



MINUTES

Thursday – February 16, 2017

- 1. Call to Order** - Chairman Lavoie 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, Chairman
Andover	Lisa Schwarz
Boxford	Jim Barnes
Groveland	Robert Arakelian
Lawrence	Theresa Park
Methuen	Kevin Hagerty
Newburyport	Ed Ramsdell, Secretary
Rowley	Bob Snow, Treasurer
West Newbury	Brian Murphey
Rep at Large	Brad Buschur

Staff

Karen Conard, Executive Director
Joe Cosgrove, Environmental Program Manager
Mike Parquette, Comprehensive Planning Program Manager
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager
Jerrard Whitten, GIS Manager
Jen Dunlap, Finance Administrator
Nancy Lavalley, Office Administrator

3. Adoption of December Meeting Minutes

The minutes were reviewed and recommended for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Ramsdell and second by Commissioner Snow. The December Minutes were unanimously approved.

4. Warrants

Treasurer Bob Snow reported that the December warrant was reviewed favorably and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Hagerty. The December warrant was unanimously approved.

Treasurer Bob Snow reported that the January warrant was reviewed favorably and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

Vote: There was a motion by Commissioner Snow and second by Commissioner Hagerty. The January warrant was unanimously approved.

5. Chairman's Report

Chairman Robert Lavoie reported on the following activities since the last meeting in December.

- As is typical, the lull between December and January gave all of us some much deserved time off. After completing our most significant work of the year in searching for and approving our next Executive Director, we all deserved the break.
- I have been impressed by Karen's energy in making the rounds with all of our municipalities. She attended the Merrimack Valley Chamber of Commerce annual January breakfast when the Town Managers and Mayors of many of our member municipalities come together and give a progress report for their respective municipalities. Certainly a lot going on in the Merrimack Valley!
- Karen and I also ran into each other in late January at the Massachusetts Municipal Association (MMA) Annual Meeting, and again she was pressing the flesh with all of the various municipal delegations; very impressive.
- MVPC Senior management and the Commission's Finance Committee are to be commended for their hard work in putting together next year's budget; we will be taking that up later in the night's meeting
- I look forward to working with everyone the remaining months in 2017. At the present time, my political plans basically involve finishing my time on the Amesbury City Council through December 31, 2017; I do not intend to be a candidate for reelection to the City Council this year. As my wife constantly reminds me, 12 years is certainly enough of a contribution to the civic life in Amesbury. And, after approximately 15 years on the Commission, it's probably time for new blood from Amesbury, so I just wanted to float that information out to all of the Commissioners.

6. Executive Director

Meetings with Community Leaders

- Met with town officials from Amesbury, Salisbury, Merrimac, Andover, Groveland and Newbury to date - actively seeking meetings with Boxford, Georgetown, West Newbury and Rowley
- Met with Congresswoman Niki Tsongas's District Director June Black
- Met with Ozzy Properties to discuss their needs at their Lawrence, Andover and North Andover locations
- Met with Lawrence Partnership Executive Director Derek Mitchell
- Met with Greater Haverhill Chamber of Commerce President/CEO Beverly Donovan
- Met with officials from MassDevelopment, who are allowing our staff to use their Lawrence office for "touch down" space
- Met with Smart Growth Alliance Executive Director Andre Leroux and Great Neighborhoods Director Anabelle Rondon
- Met with NMCOG Executive Director Beverly Woods
- Attended MVCC Annual Mayor/Managers Breakfast - January 13th
- Attended TDI Haverhill Core Partnership Meeting - January 17th
- Attended MMA Annual Conference - January 20th
- Attended MPO meeting - January 26th
- Attended MARPA monthly meeting - January 27th
- Attended CEDS Meeting - January 30th at NECC
- TRIED to attend NARC Conference in Washington DC - February 12th and 13th!
- Attended the Newburyport State of the City address - February 16th
- Attended a 40R presentation with the City of Methuen - February 16th
- Planning for a March 1st quarterly Regional Planners meeting, with guest speaker Phil DeMartino from DHCD to discuss the regional Housing Production Plan that we are undertaking on behalf of the region with a Community Compact Efficiency and Regionalization grant, with Jerrard providing MIMAP 2.0 and Pictometry updates and Tony providing an update on the TIP process
- Mention Citizens Training Program Collaborative session on Saturday, March 18th at Holy Cross in Worcester (please refer to handout)

Merrimack Valley Mayors & Managers Coalition (MVMMC)

- We held monthly DPW Directors meetings in January and February and continued to discuss the MS4 permit. At the January meeting, the group heard from Kathryn Glenn and Christine Kennedy of the MA Coastal Zone Management office. At the February meeting, we heard from the New England Environmental Finance Center regarding finance options to undertake stormwater improvements, and enjoyed a demonstration of the Newbury Stormwater Mobile App from Jerrard Whitten.
- The Merrimack Valley Mayors and Managers Coalition meeting was held on January 12th at North Andover Town Hall. The agenda for the meeting focused on the progress on the regional branding effort, including final selection of logo and tagline and discussion of next steps.

