



MINUTES

Thursday – February 19, 2015

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Byers called the meeting to order at 7:00pm.
- 2. Roll Call** – Secretary Ramsdell called the roll and declared a quorum present. The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

Commissioners

Amesbury	Robert Lavoie
Haverhill	April Derboghosian
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newbury	John Weis
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell
North Andover	Richard Byers, Chairman
Rowley	Joe Perry
Salisbury	Jerry Klima

Staff

Dennis DiZoglio, Executive Director
Anthony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager
Mike Parquette, Comprehensive Planning Program Manager
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager
Todd Fontanella, Sr. Transportation Planner
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator/Executive Assistant

3. Adoption of January Meeting Minutes

Secretary Ramsdell reviewed the January minutes and declared them in order and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

Vote: Commissioner Hagerty made a motion to accept the December minutes and second by Commissioner Weis. The January minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Warrant for January

In Treasurer Robert Snow's absence, MVPC's Finance Administrator Jenifer Dunlap reported that the January warrant was reviewed favorably and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

Vote: Commissioner Lavoie made a motion to approve the January warrant and second by Commissioner Perry. The January warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

Chairman Richard Byers reported on the following activities since the last meeting.

- I had an opportunity to attend our annual legislative breakfast held on January 26th. We had a good turnout; seven legislators either attended or were represented. Those in attendance were: Senator Ives, L'Italien and Tarr (an aid) and Representatives Kelcourse, Mirra, Moran and DiZoglio. We specifically talked about how MVPC used DLTA funds to provide technical assistance to our communities on energy, housing, economic development, municipal management and stormwater regulation issues. We also shared with them the regional transportation priorities being considered by

the MPO and the update of the Priority Growth Strategy which will influence the award of State MassWorks grants in the region. I think it was a good opportunity to engage in a meaningful discussion with our legislative delegation.

- As I mentioned at previous Commission meetings MVPC will be conducting its Citizen Planner Training Program this year. We have included the notice and the course outline in your packets as a reminder. Please let your communities know of this useful training and encourage them to participate.

6. Executive Director's Report

Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio reported on the following activities since the last meeting.

Meetings with Community Leaders

- On January 16th I attended the annual Mayors and Managers breakfast sponsored by the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce.
- On January 20th I attended the WIB planning Committee meeting and on February 13th I attended the quarterly WIB meeting.
- On January 26th we held our annual meeting with the legislators who represent the region. We reviewed our use of DLTA funding, regional transportation priorities, the Stormwater Collaborative funded by the 2014 CIC grant, the Priority Growth Strategy update and the status of the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- On January 30th I attended the Haverhill Gateway Cities presentation to MassDevelopment regarding the potential of fellowship designation. Haverhill was selected one of the top 10 gateway cities after the recent transformative Initiative Competition. Subsequent to this meeting Haverhill was awarded a fellow to help advance the Merrimack Street revitalization efforts. MVPC has offered to be a partner in this effort with the thought of sharing successes among the region's communities.
- On February 4th I attended the MPO meeting and represented MVPC.
- On February 5th I attended Governor Baker's press conference in Lawrence announcing additional Chapter 90 funding for communities and the use of these funds to help advance the Park and Lawrence Street intersection project recently programmed for funding by the MPO.
- On February 6th I attended the annual meeting of MVEDC where Congresswoman Tsongas and Congressman Moulton were guest speakers.

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMCC)

- Due to the lack of pending agenda items the February DPW meeting was not held. We anticipate that there will be a March DPW meeting which will continue to focus on the new EPA stormwater draft regulations and our regional stormwater collaborative effort. The stormwater training program outline and timetable have been distributed and registration is underway.
- On February 25th the Mayors and Managers will meet. Secretary Jay Ash from EOHED will be the guest speaker and the planners and community development officials in the region will be invited to attend as well.
- ACE the selected Solar developer to sell net metering credits to our communities is on the wait list for the SREC II solar managed growth category of projects. To meet the communities' needs we have solicited offers from other solar developers. Borrego has made an offer and we are soliciting the interest level from participating communities.
- Electric aggregation is moving forward with Newburyport, Haverhill and Methuen. No additional progress to report.
- To date the regional renewable energy manager, Meister Consulting Group (MCG) has met with: Newburyport, Newbury, North Andover, Boxford, Andover and Amesbury to review potential sites. Boxford has selected Borrego to develop their landfill project. No additional progress to report.

