

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of Executive Committee Zoom Meeting
Thursday, September 23, 2021

Executive Committee Members Present:

Walter Gunn, Chair – Longmeadow
Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown
George Kingston, Treasurer – East Longmeadow
T.J. Cousineau, Assistant Treasurer – Blandford
Michael Marciniak - Palmer
Mark Paleologopoulos – Agawam

PVPC Staff Present:

Kimberly H. Robinson, MUP, Executive Director
Pat Beaudry, Manager of Public Affairs
Lisa Edinger, Director of Finance
Patty Gambarini, Principal Environmental Planner/Section Manager
Doug Hall, Data Manager/Analyst
Erica Johnson, Director, Community Development
Indrani Kowlessar, Director of Human Resources
Catherine Ratte, Principal Planner/Environment and Land Use Section Manager
Gary Roux, Principal Planner/Traffic Manager

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome and Approval of the Minutes of the August 26, 2021 Executive Committee Meeting

The September 23, 2021 Executive Committee Zoom meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m. by Commission Chair Walter Gunn. Mr. Gunn noted there was a quorum with 5 members present. He then called for a motion to approve the August 26, 2021 Executive Committee Zoom meeting minutes.

T.J. COUSINEAU MADE A MOTION TO APPROVE THE MINUTES, GEORGE KINGSTON SECONDED THE MOTION.

Mr. Gunn took a roll call vote and he noted that there were two abstentions. Given that two more Committee members were expected to attend today's meeting, Mr. Gunn moved to continue this agenda item at the end of the meeting. It was noted that Mr. Paleologopoulos joined the meeting at 4:04 p.m. bringing the total to 6 members present.

2. Warrant/Financial Reports

Director of Finance Lisa Edinger announced that PVPC's main operating account has now been transferred from Peoples United to Westfield Bank. She then reviewed PVPC's warrants for August 2021 and she highlighted several checks on the check listing. Ms. Edinger next talked about PVPC's Financial Summary Profile. She noted that all the account balances are good and she pointed out that there is a new column for the *Judge Peck PVPC Internship* contributions.

3. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority for Annual Federal Transit Administration (FTA) Section 5307 Transit Planning Funds Which Support the Planning Commission Transit Planning Work Tasks and Responsibilities

Principal Planner/Traffic Manager Gary Roux explained that this is an annual contract with the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority to provide transit planning assistance and he noted this is an increase over last year's funding amount.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE \$310,000 TWELVE MONTH CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE PIONEER VALLEY TRANSIT AUTHORITY FOR FTA SECTION 5307 TRANSIT PLANNING FUNDS WHICH SUPPORT THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S TRANSIT PLANNING WORK TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to Enter into a Contract with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (MA DOER) for Green Communities work in Various Member Municipalities

Principal Planner/Environment and Land Use Section Manager Catherine Ratte noted that this contract is to provide technical assistance to our member municipalities that wish to seek and maintain Green Communities certification. She noted that East Longmeadow and Hadley are two new communities seeking designation.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$147,250, WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES (MA DOER) FOR GREEN COMMUNITIES WORK IN VARIOUS MEMBER MUNICIPALITIES. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

Mr. Gunn called for a combined block vote to address the following motions for agenda items 5 and 6 given that the items are related. The block vote was moved by George Kingston and seconded by T.J. Cousineau.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Enter into a Contract with the Town of Huntington to Perform Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning and Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$38,000 WITH THE TOWN OF HUNTINGTON TO PERFORM MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS (MVP) PLANNING AND HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Enter into an Agreement with the Town of Tolland to Perform Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness (MVP) Planning and Hazard Mitigation Plan Update

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO AN AGREEMENT IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$27,000, WITH THE TOWN OF TOLLAND TO PERFORM MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS (MVP) PLANNING AND HAZARD MITIGATION PLAN UPDATE. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

7. Authorization for the Executive Director to Enter into a Contract with the City of Holyoke for a Community Engagement Project on Impervious Surface Reductions

Principal Environmental Planner Patty Gambarini explained that this funding is from the Nature Conservancy and it extends the Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness work that PVPC did in Holyoke last year. She also noted that they wanted help with engaging people around an Impervious Mitigation Plan that was developed 2 years ago.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT IN A TOTAL AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$38,000, WITH THE CITY OF HOLYOKE FOR A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT PROJECT ON IMPERVIOUS SURFACE REDUCTIONS. PROJECT ELEMENTS INCLUDE A COMMUNITY-WIDE SURVEY ON CLIMATE EXPERIENCE AS IT RELATES TO IMPERVIOUS SURFACES; DESIGN OF INTERPRETIVE GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE SIGNAGE IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH; AND HOSTING EDUCATION DAYS AROUND THE CITY'S EXISTING GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE STORMWATER MANAGEMENT FACILITIES. THE MOTION WAS UNANIMOUSLY APPROVED.

