



**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 9, 2023
7:00 PM
REMOTE MEETING**

MINUTES

1. Open Meeting, Introductions, and Announcements

Chairman G. Corbosiero called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m. Chairman G. Corbosiero stated in accordance with Governor Baker’s Covid-19 Executive Order regarding the Open Meeting Law and remote participation, votes will be taken through Roll Call.

2. MRPC Minutes – January 5, 2023- Approval of Commissioners Requested

Having no objections to the January 5, 2023 minutes, P. Cunningham moved to accept the minutes as written. The motion was seconded.

Roll Call vote followed:

- G. Tillotson- yes
- P. Cunningham- yes
- S. Donahue- yes
- J. DeRoy- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- M. Bohart- abstain
- K. Nartowicz- yes
- A. Reid- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes

3. Cash Schedule – January 2023 – Acceptance of Commissioners Requested

L. Quinlivan presented the cash schedule. The opening balance for January was \$722,381.63, total receipts and transfers for the month were \$181,167.07, total cash on hand before this warrant was \$903,548.70, less the amount of this warrant of \$269,302.72, left a balance after the warrant of \$634,245.98.

L. Shifrin asked that we look into interest rates for CDs (Certificates of Deposit) so we could be earning a higher interest rate. G. Eaton stated he didn't believe governments are allowed to do this, but we would look into this.

Having no objections to the cash schedule, L. Shifrin moved to accept the cash schedule as presented subject to audit. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

- A. Reid- yes
- G. Tillotson- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- J. DeRoy- yes
- K. Nartowicz- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes
- M. Bohart- yes
- P. Cunningham- yes
- R. Hoyt- yes
- S. Donahue- yes

4. Guest Announcements and Questions

No announcements or questions were presented.

5. Administrative Matters

5.1 FY23 Budget Update and FY24 Budget "First Look" – Information Only

FY23 Budget – June 2022 – Adopted

Projected Revenue	\$1,503,848
Projected Expenses	\$1,810,479
Projected Surplus/(Deficit)	(16.9%)
Projected Overhead Rate	132.59%

FY23 Budget – February 2023 –Working Budget
Subject to Approving Amendments in March,
April, May, and/or June 2023

Projected Revenue	\$1,765,591
Projected Expenses	\$1,751,754
Projected Surplus/(Deficit)	0.08%
Projected Overhead Rate	131.55%

FY24 Budget – To be Adopted June 2023

Projected Revenue	\$2,333,091
Projected Expenses	\$2,449,746
Projected Surplus/(Deficit)	(5%)
Projected Overhead Rate	\$130.00%

5.2 MRPC and MEC, Inc. Records Preservation: Digitization of Documents – Information Only

MRPC’s Administrative Manager and Executive Director met with representatives from Ricoh to build a budget for the digitization (scanning) of approximately 40+/- bankers’ boxes full of plans completed by the agency (back to the 1970s), financial reports, and related documents. The budget is about \$22,032.75. By this spring, MRPC will seek quotes from additional firms to complete this project in phases or in whole. Please watch this space for updates.

5.3 Nashoba Valley Chamber of Commerce Executive Roundtable Program – Information Only

The CEOs Roundtable Program met on January 25th. We discussed the difficulty of hiring workers and retaining talented employees in a very tight labor market.

The next meeting will be hosted by the MRPC’s Executive Director on Wednesday, February 22nd.

5.4 Status of Request for Proposals for Grant Writing Consultant – Information and Possible Action Requested

REPORT

A Request for Proposals and Quotes (RFP/Q) was published on December 12, 2022, in the MA Secretary of State’s Goods and Services (G&S) Bulletin, with an initial deadline of January 16, 2023, which was later extended to February 6, 2023.

One proposal was received from Dexterity Management. The firm’s qualifications are superior. Personnel from Dexterity Management will deliver grant proposal research, writing, and submission services from \$75 to \$150 per hour. The firm’s average hourly rate is \$115/hour. Please see the detailed quote on the following page.