Massachusetts State Employees' Retirement System

- MVPC, along with 6 other RPAs received a letter from the Retirement systems stating that after 42 years of being members of the State retirement system MVPC is now required to contribute to the system. A meeting was held with the State retirement Board and MARPA. Corrective legislation has been drafted and I met with Representative Dempsey seeking his help. Representative Dempsey

office is recommending that we engage the administration in this discussion. Efforts are underway to set up a meeting to discuss.

Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy

- As you know we have completed the draft update of the Priority Growth Strategy and held a public meeting at our last meeting. As per our enabling legislation voting of any regional plan "shall take place at a subsequent meeting from that at which it is proposed". We recommend your adoption of the Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy this evening.

7. Priority Growth Strategy

MVPC's Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio reported that since the Public Hearing of the Priority Growth Strategy on February 19th several comments have been received. Those comments have been incorporated into the Priority Growth Strategy. Mr. DiZoglio requested authorization that the Commission adopt the Priority Growth Strategy.

Vote: Commissioner Klima made a motion to approve the Priority Growth Strategy and second by Commissioner Weis. The Priority Growth Strategy was unanimously approved.

8. Contracts

- a. A contract with the Town of Rowley for \$2,800 to update parcel mapping and MIMAP operations. And a contract with the Rowley Municipal Light Plant for \$5,500 for a GIS and a mobile application development project.

Vote: Commissioner Weis made a motion authorize the above mentioned contract and second by Commissioner Lavoie. The contract was unanimously approved.

- b. contract with the Town of Rowley for \$5,500 (GIS and mobile application development project with the Rowley Municipal Lighting plant) A

Vote: Commissioner Weis made a motion authorize the above mentioned contract and second by Commissioner Klima. The contract was unanimously approved.

9. Finance Committee Report

MVPC's Executive Director Dennis DiZoglio, reported on the meeting of the Finance Committee and FY'15 and FY'16 budgets.

- Finance Committee met Tuesday, February 17th.
- Members in attendance: Joe Perry and John Weis

Audit update – MVED was required to have a single audit completed for FY14. There were no findings. MVED realized a small increase to the fund balance of \$614 from rental activity and broke even on the RLF program activities.

The MVPC FY14 audit has been completed. There were no findings. In FY14, \$54,832 was contributed from the fund balance toward match requirements and helped to leverage \$2.38 million in revenue. The Executive Director discussed Page 5. of the Audit, the Management and Discussion letter, and the challenges facing MVPC. He detailed steps in the letter designed to minimize the trend of using the fund balance: a.) by carefully examining LTA requests and paying for LTA requests with contract funds where appropriate, b.) reducing local and administrative expenses where possible (i.e. annual report printing), and c.) increasing assessment revenue to the maximum allowed by law. The Executive Director also explained the ongoing MA Retirement employer contribution issue for RPA's and possible future overhead rate consequences of a negative outcome for this issue.

John Weis noted that he would not want to see the LTA requests denied if at all possible. DiZoglio explained that he has never turned away a request before and that this new LTA directive is designed so that we take a closer look at all requests coming in and find creative ways to fulfill the request while

minimizing use of assessments. We hope to avoid saying no to LTA requests, but it is one of the few ways we can control the use of the fund balance. The challenges facing us now and in the years ahead may make saying no to some LTA requests in the future unavoidable

- **Revised FY15 Budget #2 Draft** – A revised draft budget was reviewed for FY15 that included new projects realized and delayed/canceled projects since budget #1 was prepared in 2/14. DiZoglio explained Budget #2 consists of \$3.2million in revenue and is higher by Budget #1 by (\$999K) due in large part to additional revenue from EPA RLF (\$69K of \$375K in new funds), renewal of the DHCD DLTA grant (\$72K of \$192K), new MADOT Safety contract (\$25K of \$41K), new National Wildlife Federation Sandy Funds (\$500 of \$1 million+), new MA Fish and Game (\$59K), New US Fish and Wild funds (\$277K) (of which some is Sandy related), and Community Innovation Challenge (CIC) Stormwater grant (\$32K) and other smaller increases in projects. The MADOT 3C contract (-\$26K) and the CIC CMMS contract (-\$20K) revenue for FY15 decreased due to more or less being spent in another fiscal year. The Newburyport Low St. Study project revenue was never realized because the project was completed under the MADOT 3C grant (-\$4.5K).

