

## **MERRIMACK VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION**

Monthly Meeting of February 18, 2021

Time: *11:00 AM*

To join this meeting contact Nancy Lavallee – [nlavallee@mvpc.org](mailto:nlavallee@mvpc.org)

### **AGENDA**

1. Call to Order
2. Roll Call
3. Adoption of January Meeting Minutes
4. Warrant for January
5. Chairman's Comments
6. Director's Report
7. Contracts
8. Finance Committee Report
  - a. FY20 Audit Status
  - b. Adoption of Updated FY'21 Budget #2
  - c. Adoption of FY'22 Local Assessment Rate
  - d. Adoption of FY'22 Budget #1
  - e. New IRS Mileage Reimbursement Rate – 56 cents/mi.
9. Personnel Committee
10. Local and Regional Issues
11. Other
12. Adjourn

## MINUTES

**Thursday – February 18, 2021**

### **Virtual Commission Meeting (GoToMeeting)**

Recorded from MVPC, 160 Main Street, Haverhill, MA

Consistent with the Governor's orders suspending certain provisions of the Open Meeting Law and banning gatherings of more than 10 people, this meeting will be conducted by remote participation to the greatest extent possible. The public may not physically attend this meeting, but every effort will be made to allow the public to view and listen to the meeting in real-time. Persons who wish to do so are invited to watch the meeting on the MVPC web site or join the meeting from your computer, tablet, or smartphone by using the link: <https://global.gotomeeting.com/join/748821525> or you can also dial in using your phone by calling +1 (571) 317-3112 and using access code 748-821-525. If live transmission proves infeasible, an audio or video recording, transcript, or other comprehensive records of the meeting will be made available on the MVPC website as soon as possible.

1. **Call to Order** – Chairman Snow called the meeting to order at 11:00 am
2. **Roll Call** – Secretary Laplante called the roll and declared a quorum of 11 commissioners present at the time of roll call with 1 commissioner arriving late due to technical difficulties for a total of 12.

\*Note: Due to technical difficulties with GoToMeeting commissioners were disconnected and returned at different times during the meeting, thus note the inconsistent number of authorized votes.

The following Commissioners and Staff were in attendance:

#### Commissioners

Amesbury	Robert Laplante, Secretary
Amesbury	Angela Cleveland, Alternate
Boxford	Jim Barnes, Treasurer/Finance Committee
Georgetown	John Cashell
Lawrence	Pedro Soto
Merrimac	Bob Bender
Methuen	Kathleen Bradley Colwell, Vice-Chair/Finance Committee
Newbury	Martha Taylor
Newburyport	Rick Taintor
Rowley	Robert Snow, Chairman
Rowley	Joe Perry, Alternate/Finance Committee
Salisbury	Lou Masiello
West Newbury	Brian Murphey
Rep-At-Large	Brad Buschur

#### Guests

Denise Casey, North Andover Deputy Town Manager

## **Staff**

Theresa Park, Executive Director  
Tony Komornick, Transportation Program Manager  
MaryKay Beninati, Senior Transportation Planner  
Betsy Goodrich, Senior Transportation Planner  
Jim Terlizzi, Transportation Engineer  
Jerrard Whitten, GIS-IT Program Manager  
Mikayla Minor, GIS Analyst  
Steve Lopez, Senior GIS Analyst  
Jennifer Hughes, Environmental Program Manager  
Ian Burns, Targeted Economic Development Specialist  
Nate Robertson, Community & Economic Development Planner  
Jenifer Dunlap, Finance Administrator  
Nancy Lavallee, Office Administrator

### **3. Adoption of January 21, 2021 Meeting Minutes**

Secretary Laplante reviewed the minutes and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Colwell and seconded by Commissioner Soto to approve the January 21, 2021 meeting minutes. The January 21, 2021 minutes were approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 11 attending commissioners.

### **4. Warrant for January 21, 2021**

MVPC's Treasurer Barnes reported on the January 21, 2021 Warrant and recommended the Commission's authorization for adoption.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Colwell and seconded by Commissioner Taintor to approve the January 21, 2021 warrant. The January 21, 2021 warrant was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 12 attending commissioners.

### **5. Chairman's Comments**

Chairman Snow reported on the following activities since the January meeting.

Chairman noted the upcoming departure of MVPC's Executive Director, Theresa Park. Ms. Park accepted a new role with MassDevelopment. Chairman Snow offered a collective thanks for her work this past year and going forward will ensure a smooth transition. Along that line, following Theresa's departure, Tony Komornick will act as acting Executive Director; he did an excellent job after Karen's departure. We will also activate a search committee to find Theresa's replacement. Chairman Snow requested that the commissioners let him or Jen Dunlap know if they are interested in serving on the committee. We will discuss this matter further when we get to the "Personnel" item on the agenda.

