

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of Executive Committee Zoom Meeting
Thursday, June 27, 2024, 5:00 P.M.

Executive Committee Members Present

Walter Gunn, Chair – Longmeadow
George Kingston, Vice Chair – East Longmeadow
Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown
Marilyn Gorman Fil, Treasurer – Monson
T.J. Cousineau, Assistant Treasurer – Blandford
Joanna Brown, At-large Member – South Hadley
Peri Hall, At-Large Member – Goshen
Jack Jemsek, At-large Member – Amherst
James Whalen, At-Large Member – Holland

PVPC Staff Present

Kimberly H. Robinson, MUP, Executive Director
Lisa Edinger, Director of Finance
Megan Haberle, Director, Community Development Department
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Catherine Ratté, Director, Land Use and Environment Department
Indrani Kowlessar, Director of Human Resources
Eric Weiss, Director, Municipal and Economic Collaboration Department

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome, and Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on May 23, 2024

The Executive Committee meeting on June 27, 2024, was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Commission Chair Walter Gunn.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 23, 2024, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. Approval of the Minutes of the Operation Subcommittee Meeting Held on May 9, 2024

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MAY 9, 2024, OPERATION SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

3. Listing of Payments/Financial Reports

Ms. Edinger highlighted the organization's payments, invoices, and expenses for May 2024 and the financial summary as of June 18, 2024. The agency has received 69% of its budgeted revenue and invoiced 87% of its expenses, which is consistent with the expected progress. PVPC must invoice all the projects by mid-August 2024, which requires getting all the expenses from consultants and municipalities. Some have different deadlines and meeting schedules, making the process difficult. The fiscal year ends on June 30, the same as the state of Massachusetts and most of the municipalities in its region. The federal government, however, has a different fiscal year that starts on October 1.

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Contract with the Town of Monson for Professional Town Planner Services

MOVED DOUG ALBERTSON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ENTER INTO A CONTRACT WITH THE TOWN OF MONSON FOR A SUM NOT TO EXCEED \$25,000 FOR PROFESSIONAL TOWN PLANNER SERVICES. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate a Contract with the City of Springfield to Perform a Local Pavement Management Study

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE A CONTRACT WITH THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD TO PERFORM A LOCAL PAVEMENT MANAGEMENT STUDY IN THE AMOUNT OF \$123,837.21. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

Gary Roux explained that local pavement management is a service in which the Transportation Department surveys the pavement distress on local roadways and uses a program to project the deterioration and repair strategies over time. Pavement management is not about fixing the worst roads first but maintaining the good roads so they do not deteriorate as quickly and investing in major overhauls as needed.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Agawam for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for the Provision of the Housing Rehabilitation Program and Aging in Place Program

It was recommended that agenda items six through 13 be voted on in a block since they are all CDBG contracts for different communities.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO COMBINE AGENDA ITEMS SIX THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

Megan Haberle presented an overview of the process and the activities that are funded by the CDBG program for 23 communities in the Pioneer Valley region. She mentioned that the grants have faced an unusually delayed process because of a lot of back-and-forth communication with the state that was not anticipated. The contracts between the communities and the state have already been executed, but the contracts between PVPC and the communities are still pending. She also explained that the grants support infrastructure improvements, social service programs, and housing rehab programs for low and moderate-income homeowners and gave examples of each category and how they benefit the communities.

Ms. Haberle noted that the contracts between PVPC and the communities would fund staff time to interface with the state and the communities and to ensure compliance with all the requirements associated with the grants. She then listed some of the tasks that the staff would perform, such as reporting, communication, public hearings, procurement, and inspection.

Mr. Kingston asked why they are in fiscal years 22 and 23, and yet it is 2024. He also asked for clarification on the dollar amounts they are looking at and whether the amounts are for monitoring the grant or the amount of the grant itself. Ms. Haberle replied that the state combined fiscal years 22 and 23 and launched into a more rigorous compliance phase. The grant amount is in a separate contract between the community and the state. The amounts described are in the professional services contract between the community and PVPC, which funds their work to administer the grant and provide direct delivery services.

7. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Belchertown for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for Infrastructure Improvements at the Sportshaven Mobile Home Park

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

8. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Brimfield for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for the Provision of the Regional Housing Rehabilitation Program in the Towns of Brimfield, Holland, and Wales, and the oversight of the Wales Community Food Pantry

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

9. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Holland for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for the Provision of Infrastructure Improvements on Union Road

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

10. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Ludlow for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for the Provision of a Housing Rehabilitation Program and Implementation of the Robert Street Neighborhood Improvement Project

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

11. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Russel for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for the Provision of the Regional Housing Rehabilitation Program with the Towns of Huntington, Chester, Middlefield, Implementation of the Valley View Infrastructure Improvement Project, and Oversight of Four Regional Social Service Programs, Huntington Food Pantry, Hilltown Social Service Project, Southern Hilltown's Adult Education Center, and Southern Hilltown's Domestic Violence Prevention Project

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

12. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Southwick for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for the Provision of Phase Two Infrastructure Improvements on Bungalow Street and Oversight of Our Community Food Pantry

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

13. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Spencer for the PVPC to Administer Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Funding for the Provision of Phase Two Infrastructure Improvements on Valley and Mill Streets

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE EIGHT CONTRACTS PRESENTED AS AGENDA ITEMS 6 THROUGH 13. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

14. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Town of Russell for PVPC to Conduct the Southern Hilltowns Domestic Violence Prevention Program in the Towns of Russell, Chester, Huntington, and Middlefield Awarded the Town of Russell Through a Community Development Block Grant

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY JAMES WHALEN, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT NOT TO EXCEED \$57,000, WITH THE TOWN OF RUSSELL TO CONDUCT THE SOUTHERN HILLTOWNS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM IN THE TOWNS OF RUSSELL, CHESTER, HUNTINGTON, AND MIDDLEFIELD. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

Ms. Haberle indicated that the program is funded by a FY22-FY23 CDBG grant, which refreshes the service that has been in place in previous years.