Increase in expenses related to the above increase in revenue was mainly to Consultants (\$482K) and Direct Labor (\$100K), and in-kind expense (\$280K). There were no increases in indirect expenses.

DiZoglio also noted that Budget #2 uses almost 100% of assessment revenue for contract matching, making the possibility of using the fund balance to some degree likely.

Vote: Commissioner Perry made a motion to approve the Revised Budget FY2015 Budget #2 Draft and second by Commissioner Hagerty. The Revised Budget FY15 Budget #2 was unanimously approved.

Budget #1 FY2016 –DiZoglio noted that Budget #1 for FY2016 was in the amount of \$2.75 million. A few indirect expense increases were made in areas such as salaries, fringe benefits, and insurance related expenses. A very strong start, but we would still be looking for additional revenue sources over the next 18 months.

The Executive Director explained that there were several potential grants in the offing, such as renewal of the DHCD DLTA grant (\$190-200K) and EPA Brownfields Hazardous & Petroleum Assessment Grants (\$400K), additional MADOT Safety funds, and EDA MVMB Website update contract (\$70K).

DiZoglio also noted that Budget #1 uses almost 85% of assessment revenue for contract matching. Landing additional contracts would increase this obligation.

Vote: Commissioner Weis made a motion to approve Budget #1 for FY2016 and second by Commissioner Perry. The Budget #1 FY2016 was unanimously approved.

FY2016 Assessments

The various FY16 Assessment rate options were discussed. Seeking the maximum percentage increase of 2.49% was favored by the finance committee as a way to minimize using the fund balance and because we have been contributing matching funds from the fund balance for the last 6 years (three of those years being years without increases to the assessment rate).

Vote: Commissioner Lavoie made a motion to approve FY2016 Assessments and second by Commissioner Weis. The FY2016 Assessments was unanimously approved.

IRS Mileage Rate

The Finance Committee requested the Commission's approval to increase the IRS Mileage rate to increase to 57.5 cents per mile.

Vote: Commissioner Klima made a motion to approve the IRS Mileage rate to 57.5 cents per mile and second by Commissioner Ramsdell. The FY2016 Assessments was unanimously approved.

10. Comprehensive Planning Update

MVPC's Comprehensive Planning Manager, Mike Parquette, reported the following regional activities.

PLANNING AHEAD FOR GROWTH/PRIORITY GROWTH STRATEGY - We have completed the five-year update/revisions to the *Merrimack Valley Priority Growth Strategy - The Regional Land Use Plan for the Merrimack Valley Region* in order to reflect changes (such as new development, new zoning, revised PDA's or PPA's, or completed infrastructure projects) that have taken place since the PGS was completed in 2009 and also to reflect its introduction into the statewide Planning Ahead for Growth initiative. In spite of the economic recession, this region has accomplished some great things in the last 5 years and communities have advanced new initiatives and adopted new smart growth zoning which has been reflected in the update. Also, many road and bridge projects planned 5 years ago are now completed and new projects are planned or under construction. These changes are incorporated into the new Strategy. The updated Strategy has been available for review on our website and we have solicited comments. It has been the focus of a recent Planning Directors meeting, a Public Hearing has been held to obtain comments and questions, and we have received some very insightful and helpful comments from some of our communities which will be incorporated into the final document.

DLTA PROGRAM – We continue to implement the “Planning Ahead for Growth/Planning Ahead for Housing” and “Regional Services” activities programmed with DLTA funds. We executed a new contract in October and executed a revised contract in December which recognizes a 1.5% reduction in funds. A DLTA Legislative report prepared for the Legislative Caucus held on January 26 is enclosed in your packet.