Chairman Snow announced that the State has rolled out "Community One Stop for Growth," a single application portal to access the State's many grant programs from EOHEd, DHCD, and MassDevelopment including MassWorks, Urban Agenda, Housing Choice, and Site Readiness to name a few. Information is available here: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth>

Several GIS and Environmental Program contracts will require MVPC's approval this evening. Jerrard Whitten and Jen Hughes will provide an overview of them.

The Finance Committee met on February 11th to review the status of the FY'21 budget, as well as the proposed FY'22 budget. The Committee will report out on its recommendations, as well as going over the FY'22 local

assessment rate. Chairman Snow expressed his thanks to the Committee for their work and Jen Dunlap for preparing all the necessary documents and so thoroughly going over the various line items.

After much hard work, the 2020 Annual Report has been completed, printed, and has been mail out to you. If you don't receive a copy in the next week or so, you should let Nancy know and she will send a copy to you.

## 6. Executive Director's Report

MVPC's Executive Director, Theresa Park, referred to her detailed report of MVPC activities since the January meeting followed by her departure message to the Commissioners saying "that the new year has been full of surprises, including an unsolicited offer from Dan Rivera to join his team at MassDevelopment. While I was caught off guard given my short tenure at MVPC, the work potential proved too promising to pass up. The impact of my pending departure is mitigated by the planning commission's competent staff who are fully vested in the region's success and ensuring the maximum benefit to member communities of their work in transportation, GIS, environment, and community & economic development. Also, the time and dedication by the Commission members to ensure MVPC's smooth technical, administrative, and fiscal operations have allowed the organization to prosper and grow over its 60+ year existence. For the remainder of my time, I will work to ensure a seamless transition and lend my support where necessary. I'd like to extend my thanks and appreciation for putting your faith in me and for the opportunity to work with you and your community."

Ms. Park welcomed the Program Managers to share their program highlighted activities completed since the Commission meeting:

**Transportation Program update:** MVPC's Transportation Program Manager, Tony Komornick, reported that the MPO met on January 27<sup>th</sup> with MassDOT officials to review the status of the current Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) and how the status of the projects may impact the development of the upcoming FFY's 2022-2026 TIP that needs to be approved by May 2021. Mr. Komornick reported that the Route 114 Corridor improvement project, programmed for FFY 2023 in the current TIP, will be delayed until FFY 2024 and that the project cost has increased from \$26 million to \$35 million. Since Target Funds were planned for this project, the MPO now needs to figure out how this funding will be reprogrammed in FFY 2023 so that we do not lose the funds to other projects in the state. MVPC's Senior Transportation Planner, Mary Kay Beninati, will be presenting the preliminary first draft of the programming of Target Funds at the upcoming MPO meeting. He also noted that we are looking for input from the communities on traffic-projects they would like to have included in FFY 2022 or FFY 2023 of the TIP. The final determination of projects to be included in the draft document will be made by April.

Mr. Komornick said that the MPO is reaching out to commissioners, stakeholders, and community officials for requests of a traffic study and traffic analyses projects to be included in the UPWP (Unified Planning Work Program) to be released on October 1. Please contact Tony Komornick with your requests. He added that, while the amount of funding expected to be available for planning in the FFY 2022 UPWP is \$30,000 less than we have under the current contract, there's a good chance that a community request will be accommodated.

**GIS Program update:** MVPC's GIS Program Manager, Jerrard Whitten reported that annual contract renewals are approaching for Parcel Update, MIMAP, and mobile applications. In other contract news, Andover and Newburyport agreements for advancing their computerized maintenance management software (CMMS) will be presented later in the meeting.

Mr. Whitten reported that the MVPC GIS Team conducted an Imagery Forum with discussion on the future of oblique angle aerial photography and new imagery technology in the region. The decision to change vendors is a very important consideration and will be decided on collectively as it impacts all of the municipalities in the region. MVPC is weighing the pros and cons of continuing the relationship with Eagleview/Pictometry, with whom we have had a working relationship for over 20 years or switch to another new international vendor called nearmap. Nearmap is new to the imagery marketplace offering similar technology with multiple flights per year where the current imagery provider, Eagleview/Pictometry provides imagery every 2-3 years. MVPC will continue to work with communities in the region to identify the costs and other characteristics of each product.

Mr. Whitten reported that the GIS team is working very closely with MVPC's Jen Hughes, Environmental Program Manager, to develop an open space and conservation restriction monitoring application for municipal deployment. This application was first deployed to West Newbury and now to the City of Newburyport provides a common data source and will assist communities in storing results from annual monitoring and reporting.