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. MARPA has appointed the Executive Director of CMRPC to represent them on the committee required in the 2016 budget to resolve this issue. Still waiting for the meeting to be called by ANF. Still no change.

7. Contracts

- Newburyport – Tree Inventory Mobile Application - \$2,000
- Salisbury – Mobile Drainage Application - \$2,000
(Assist DPW in the management of drainage infrastructure
No matching funds are required).

Vote: Commissioner Snow made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contracts as presented. Commissioner Murphey seconded the motion. The contract was unanimously approved.

- Division of Local Services - \$50,000
- Mass Housing - \$50,000

Vote: Commissioner Snow made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contracts as presented. Commissioner Hagerty seconded the motion. The contract was unanimously approved.

- Grant Agreement Execution by MVPC with the MA Executive of Energy and Environmental Affairs, Office of Technical Assistance: \$10,000 award through the Massachusetts RPA Chemical Safety Grant. Funding will be used by MVPC to work with OTA to conduct chemical safety and climate change resiliency training for local authorities and organize workshops for facilities that pose potential risks.
- Grant agreement from MA Division of Marine Fisheries for Soft Shell Green Crab Research and Marketing Project - \$20,000.

Vote: Commissioner Hagerty made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned contracts as presented. Commissioner Snow seconded the motion. The contract was unanimously approved.

8. Finance Committee

- Finance Committee met Wednesday, February 10th.
- Members in attendance: Joe Perry and Bob Snow
- **Audit update** – was given by the Finance Administrator. Audits have both been completed- **NO FINDINGS!**
 - **MVPC audit stats:** FY16 had \$2.7 million in revenue. \$10,968 was added to the fund balance due to careful use of resources, creative thinking when it comes to satisfying our LTA obligations, reduction in expenses like printing, maximizing the assessment rate increase, and lower EPA match. Fund balance remains a healthy \$314K. Audit contains new audit requirements regarding GASB 68 Pensions, adding additional pages to the audit.

- **Budgets** – A review of revised FY16 Budget #2 and FY17 budget #1 was given by the Finance Administrator.

Revised FY16 Budget #2 Draft – A revised draft budget was reviewed for FY16 that included new projects realized and delayed/canceled projects since budget #1 was prepared in 2/15.

- **Budget #2 – 3.37 million - is higher than budget #1 by roughly \$631K** –

Increase in Revenue:

- EPA Assessment - **\$14K**
- DHCD DLTA (addition of 6 mos.-2016 funds - **\$128K**)
- MADOT Safety Contract-extension of contract with add'l funds- **\$31K**
- Nat. Wildlife Federation (Sandy Funds) - **\$576K**
- CIC CMMS Maintenance - **\$22K**
- *NEW-Newbury Master Plan - **\$13K**
- *NEW-Boxford Stormwater - **\$15K**
- *NEW-Stormwater Coalition Assessment - **\$5K**
- *NEW-MAHB Health Impact assessment - **\$8.8K**
- *NEW-MAHB Methuen Walkability assessment - **\$8K**
- EDA RLF. - **\$5K**
- MVMMC. - **\$6K**
- Misc GIS - **\$50K**

Decrease in Revenue:

- MADOT 3C.-**\$12K** (new maximum 1 year budget allowed by MADOT)
- CZM - **\$2K** – lower greenscapes revenue
- US Fish and Wild – **132K (cash flow only, to spend in FY17 instead)**
- MEMA – **2K (cash flow only, to spent in FY15 instead)**

Increase in expenses related to the above increase in revenue was mainly to direct salary (\$210K), Consultants (326K\$), and in-kind exp. (\$55K).

Indirect Expenses – minimal change.

It was also noted that Budget #2 uses almost 100% of assessment revenue for matches.

The Finance Committee recommends adoption of the FY16 Budget #2 to the Commission.