VALLEY SUPPORT TEAM – Dennis and Mike are members of the Methuen Downtown Redevelopment committee and we can offer MVPC's expertise in economic development and transportation planning to assist in their efforts. Meetings have been held on October 10, October 24, October 31, and December 2. The Committee submitted an application to MassDevelopment for the Transformative Development Initiative. Unfortunately, Methuen was not one of the 10 cities chosen, although Haverhill's application was successful and they were chosen for this new initiative and also for a "fellow". Methuen may be able to utilize one of many programs aimed for "Gateway Cities" such as: 40R District, Cultural District, Housing Development Incentive Program, 43D for Housing, Tax Increment Financing, and Compact Neighborhood District. Mike has had conversations with EOHED folks about assisting Methuen with these programs and they are excited to come and discuss the merits of each tool to the Downtown Redevelopment Committee. We also have had conversations with West Newbury and Merrimac regarding updating their Housing Production Plans which expire in 2015 and we have discussed with Haverhill completing a Housing Needs Analysis and a Housing Production Plan.

MERRIMACK VALLEY MEANS BUSINESS - We are writing a grant application to EDA to obtain funds for updating and marketing the MVMB website which has been a goal of the Mayor's/Manager's Coalition.

EDA and EPA Reports - A midpoint progress report was submitted to EDA on January 31, and a EPA brown-fields assessment and cleanup quarterly report was submitted on January 30th.

MEETINGS - Attended a workshop on 1/14/15 sponsored by the Mass. Office of Business Development. The workshop was to discuss changes in guidelines to the Economic Development Incentive Program (EDIP). Attended the Legislative Caucus on 1/26/15.

11. Environmental Program Update

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, report on the upcoming Stormwater Workshops.

Workshop 1 – Parks and Recreation Staff

Tuesday, March 10, 2015 (8 - 10:00 AM)

Northern Essex Community College – Classroom

This workshop will focus on the proper use, storage, and disposal of pesticides, herbicides, fertilizers, and organic wastes. We will review the importance of following manufacturer's instructions, and how to evaluate and adapt the lawn management strategies to protect water quality. We will review and discuss

methods for placing signage and instituting effective trash containment and removal programs at public parks.

Workshop 2: Buildings, Facilities, Vehicle and Equipment Maintenance

Friday, March 20, 2015 (8 - 11:00 AM)

Andover Public Safety Building and Public Works Maintenance Yard

This workshop is aimed at all municipal staff members that are responsible for maintaining municipally owned or operated buildings or facilities where pollutants are stored and may be exposed to stormwater runoff. This group includes staff from public works, police, fire, municipal pools, municipal parking garages, municipal golf courses, or other relevant staff. We will review responsible storage and handling of petroleum products and other potential stormwater pollutants at these sites, and present guidance for developing a spill prevention, control, and countermeasure plan (SPCC).

Workshop 3: Stormwater Management and Infrastructure Maintenance

Friday, April 10, 2015 (8 - 11:00 AM)

Northern Essex Community College – Classroom

This workshop is geared toward primarily public works staff people that are responsible for maintaining roadways, sidewalks and municipal stormwater management infrastructure. This workshop will provide guidance on recommended maintenance schedules for stormwater infrastructure such as cleaning catch basins, street sweeping, winter snow and ice maintenance, disposal of catch basin and street sweeping waste, stormwater treatment structures, drainage ditches and swales. We will provide a sample format for an operation and maintenance plan to assist in managing the maintenance of these facilities.

12. Transportation Report Update

MVPC's Transportation Program Manager, Tony Komornick, reported on the following transportation activities.

Merrimack Valley MPO

The **MVMPO** met on February 5th and agreed to release a series of **proposed amendments to the region's FFY 2015 – FFY 2018 TIP** (see attachment). The Public Review and Comment period for these amendments will begin February 28th, with Public Hearings being held at the MVPC Offices on March 18th.

Jim Terlizzi completed an analysis that showed vehicle delay could be reduced at the Park St. /Lawrence St. intersection through the installation of new, fully-actuated traffic signals. The results of his analysis will be presented to MassDOT's CMAQ Review Committee, which must approve of the use of CMAQ funding for all projects in the Commonwealth.

The next meeting of the MVMPO will take place in early April (date to be determined).

Studies, Analyses & Plans

Related to the **Regional Transportation Plan**, Tony, Betsy Goodrich and Todd Fontanella continued to develop proposed *Goals and Objectives* for use in the document and staff continued to identify a variety of *Performance Measures* that will be evaluated by MVMPO members for use in the Plan as is mandated under MAP-21.

Steve Lopez and the GIS staff prepared a **comprehensive list of all crash locations in the Valley** using MassDOT data from 2010-2012. That database is now being modified.

Tony and Betsy created a database showing the **number of fatal crashes in the MVPC region** for the 23-year period between 1990 and 2012.