**Environmental Program update:** MVPC's Environmental Program Manager Jen Hughes reported that the Open Space monitoring application is a great tool for communities to monitor and manage properties. She added that work has started on the MassDEP MS4 grant to assist 5 communities in identifying BMP retrofit sites as required in Year 4 of the permit. These sites can include schools and parking lots to name a few. Environment and GIS are meeting with each community to identify the most relevant sites where green infrastructure can be implemented.

Ms. Hughes added that on February 4, 2021, MVPC hosted a virtual meeting with All in Energy and Action Inc. to update communities about energy efficiency programs for residents including renters, landlords, homeowners, and those who are income-eligible. Over 20 community representatives participated.

She reported on Brownfields Programs including that Phase 1 Assessment of Brown School was completed in January using RLF program income. A meeting was held with Credere Associates, Mayor Holaday, and her staff. Credere Associates will draft a proposal to conduct Phase II Assessment. She held a call with Merrimac regarding the Coastal Metals site. Credere Associates will draft bid documents for Coastal Metals' monitoring well redevelopment and groundwater injections to obtain additional bids for the final phase of the cleanup.

Ms. Hughes updated the group on the Hazard Mitigation Plan reporting that a draft of North Andover's Hazard Mitigation plan is under review by MVPC staff. Once the draft is ready for North Andover's review, a community listening session will be scheduled.

Peter Phippen, MVPC's Coastal Coordinator, was unable to attend the meeting. In his absence, Ms. Hughes noted that The Great Marsh Symposium titled, 'Restoration Matters' will be virtual this year and held on Wednesday, March 17. Registration information is on the MVPC website.

**Community and Economic Development update:** MVP's Economic and Development Program Manager, Nate Robertson, reported EDA Applications including that MVPC has continued meeting with EDA and the Lawrence Partnership about revising the scope of the \$850,000 EDA grant award for the expansion of Lawrence Partnership's *Revolving Test Kitchen*, a food industry business incubator, in downtown Lawrence. This project is a collaboration between the Lawrence Partnership, Lupoli Companies, MassDevelopment, Northern Essex Community College, Entrepreneurship for All, and Merrimack Valley Planning Commission. MVPC is moving forward with EforAll to discuss their new scope of work and discuss the application timeline for Haverhill.

Mr. Robertson reported that MVPC is moving forward with the RFP for the Small Business Technical Assistance Program, which is funded through the CARES ACT through EDA. He is working with an RFP specialist to assure all federal and state standards are met to rollout the RFP and start receiving bids. This will pay for small business who have been affected by COVID-19 to be paired up with consultants who can help them get relief funding, financial management, digital technical assistance, marketing, and legal services, human resources, workforce issues and navigate through COVID-19 relief programs available through the state and federal level. This is a great opportunity for small businesses to get back on their feet.

Mr. Robertson added that MVPC has been awarded LTA funds and is soliciting projects from communities that could qualify for these funds.

## 7. Contracts

### Grants/Local Community Contracts (by MVPC Program)

#### GIS

- **Andover** – MOU for Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) Upgrade to Maintstar Inc. Version 15 (annual license and maintenance support services) - \$15,250 (4/1/21- 3/31/22) and \$10,000 (4/1/22 and beyond)

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Taintor and seconded by Commissioner Soto to authorize the above-mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 12 attending commissioners.

- **Newburyport** – MOU for Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) Upgrade to Maintstar Inc. Version 15 (annual license and maintenance support services) - \$17,750 (4/1/21- 3/31/22) and \$12,250 (4/1/22 and beyond)

MVPC to received funding from the Town of Andover and City of Newburyport for the coordination, implementation, operation, and refinement of a regional CMMS offered by Maintstar, Inc. and the coordination of associated training.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Barnes and seconded by Commissioner Taintor to authorize the above-mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 12 attending commissioners.

- **Newburyport** - \$8,000 (No match required) - Parcel Update and MIMAP Operation FY2021

MVPC to receive funding from the City of Newburyport for the above GIS services.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Colwell and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to authorize the above-mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 12 attending commissioners.

### Consultants and Subgrant Agreements / Loans (by MVPC Program)

#### Environmental

- **Housing Support, Inc.** – 20 Main Street, Haverhill EPA Brownfields Site – \$35,000 EPA Brownfields RLF Grant agreement

Housing Support, Inc. is to be paid the subgrant amount directly from the MVPC EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund program income for additional site assessment following remediation and cleanup activities. The City of Haverhill will also be contributing to this work in hopes of bringing redevelopment to the site in the future.

*Vote:* There was a motion by Commissioner Colwell and seconded by Commissioner Taylor to authorize the above-mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante’s roll call vote of 12 attending commissioners.

#### GIS

- **Maintstar, Inc.** – Computerized Maintenance Management System (CMMS) – software upgrade and annual license and maintenance support - \$33,000

MVPC is to pay Maintstar, Inc. for the CMMS upgrade, license, and annual maintenance support for the Town of Andover and City of Newburyport CMMS systems.

**Vote:** There was a motion by Commissioner Barnes and seconded by Commissioner Taintor to authorize the above-mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 12 attending commissioners.

## Administration

### • Community Paradigm Associates LLC – Executive Director Search Consultant - \$7,000

MVPC is to pay Community Paradigm Associates LLC to conduct the Executive Director Search process beginning this month and concluding in April. Services include an update of company profile document, position advertising, outreach, resume' review, interview coordination with MVPC Search Committee, reference review, assistance in finalist selection, and consultation/technical assistance during selection and with the employment agreement.

**Vote:** There was a motion by Commissioner Taylor and seconded by Commissioner Masiello to authorize the above-mentioned contract. The contract was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 11 attending commissioners.

## 8. Finance Committee

Treasurer Barnes gave a summary of the finance committee meeting held on February 11, 2021. In attendance were members Joe Perry and Kathleen Colwell.

- a. **FY'20 Audit** – Treasurer Barnes reported that the FY20 audit has been completed and that there are no findings. He added that that FY'20 audit shows the highest MVPC revenues in its history of \$2.56 million due to the Merrimack River District Commission Projects, EPA Brownfields activities, and Great Marsh activities with NWF and additional DMF funding.

Mr. Barnes added that \$43k was added to the operating fund balance due to careful management of resources and fewer match requirements. The operating Fund Balance on June 30, 2020 is \$294k.

The Finance Administrator gave a brief overview of the Other Post Employment Benefit (OPEB) for FY'20 – Retiree Health Insurance through the Group Insurance Commission (GIC) contained in the audit as follows:

- o \$104,367 – Net Expense/loss due to OPEB actuarial study contribution reporting
  - o \$775k – Value of OPEB Trust set aside and growing to fund this benefit
  - o \$1.57 million – Net actuarial determined OPEB liability on MVPC's books.
- b. **Adoption of Updated FY'21 Budget #2** - Treasurer Barnes reported on the revised Budget #2 for FY21. Budget #2 in the amount of \$3.6 million was updated to include new projects realized and delayed/canceled projects since Budget #1 was adopted one year ago. Treasurer Barnes reported that the Finance Committee recommends the adoption of the FY21 Budget #2 to the commission.

**Vote:** Commissioner Taintor made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned FY21 Budget #2 as presented. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. The FY21 Budget #2 was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 12 attending commissioners.

- c. **Adoption of FY22 Assessment Rate** - Treasurer Barnes reported on the proposed assessment rate increase for FY'22. Various examples were shown, but the maximum increase allowed of 2.49% or \$0.40253 per capita totaling \$134,343.40 in revenue was used as an example in budget #1 FY'22. Treasurer Barnes reported that the Finance Committee recommended the adoption of the maximum

increase allowed equaling \$0.40253 per capita to minimize the contributions from the fund balance to meet contract match requirements.

*Vote:* Commissioner Taylor made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned FY'22 Assessments as presented. Commissioner Masiello seconded the motion. The FY'22 Assessments was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call of 12 attending commissioners.

- d. **Adoption of FY'22 Budget #1** - MVPC's Treasurer Barnes reported on Budget #1 for FY'22 totaling \$2,489,639 saying it is a very strong start.

Treasurer Barnes reported that the Finance Committee recommends the adoption of the FY'22 Budget #1 to the commission as presented.

*Vote:* Commissioner Taintor made a motion to authorize and approve the above-mentioned FY'2 Budget #1 as presented. Commissioner Taylor seconded the motion. The FY'22 Budget #1 was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call of 12 attending commissioners.

- e. **Adoption of New IRS Mileage Reimbursement Rate** - Treasurer Barnes reported that the Finance Committee recommended the adoption of the new IRS mileage reimbursement rate of 56 cents per mile as is the commission's usual practice, effective January 1, 2021.

*Vote:* Commissioner Masiello made a motion to authorize and approve the adoption of the new IRS mileage reimbursement rate of 56 cents per mile. Commissioner Murphey seconded the motion. The new IRS mileage rate of 56 cents per mile was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call of 12 attending commissioners.

## 9. Personnel Committee – Executive Session

Chairman Snow noted that the Personnel Committee requested the meeting go into Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter. The regular meeting proceeded through the remaining agenda and adjourned.

## 10. Local and Regional Issues - None

## 11. Other – None

## 12. Adjourn

There was a motion to adjourn the regular meeting at 12:22 pm and go into Executive Session, to discuss a personnel matter, and not return to regular session, by Commissioner Colwell and seconded by Commissioner Barnes. The motion was unanimously approved by Secretary Laplante's roll call vote of 11 attending commissioners.

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Robert Laplante, Secretary