Vote: Commissioner Snow made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned FY'16 Budget #2 Draft as presented. Commissioner Schwarz seconded the motion. The Budget was unanimously approved.

- **Budget #1 FY2017** to the amount of \$3.18 million was reviewed. It was noted that this is a very strong start.
 - **Additional Potential Revenue sources**
 - EPA Assessment -Hazardous& Petroleum - \$400K
 - EPA RLF – \$1 million
 - EDA MVMB Website Update funding - \$70K
 - DHCD – DLTA for 2017 - \$190-200K
 - **Indirect Expenses** – Increases were made a few expense categories such as Salaries, fringe benefits, insurance related expenses, and outside services for recruitment activities in filling Dennis' position.
 - It was also noted that Budget #1 uses almost 70% of assessment revenue for matches. Landing additional contracts would increase this obligation.

The Finance Committee recommends adoption of the FY17 Budget #1 to the Commission.

Vote: Commissioner Snow made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned FY'17 Budget #1 Draft as presented. Commissioner Hagerty seconded the motion. The Budget was unanimously approved.

- **FY17 Assessments – the Finance Committee recommends to the Commission adoption of a \$0.36481 per capita assessment rate for FY18, a 2.49% increase in the assessment rate, in an attempt to minimize the trend of contributing to the fund balance to meet match requirements.**

Vote: Commissioner Park made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned FY'17 Assessments as presented. Commissioner Ramsdell seconded the motion. The Assessments were unanimously approved.

- **IRS Mileage Change – the Finance Committee recommends to the Commission adoption of a decrease in the 2017 IRS Mileage to the new rate of 53.5 cents per mile down from 54 cents per mile.**

Vote: Commissioner Park made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned FY'17 Assessments as presented. Commissioner Ramsdell seconded the motion. The Assessments were unanimously approved.

9. Comprehensive Planning Update

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

COMMUNITY COMPACT CABINET: The "Community Compact Cabinet" is designed to elevate the Administration's partnerships with cities and towns, and allows the Governor's Office to work more closely with municipal leaders. The Cabinet champions municipal interests across all executive secretariats and agencies, and develops in consultation with cities and towns, mutual standards and best practices for both the state and municipalities. The creation of Community Compacts creates clear standards, expectations and accountability for both partners.

In our region, 12 municipalities have signed "community compacts". Two communities, Lawrence and Newburyport have community compact reports completed for "best practices" in the field of financial forecasting. MVPC is completing a CCC project in Salisbury on Comprehensive Water Resources Management; we anticipate working with Georgetown on a Complete Streets bylaw; and we have been working with North Andover and the MVMMC on job creation and retention (marketing campaign). In addition, we will be working soon with Groveland on development of mobile technology for their water department, which can serve as a model for other communities.

Also, the administration announced the new "Efficiency and Regionalization Grant Program." The purpose of this program is to provide financial support for governmental entities interested in implementing regionalization and other efficiency initiatives that allow for long-term sustainability. MVPC submitted a grant application in November to complete a Merrimack Valley Regional Housing Production Plan. We were successful and will receive \$100,000 to complete the project.

MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL MARKETING PROJECT: MVPC has completed phase one of the MVMMC marketing project. Numerous meetings were held with local businesses and individual communities as well as a "roundtable" meetings in order to determine the effectiveness of the existing MVMB "brand", and to better understand what makes the valley attractive to businesses, residents, and visitors. Logos and taglines were developed and these were presented to the MVMMC on December 1st to solicit their opinion and advice as they will be key players in owning and selling the marketing slogan and logo. The tagline and logo was also presented to the "roundtable" committee on December 12th. All parties agreed on a tagline and logo. The next step is to hire a firm to develop a marketing campaign and launch the new tagline and logo.

DLTA: A final 2016 DLTA Report was submitted to DHCD and the Division of Local Services on January 12, 2017. The report is enclosed for your review. The last time we met in December, DLTA funds were still in question. I am happy to report that DLTA will be funded for 2017, and the Governor's proposed budget includes DLTA for 2018.

MERRIMACK VALLEY REGIONAL HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN: Using funds from the CCC program, MassHousing, and DLTA, MVPC will complete a Regional HPP. The HPP will be comprised of a: comprehensive housing needs assessment; affordable housing goals; and implementation strategies. This is a "first of a kind" regional HPP, which has the potential to be used as a model for other RPA's.

MEETINGS:

- December 7th – Meet with Mt. Washington Neighborhood Executive Dir.
- December 12th – Marketing Roundtable meeting
- December 13th – Seth Moulton & Federal Agencies in Peabody
- January 11th – Met with Phil DeMartino re: Regional HPP
- January 12th - Mayors/Managers meeting to discuss marketing
- January 17th – Haverhill TDI meeting with core partners
- January 23 – Lane Glenn re: CEDS process for 2017
- January 30th – MVMB next steps
- January 31st – CEDS meeting at NECC
- January 31st – Haverhill TDI, Better Block Program
- February 16th – Methuen 40R presentation

10. Environmental Program Update

MVPC's Environmental Program Manager, Joe Cosgrove, reported on activities since the last meeting in December.

Region Multi-Hazard Mitigation Planning:

- Annual Progress Meeting of Regional Planning Team rescheduled to March 9th at MVPC.
- Federal Hazard Mitigation grant awards include \$381,990 to Town of Boxford for replacement of Middletown Road culvert (75% of project cost)
- MVPC last month was awarded a \$10,000 grant from Executive Office of Environmental Affairs Office of Technical Assistance to organize a training program for first responders, local businesses and communities to incorporate chemical safety into climate change resiliency planning and emergency preparedness.

Brownfields Program:

- Brownfields Assessment grant application for \$300,000 submitted to EPA in December. Program is highly competitive. Award announcements are expected late spring 2017 with start up if selected for funding in Fall 2017.
- Meetings held on potential RLF cases in Merrimac (Coastal Metals); Newburyport (Rail Trail Phase 2); Haverhill (Stevens Mill); Lawrence (Tombarello's, La Fruteria); and Methuen (potential downtown 40R properties).

Green Communities:

- Working with West Newbury Energy Advisory Committee on energy reduction plan and submitting proposal for Green Communities competitive grant round by March 3rd deadline. Annual Green Communities performance report submitted to DOER in December.
- DOER in early February announced 30 additional cities/towns in state designated Green Communities including North Andover and Salisbury. With these latest designations, six communities in the MVPC are now Green communities (In addition to Salisbury and North Andover, they are Amesbury, Andover, Newburyport and West Newbury).

Stormwater Collaborative:

- MV DPW Stormwater Collaborative partnering with Salem State University GIS Dept on project developing mobile app inventory of system infrastructure for Operations & Maintenance as well as system catchment area prioritization.
- Cooperative has also met with New England Center for Environmental Finance and Mass. Coastal Zone Management staff on Coastal Pollution Remediation Grant funding.
- Staff will also be partnering with MassBay and Merrimack River Watershed Council in preparing 604B Water Quality Management Planning application focused on water quality monitoring. Application is due to MassDEP March 24th.

Great Marsh Management:

- Data Collection
 - Data collected for pre-winter conditions at all 22 sites in the Great Marsh. Data will be compared with measurements to be collected in Spring 2017 to determine rates of Marsh Edge erosion. Marsh core sediments collected last summer are being analyzed for organic versus inorganic materials by Boston University
- Invasive Species Management
 - Great Marsh Pepperweed monitoring & control: 2016 season was wrapped up and planning/scheduling for 2017 underway.
 - Green Crab Population monitoring: Several green crab marketing events were held including one with Reds Seafood in the Boston Public Market in Dec. Over 50 people attended the event and were treated to green crab bisque, broth, pate and meat as well as a slide show on the culinary attributes of green crab. A working group has been established with partners from Maine, Canada and Italy as well as the local North Shore contingent.
- Adapt to/mitigate impacts of climate change [CC]:
 - Eelgrass restoration—Eelgrass habitat biodiversity data collection continued in Essex Bay.
 - Hydro geologic modeling—The Hydrodynamic Modeling Oversight Committee conducted two meetings to provide input into salinity and sediment transport model developed by Woods Hole Group.
- Education and outreach [E&O]:
 - Planning group working with region's elected representatives and local officials on preservation and reuse of the Great Marsh iconic "Pink House"

11. Transportation Report Update

Mr. Komornick briefly touched upon some of the following tasks and activities that have been completed or undertaken by transportation staff since the last Commission meeting in December.

Merrimack Valley MPO (MVMPO)

The Merrimack Valley MPO met on January 26th. Key actions taken included:

- Release of **three proposed amendments** to the MPO's FFYs 2017-2021 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) (see handout);
- Release of proposed changes to the MPOs Public Participation Plan that would **reduce the Public Review and Comment period from 30 days to 21 days** for the draft TIP, Regional Transportation Plan, Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) as well as any amendments to these documents (see handout);
- Establishment of a **monthly MPO meeting date/time for the MVMPO** (4th Wednesday of the month @ 12:00 Noon).

Earlier this month, MassDOT released financial information that will be used by MPOs around the state in developing their Draft FFYs 2018-2022 TIPs and Draft FFY 2018 UPWPs. (handouts)

MVPC will be accepting requests for projects to be included in the TIP or UPWP studies/analyses through the first week of March.

The next meeting of the Merrimack Valley MPO will be held on February 22nd.

Tony participated in **USDOT's Planning Certification Review for the Northern Middlesex MPO**, which was held in December.

Prepared list of transportation projects that received federal funding obligations in FFY 2016.

Studies

Mr. Terlizzi led staff in conducting the Road Safety Audit (RSA) for the **River Street/Lowell Avenue Traffic Study in Haverhill** on December 20th and in preparing draft and final versions of the RSA report.

Tony and Jim participated in **Road Safety Audit for Dascomb Road/I-93 Interchange area** that was held on December 14th

Other

Ms. Goodrich continues to work with the Mayor and Haverhill DPW in developing and implementing a **Complete Streets Policy**.

Mr. Komornick and Mr. Terlizzi met with MassDOT staff and the selected designer for the **Route 114 Corridor Improvement Project** to discuss its scope and implementation.

Attended Public Meeting on **Lawrence's Manchester & Lawrence Branch Rail Trail** proposal.

Supported MVRTA's successful efforts to secure MassDOT approval of use of CMAQ funds to **purchase three diesel/electric hybrid buses**.

Completed process of identifying potential locations for **fixed bus route markers**. These would not be bus stops per se, but they would serve to mark the route so that people would have more information about where to catch the bus.

Held **Regional Coordinating Council meeting** on February 15th to view the draft fixed route bus training video for seniors and disabled passengers. We will soon make revisions to the video and then the MVRTA will begin disseminating it.

Betsy attended the **Methuen Arlington Neighborhood monthly meeting** yesterday to inform them about the TIP amendments and upcoming UPWP and TIP development processes. We received some feedback about potential roadway (Brown Street sidewalks) and bridge (Broadway over Spicket River) projects.

Finalized the newest version of the **MVRTA system map**, which includes more information about how to ride the bus in both English and Spanish.

Continued to participate in the City of Lawrence's efforts to improve livability in the city through the **Mayor's Health Task Force and the Mass in Motion program**.

Met with Angie Estevez to discuss transportation concerns for the Mount Washington neighborhood in Haverhill. Then on January 5th, MVPC hosted a meeting for the Mount Washington Alliance to hear a presentation by QRyde, a company that provides transportation mobility software. The **Mt. Washington Alliance** is investigating different ways to address job access issues.

We are collecting data about employee numbers at large employers and industrial parks. This information will include shift information. The data will feed into our efforts to address **job access challenges in the region** and will culminate in a forum later this year.

Staff is providing assistance to the City of Lawrence in their effort to modify existing Census Bureau geography that would place the entire **Lawrence Industrial Park** in one Census Tract.

Staff continued to collect **National Transit Database ridership counts** for the MVRTA's fixed route bus system.

Technical Assistance

MVPC is analyzing vehicle turning movement and Automatic Traffic Recorder (ATR) counts in and around the **Loring Street/Salem Street intersection in Lawrence**. The City requested that MVPC analyze this intersection as part of their effort to change the signal from flashing to multiphase operation.

Tony and Betsy met with Methuen DPW Director Steve Gagnon and a local resident on January 27th to review the options for creating a **crosswalk on Pleasant St. near its intersection with Stillwater Rd.**

Tony met with Newbury Town Administrator Tracy Blais and Town Planner Martha Taylor to discuss MVPC conducting a **parking study in the Byfield Village area.**

Upcoming Meetings

- MassDOT ‘Tip Readiness Day’: February 17th – 9:00 a.m. @ Transportation Building (Office of Transportation Planning);
- Merrimack Valley MPO Meeting: February 22nd – 12 Noon @ MVPC Offices.

12. Local and Regional Issues - None

13. Other – None

14. Adjourn

There was a motion and a second to adjourn. 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 16, 2017.

Ed Ramsdell, Secretary