Betsy and Mary Kay continued to collect/revise **Journey to Work data** for the region from the 1990 and 2000 U.S. Census and the 2006-2010 American Community Survey, which will be included in the RTP.

Transportation - Other

Tony attended the February 5th meeting of the **MVRTA Advisory Board** and reported on the status of Transportation Planning process in the region.

Staff prepared materials that were discussed at the **Legislative Breakfast** on January 26th.

Jim Terlizzi and Danny Ovalle continued to collect information on the location and condition of all sidewalks in the City as part of MVPC's contract to update **Haverhill's Asset Management Program**.

Danny continued to prepare the **2014 Community Traffic Count Reports** and to upload the traffic count data we have collected to the MassDOT website.

Tony and Betsy met with a staff person from the City of Haverhill's Engineering Department to discuss what steps should be taken in implementing the recommendations made in the **Bikeability and Walkability audits** that were held last fall.

Todd continued to review the **MVRTA's performance in meeting ADA service provision requirements**.

Tony and Betsy met with Andrew Herlihy to discuss the City of Haverhill's interest in submitting a **Mass in Motion grant application** and subsequently worked with them on the grant application.

Betsy worked with the Haverhill Police Department and MassDOT in preparing a scope of work and other materials for the next contract under the **Haverhill Safety Program**.

Betsy met with Andrea Leary of the **Merrimack Valley Transportation Management Area** to discuss expanding transit options in the River Road area in Andover.

Betsy attended the February 10th meeting of the **Haverhill Bicycle Committee** that was held at City Hall to discuss implementation of bike lanes in the City.

Tony and Betsy responded to a request from the MVRTA for the number of **Passenger Miles Traveled on the MVRTA fixed route bus system** in FFY 2014 using passenger count data collected by both MVPC and MVRTA staff.

Todd attended the **Plaistow Commuter Rail Study Advisory Committee Meeting** that was held on January 20th and provided comments to the Study consultant on their draft documents. Since that meeting, MassDOT has informed the Advisory Committee that it would not support any option that would place the layover facility in Haverhill near the state line and would not support any option that does not include a new layover facility.

Betsy and Joe Cosgrove participated in a conference call on the **use of Health data in transportation planning** that was held earlier today.

Tony and Jerrard Whitten worked on developing an approach for mapping and showing potential roadway improvements in and around the intersection of **Church Street / Bridge Street / Ferry Lane near the Rocks Village Bridge in West Newbury**.

Betsy participated in a webinar on Complete Streets that was held on January 29th.

Staff reviewed **MassDOT's Project Selection Advisory Council Interim Report** that was issued on December 31, 2014. The deadline for submission of the Final Report has been extended to the close of FY 2015 (June 30, 2015).

Cancelled Meetings

- Public Meeting on proposed project to improve Central Street in Rowley (January 26th);
- Meeting with Mayor Fiorentini and John Pettis to discuss status of transportation in City (February 9th);
- Transportation Program Managers Group (February 10th);
- Border to Boston Shared Use Trail Project Meeting (February 10th);
- Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee (February 12th);
- Meeting with MassRIDES to discuss Safe Routes to Schools (February 13th).

Upcoming Meetings

- Haverhill Traffic and Safety Committee (February 24th);
- Plaistow Commuter Rail Study Public Meeting (February 24th);
- Lawrence Healthy Active Living Working Group (February 25th);
- Newburyport Traffic and Safety Committee (February 26th);
- MVRTA Advisory Board Meeting (March 5th);
- Merrimack Valley Regional Coordinating Council Meeting (March 12th);

- TIP Amendment Public Hearings (1:00 p.m., 6:00 p.m. on March 18th);
- Public Meeting on Central Street Roadway project in Rowley (Late March);

13. Local and Regional Issues

- 14. Other** – In Commissioner O’Hanley’s absence, MVPC’s Nancy Lavallee requested information for the Town of Groveland to provide the name of a CEO (Code Enforcement Officer). MVPC’s Comprehensive Planning Manager Mike Parquette agreed to Contact Commissioner O’Hanley.

15. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn by Commissioner Ramsdell and second by Commissioner Weis. Meeting adjourned at 8:45pm.

I hereby certify that these minutes are an accurate account of the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission meeting held on February 19, 2015.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary