noted that the PVPC is trying to find a college student to do this work which involves outreach to elderly and disabled community individuals in an effort to decrease the number of people using the demand response services van. Mr. Roscoe noted that the Travel Trainer Intern will introduce individuals to the PVTA's fixed-route transportation system so they can become familiar and comfortable with travelling on the PVTA's fixed-route buses. Mr. Roscoe stated the funds are only available through May 2018 and the PVPC has 3 months to see if this outreach effort can increase PVTA ridership.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 7.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO SIGN AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$10,000 CONTRACTUAL AMENDMENT WITH THE PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY (PVTA) WHICH WILL ALLOW THE PVPC TO RETAIN A TRAVEL TRAINER INTERN AND PROVIDE SUPPLEMENTAL TITLE VI COMPLIANCE AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE REQUESTED BY THE PVTA FOR ITS REQUIRED FARE EQUITY ANALYSIS AND SERVICE CHANGE EQUITY ANALYSIS.

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.

8. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Executive Office for Administration and Finance in Order for the PVPC to Develop a Municipal Information Technology (IT) Management Service for Municipalities and School Districts With a Specific Focus on Exploring Opportunities to Share Technical Services, Procurement and Technology

Mr. Gunn called on Joshua Garcia, PVPC's Municipal Services Coordinator, to address agenda item 8. Mr. Garcia stated that last year, the six Hilltown communities leveraged District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) funds to conduct an Information Technology (IT) assessment for their towns. He stated that PVPC's Regional Information and Policy Center Principal Planner Molly Goren-Watts, and Senior Computer Specialist, Network Administrator Jaime Duran worked on that project which involved looking at the towns' IT infrastructure and identifying their strengths and weaknesses, as well as putting together a report which included capital upgrade strategies. Mr. Garcia stated that PVPC then applied for and was awarded by the Commonwealth an Efficiency and Regionalization grant in the amount of \$150,000 to develop a regional IT management service. He noted that Ms. Goren-Watts is the lead staff person and there have been staff meetings to strategize on how to execute an appropriate scope. Mr. Garcia explained that this project will pay for some needed IT capital upgrades in the towns as well as PVPC staff time to do procurement of an IT firm. He stated that the PVPC partnered with a firm that will provide 24/7 help desk support noting that the small towns may not necessarily have the resources to hire an IT director. Mr. Garcia also noted that the PVPC would serve as the IT Coordinator and they could provide the towns with advice regarding their IT decisions. Mr. Garcia remarked that this is an innovative project that the Governor is interested in, adding that no other regional planning agencies in the commonwealth are doing this and it is being looked upon as a best practice. Mr. Garcia noted that he has been encouraging more PVPC cross departmental collaboration in order to try to help our member communities meet their needs. Mr. Brennan added that this is part of PVPC's attempt to find ways to respond to the stress on the rural municipalities noting that the Rural Policy Advisory Commission does not have any resources. Following a brief discussion, Mr. Garcia suggested that Executive Committee members reach out to Molly Goren-Watts if they would like to receive additional information regarding this project.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 8.

MOVED BY LYNN ARNOLD, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$150,000 EFFICIENCY AND REGIONALIZATION GRANT PROGRAM CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS EXECUTIVE OFFICE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND FINANCE IN ORDER FOR THE PVPC TO DEVELOP A MUNICIPAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT) MANAGEMENT SERVICE FOR MUNICIPALITIES AND SCHOOL DISTRICTS WITH A SPECIFIC FOCUS ON EXPLORING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SHARING TECHNICAL SERVICES, PROCUREMENT AND TECHNOLOGY.

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.

9. Initial Discussion of Venue and Plans for the PVPC's 2018 Annual Meeting in June

As a possible venue for the PVPC's 2018 Annual Meeting, Mr. Brennan proposed the idea of using the Irish Cultural Center of Western New England which is located on Morgan Street in West Springfield. Mr. Brennan remarked that he had learned about this new facility from the former Assistant Director of the Springfield Housing Authority (SHA), Sean Callihane, who has since retired from the SHA and is now serving as the Board Chair of the Irish Cultural Center. In addition, Mr. Brennan suggested that the Consul General of Ireland based in Boston could possibly be invited to be the speaker for this meeting. Mr. Brennan stated that the PVPC has put a hold on the space for Thursday, June 7th and Thursday, June 14th for PVPC's 2018 Annual Meeting. After Mr. Brennan had responded to a series of informational questions, he asked Executive Committee members if they would like to consider the idea of using the Irish Cultural Center of Western New England or if they would like to suggest other venues for this event. In response, Executive Committee members expressed their support for using the Irish Cultural Center of Western New England as the potential venue for the Commission's 2018 Annual Meeting.

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

Mr. Brennan stated that the next full Commission meeting will take place on February 8th. Mr. Brennan noted that he

invited Southampton Selectboard Chair Charlie Kaniecki who has been working to organize a Pioneer Valley Mosquito Control District (PVMCD) and he stated that Mr. Kaniecki will give a presentation on the PVMCD at the Commission meeting. Mr. Brennan noted that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments (FRCOG) has been involved in this project as well, adding that a FRCOG staff person has also been asked to attend the February 8th Commission meeting.

Mr. Brennan next reported that the State Rail Plan, the release of which has been delayed several times over the past six months, will be released and available online as of January 26th after which there will be a 3 week period for public review and comment. Mr. Brennan also announced that a statewide public meeting will be held on January 29th at the Worcester Regional Transit Authority and he noted that he plans to ask the state to extend the comment period until at least March 1st. Mr. Brennan reported that the 3 priority rail projects for this region have been included in the plan. He stated that one project which has been given a higher priority is to expand service on the Knowledge Corridor north of Springfield to include two trains in the morning and two trains in the evening which could potentially happen in the fall of 2018. Mr. Brennan noted that the second, more expensive and longer term project is the connection to Boston. He stated that the 2016 final version of the Northern New England Intercity Rail Initiative (NNEIRI) report recommended 8 daily round trips between Boston, Worcester, Palmer, Springfield, Hartford and New Haven, as well as a reconnection with Montreal by way of one train a day out of Boston and one train a day out of New Haven. Mr. Brennan reported that the state intends to include this project in the State Rail Plan but they will characterize this proposal as needing further study because of the cost involved and objections from CSX which actually owns the line from Worcester west to Springfield. Mr. Brennan stated that the third project involves upgrading the New England Central Corridor to the modern 286K rail freight standard weight. He explained that this is an important freight corridor which runs through Palmer and the state is treating this project as a high priority in its new, draft State Rail Plan produced by MassDOT.

Mr. Brennan stated that the Valley Development Council for local and city planners throughout the region will be meeting on February 8th. He further stated that the lead staff person from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) will talk about the new "Housing Choice Initiative" and she will also present again at the April 12th Commission meeting. Mr. Brennan noted that this initiative does not work well in rural municipalities and efforts are being made to get the state to change some of the criteria.

Mr. Brennan reported that the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) contracts for all the regional planning agencies are late this year but hopefully they will be ready within the next week or two so that PVPC can get this DLTA work underway. Mr. Brennan noted that the work has to be completed during the 2018 calendar year.

Mr. Brennan next announced that the PVPC has been officially invited to serve on the I-90 Interchange Study and he reported that the first meeting will take place on February 8th at 2:00 p.m. at the Town Hall in Blandford. Mr. Cousineau commented that he will be unable to attend this meeting because he will be travelling out of the state at that time.

Mr. Brennan stated that Chrystal Kornegay, Undersecretary for the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) who has been chairing the Rural Policy Advisory Commission (RPAC), will soon be moving on to a different position and there is a question about who will chair the RPAC after her departure from DHCD. Mr. Brennan noted that there is concern among some of the members about how the important work of the RPAC will move forward in 2018 and beyond.

Finally, as regards the PVPC's Fiscal Year 2019 local assessments, Mr. Brennan stated that he is considering recommending a modest 2% increase from approximately 15.7¢ to 16¢ and he reminded Executive Committee members that the Commission's CPA firm has encouraged the PVPC to continue increasing the local assessment rate. Mr. Gunn pointed out that the Executive Committee had previously indicated they would support a full 2.5% increase. Given this Executive Committee feedback, Mr. Brennan stated that this proposed rate increase will be presented for approval at the February 8th Commission meeting.

11. Personnel Issues Including an Update on Current Staff Recruitment Efforts

Mr. Brennan announced that recruitment is underway for an Environment and Land Use Senior Planner. He noted that the goal is to make a selection by next week so that the new planner will have several months to work with PVPC Senior Planner Larry Smith prior to his planned retirement on June 8, 2018. Mr. Brennan added that there will also be a discussion about the possibility of Mr. Smith continuing to work at the PVPC on a part-time basis through the end of the calendar year to allow more time to train the new planner. Mr. Brennan next reported that PVPC has advertised for a Transit Planner with the expectation that someone could be hired in March. He explained that one of PVPC's Transit

Planners has needed to be out of the office due to a health related issue and he will likely retire within the next several months. In addition, Mr. Brennan reported that Principal Planner Molly Goren-Watts has had a series of health problems and it was necessary for her to be away from the office in November and December. Mr. Brennan stated that Ms. Goren-Watts will be away again for an indefinite period of time due to additional health issues but hopefully she will be able to return to work sometime in February.

12. Other Business

Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement With the Massachusetts Department of Public Health to Advance work on the Massachusetts Healthy Community Design Toolkit by Developing Video Case Studies of Healthy Community Design

Mr. Gunn again called on Principal Planner Catherine Ratte to address this agenda item. Ms. Ratte reminded Executive Committee members that during the past five years she has talked about PVPC's work on the Massachusetts Healthy Community Design Toolkit. Ms. Ratte stated that the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) has again contacted the PVPC to assist with this project noting that these funds need to be spent by June 30th. Ms. Ratte stated that PVPC staff currently does not have enough time to work on this project therefore the PVPC will need to work in collaboration with a consultant. She explained that PVPC Planner Dillon Sussman will be the project manager and PVPC will be engaging a video consultant and a public health consultant. Ms. Ratte also noted that this is a way to publicize the Massachusetts Healthy Community Design Toolkit.

Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to address agenda item 12.

MOVED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, SECONDED BY LYNN ARNOLD, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT, NOT TO EXCEED \$60,000, WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH TO DEVELOP 4-5 VIDEO CASE STUDIES DOCUMENTING HEALTHY COMMUNITY DESIGN, WORKING IN COLLABORATION WITH A VIDEO EXPERT AND PUBLIC HEALTH EXPERT SUB-CONSULTANT.

Mr. Gunn asked if there were any questions regarding the motion for agenda item 12 but none were forthcoming.

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

Mr. Gunn asked if there was any other business to conduct. Mr. Mazik reported that there will be an upcoming meeting with the Town of Blandford's Board of Selectmen to see if there is continued interest in filling their Town Administrator position on an interim basis. In addition, Mr. Mazik stated that there are several projects that the Town is looking at and they will see if there is a role for the PVPC which would include building projects and procurement projects. Mr. Mazik remarked that many municipalities are losing staff in their community development and planning departments due to retirements and he pointed out that more and more communities are looking to the PVPC for expertise and to provide regional services or to fill gaps where they do not want to hire staff. Mr. Cousineau stated that Blandford does not have a local tax collector and they are hoping that Eric Kinsharf can help them in that area, noting that Mr. Kinsharf has taken over their Accounting and Treasurer's office. Mr. Garcia stated that PVPC's contract with Mr. Kinsharf ends this fiscal year. He noted that the PVPC will be doing a new procurement process and he believed that Mr. Kinsharf will submit a bid. Mr. Garcia stated that the PVPC will issue a Request for Proposals (RPA) for a firm to provide a scope and costs, and to indicate what they can offer on the accounting side and in other areas such as finance director services, fiscal planning, treasurer and collector services and he noted that this will be discussed with the participating communities.

At this point, there being no further business for the Executive Committee to conduct, Chairman Gunn adjourned the January 25th Executive Committee meeting at 5:25 p.m. without objection.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the January 25, 2018 Meeting

1. Executive Committee January 25, 2018 Meeting Agenda and Suggested Motions
2. Executive Committee December 21, 2017 Meeting Minutes
3. PVPC FY 2017 Audit Report and Management Letter prepared by CPA Firm, Melanson Heath
4. PVPC Warrant: December 1 through December 31, 2017
5. PVPC Financial Summary Profile as of January 25, 2018
6. PVPC 6 Month Budget (October 1, 2017 through December 31, 2017)
7. PVPC staff retirement memo dated January 18, 2018