8. Contracts Signed Under \$25,000

Ms. Robinson stated that at the last meeting, the Executive Committee asked if they could be provided with a summary of PVPC's contracts that are under \$25,000. Ms. Robinson then gave a brief update about each of the contracts under \$25,000 that PVPC signed between August 27th and September 22nd. She noted that next month a summary will be sent out along with the meeting packet.

9. Human Resource Items

Ms. Robinson announced that the PVPC has hired two planners in our Community Development Section. She noted that Gabe Filer began working recently and Tiffany Menard will begin on October 12th. Ms. Robinson also noted that recruitment is underway for a Senior Land Use Environmental Planner.

10. Executive Director's Highlights and Updates

Ms. Robinson stated that for the October 14th Commission meeting she plans to have presentations on the different aspects of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. She noted that she is inviting PVPC's federal government representative and someone from the state, as well as folks working on the programs who can describe the opportunities.

Ms. Robinson explained that there are competitive grants that are currently available through the Economic Development Administration (EDA) noting that PVPC is eligible for three of approximately six opportunities and one is the Build Back Better Challenge which is due October 19th. Ms. Robinson noted that Massachusetts is planning on doing a statewide

application. Connecticut also wants to see a statewide application but they are fine having cross border partnerships.

Ms. Robinson stated that as regards the ARPA funds, the governor put out a proposed budget which the state legislature is currently discussing. She noted that Patrick Beaudry and Eric Weiss testified regarding the potential use of those funds noting that we're consistently trying to make sure western Massachusetts is being heard. Ms. Robinson also noted that PVPC is working with a few communities on the Local Rapid Recovery Program (LRRP) which was funded by the state to help figure out potential goals regarding economic response to the pandemic. She noted that PVPC is advocating for implementation dollars for the LRRP projects and we also might be able to use some funds remaining in the LRRP budget for implementation purposes through December 31st when the money has to be spent.

Ms. Robinson reported that she recently hosted her first meeting as the New England Knowledge Corridor (NEKC) Chair. She also reported that Lyle Wray, Executive Director for the Capitol Region Council of Governments (CRCOG) retired at the end of August although he is still very active in the conversations around ARPA. As regards MARPA, Ms. Robinson noted that part of the ARPA money includes planning funds which amount to a million dollars across the state and it automatically went to the state of Massachusetts. She noted that there have been conversations through MARPA at the state level about how to use those funds and how to best be engaged.

Finally, Ms. Robinson noted that the Executive Committee needs to approve the August 26, 2021 Executive Committee Zoom meeting minutes. Mr. Kingston stated that it is his understanding that the minutes can be approved by a majority of the members present, provided there is a quorum. Mr. Gunn noted that a motion was made earlier by T.J. Cousineau and seconded by George Kingston. He stated that there is a quorum and there are now 6 members attending.

FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE, 4 MEMBERS APPROVED AND 2 ABSTAINED. THE MOTION CARRIED BY A MAJORITY VOTE.

11. Committee Member Comments, Suggestions and Future Agenda Items

Mr. Gunn asked if any members could be available Tuesday, September 28th for a special meeting to review the Executive Director's performance evaluation for calendar year 2020. Mr. Gunn will provide some potential times for the meeting. Mr. Gunn then called for a motion to adjourn today's meeting.

GEORGE KINGSTON MADE A MOTION TO ADJOURN AND WALTER GUNN SECONDED THE MOTION. FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE, THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 4:48 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,

Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the September 23, 2021 Meeting

1. Executive Committee September 23, 2021 Meeting Agenda and Motions
2. Executive Committee August 26, 2021 Meeting Minutes
3. PVPC Warrants and Payment History August 2021
4. PVPC Financial Summary Profile September 2021