15. Authorization for the Executive Director to Approve a Contract Amount for Year Two (FY 2025) of a Three-Year Contract with the Department of Environmental Protection for Housing and to support the Regional Municipal Assistance Coordinator (MAC) for all of Western Massachusetts

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO APPROVE A CONTRACT AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$119,617.40 FOR YEAR TWO (FY2025) OF A THREE-YEAR CONTRACT WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION FOR HOUSING AND SUPPORTING THE REGIONAL MUNICIPAL ASSISTANCE COORDINATOR (MAC) FOR WESTERN MASSACHUSETTS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

Eric Weiss noted that the Municipal Assistance Coordinator, Susan Waite, works with towns in the four western counties of Massachusetts to help them improve their solid waste and recycling programs. She also assists PVPC with some projects, such as the one in Holyoke. The Springfield materials recycling facility (MRF), which many towns in the region use, is going back out to bid next year, which might affect the markets and the costs for the towns. Ms. Waite is expected to help the towns with this transition.

16. Contracts Signed Under \$25,000

Ms. Robinson reported on the two contracts under \$25,000 that the PVPC signed in May 2024 for a total of \$14,660. The contracts are related to the Land Use and Environment Department and involve the Town of Southwick and the UMass Clean Energy Extension. One contract was about the green communities designation for Southwick, which is a state program that provides grants and technical assistance for energy efficiency and renewable energy projects. The other contract was a subcontract with the UMass Clean Energy Extension to conduct greenhouse gas emissions inventories for the towns of Williamsburg and Granby, which are required for the municipal vulnerability preparedness program.

Joanna Brown asked about what the greenhouse gas emissions inventories entail and how they are done. She wondered if this is something that is being done throughout the 43 towns in the region. Ms. Robinson admitted that they do not have the exact definition for the greenhouse gas emissions inventories and agreed to contact Senior Land Use and Environment Planner Mimi Kaplan and Ms. Robinson will update the Committee with this information by email.

17. Human Resources Items

Ms. Robinson announced that Pro Munsaka joined the PVPC this month as the new GIS Coordinator. Mr. Munsaka has previous GIS experience at the county level in Delaware. She mentioned that two team members are taking the training and certification to fly the drone, one in the GIS graphics section and one in Transportation Department. She also reported that the Organization is interviewing for up to two planners in the Community Development

Department due to the increased workload from approved projects. Finally, she informed the Committee that Molly Jackson-Watts, who managed the PVPC's Regional Information and Policy Center and who has been a valuable contributor to this agency, is moving on to the City of Northampton's health department.

18. Executive Director's Highlights and Updates

Ms. Robinson reported on the efforts of the regional planning agencies (RPAs) in Massachusetts to support a bill regarding retirement for RPA employees. The bill, sponsored by State Representative James Arciero, was attached to the economic development bond bill and approved by the House Ways and Means Committee, but the House floor did not consider it. The RPAs hired a lobbyist in 2020 to help them draft and advocate for the bill, which would reverse the decision of the Treasurer in 2016 to make the RPAs responsible for the employer portion of retirement. She expressed disappointment that the bill did not go to the floor and uncertainty about the next steps. She also acknowledged that the bill has made a lot of progress and hopes that it will pass in the next legislative session.

Mr. Gunn discussed the proposed accessory dwelling unit (ADU) portion of the Governor's housing bill, which would allow 900-square-foot ADUs by right and limit the authority of local planning and zoning boards.

Ms. Robinson explained that the Pioneer Valley Regional Ventures Center (PVRVC) is the grantee of the Bruhn grant from the National Park Service and must approve the projects that the grant will fund. The National Park Service wants the projects to be announced by the end of summer 2024.

Mr. Gunn informed the group that there will be a meeting planned for late July 2024 for the PVRVC.

19. Committee Member Comments, Suggestions, and Future Agenda Items

Mr. Cousineau noted that Blanford has a new TA from the City of Springfield.

In reference to Mr. Gunn's mention of the ADU portion of the Governor's housing bill, Jack Jemsek reported that the bill allows ADUs by right in all residential zones, and some members expressed their concerns about how it will affect the local zoning and infrastructure.

Ms. Brown shared that South Hadley would have to buy 14,000 totes and double the trash fees to deal with the vendor's requirement. Mr. Kingston added that Longmeadow received a grant to get new totes. Amherst passed an ADU bylaw in 2021, and Holland had a lawsuit against ADU that was dismissed for lack of standing.

20. Action Items

- Ms. Robinson will contact PVPC Senior Planner Mimi Kaplan to obtain the exact definition for the greenhouse gas emissions inventories and will update Executive Committee Members by email.
- Executive Committee members will meet at the end of July 2024 with the other PVRVC Board Members to review Bruhn grant proposals as presented by Historic Preservation Planner Shannon Walsh.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Gunn called for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY JOANNA BROWN TO ADJOURN TODAY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 6:18 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Douglas Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other items Distributed at the June 27, 2024 Meeting

1. Executive Committee June 27, 2024 Meeting Agenda
2. June 27, 2024 Possible Motions
3. Minutes of the May 23, 2024 Executive Committee Meeting
4. Minutes of the May 9, 2024 Operations Subcommittee Meeting
5. May 2024 Payment History
6. May 2024 Financial Summary
7. May 2024 Contracts Under \$25,000