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MRPC Cost Proposal

Molly Singer
 CEO
 121 Beach St #302
 Boston MA 02111
 202 258-0760
 msinger@daxmgmt.com

Hourly Rates

Name	Rate / hr	Estimated Rate / Month
Molly Singer	\$150	30hrs @ 150 = \$4500
Dori Wolfson	\$100	15 hrs @ 100 = 1500
Federica La Cava	\$75	20 hr @ 75 = 1500
Total	\$115/hr avg	65 hrs = \$7500 / mo

Explanation:

Below are estimates of time involved to develop materials and write grants. For a \$50,000 budget, Dexterity Management would create all of the groundwork materials and about 10 grants of varying length. Below the rates are some examples of how many grants MRPC (in various combinations) can expect Dexterity to produce. These are just examples of the final amount these are not specific options, more so just to apply the rates and amount of output that you can expect. All numbers are estimates but based on good experience.

Estimated Time Allotments

Activity	Explanation	Hours	Cost
Initial Start up	Develop stock language, need statements, Learning about MRPC programs, template for letters of support, etc	30	\$3600
Prospecting	Grants.gov, Instrument1, Other funders, create funding timeline	38	\$4400
Grants	\$500K / yr multi year federal grant – complexity, 424 forms, budgets, letters of support, 30-100 pp with all attachments	60	\$7500
	Less complex federal grants of 10-20 pp	30	\$3500
	Foundation or other partnership grant (not as complex) est. 10 pp	20	\$2700
Administration	Meetings, emails, reminders, records management	5 / mo	\$675

	Off/Ons	Start up Materials	Month/Materials	Large Federal Grants	Medium Federal Grants	Foundation	Total # Grants	Total Cost				
A	3	\$8,000.00	4	\$2,700.00	3	\$10,500.00	3	\$ 8,100.00	9	\$ 51,800.00		
B	3	\$8,000.00	5	\$3,375.00	2	\$15,000.00	4	\$14,000.00	5	\$13,500.00	11	\$ 59,875.00
C	3	\$8,000.00	5	\$3,375.00	1	\$ 7,500.00	6	\$21,000.00	4	\$10,800.00	11	\$ 50,675.00
D	3	\$8,000.00	5	\$3,375.00	2	\$15,000.00	4	\$14,000.00	4	\$10,800.00	10	\$ 51,175.00

In Kind: Dexterity will provide all transportation to / from meetings (as needed) from Boston to Leominster or related areas pro bono.

Sincerely,

 Molly Singer

The Executive Director recommends the:

1. Hiring of Dexterity Management as the MRPC's grant writing consulting firm to augment MRPC's services to its communities; and,
2. Use of up to \$50,000 in cash appropriated from the MA Municipal Depository Trust (MMDT) account and/or the District Local Technical Assistance-Augmentation funds, as needed, for grant proposal preparation services.

The Executive Director recommends the hiring of Dexterity Management through June 30, 2023, as advertised.

It is possible that the MRPC will need grant writing assistance from an outside firm(s) in FY24. If so, staff will issue a second RFP/Q in the spring or summer 2023.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission Accepts the Executive Director's recommendation to hire the firm of Dexterity Management to deliver grant proposal application and submission services to MRPC and its communities through June 30, 2023, and that the funding sources above will be used to pay this consulting firm.

G. Corbosiero asked if this firm would also be able to look for available grants for member communities while working with us. G. Eaton stated yes, there is a line item on the proposal stating they would do research for us as well.

P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution as presented. Motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

- A. Reid- yes
- G. Tillotson- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- J. DeRoy- yes
- K. Nartowicz- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes
- M. Bohart- yes
- P. Cunningham- yes
- R. Hoyt- yes
- S. Donahue- yes

5.5 Election of Officers- Information Only

1. *March of Each Year: Call for Participation on the Nominating Committee.*

6. Department Updates

6.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)

No new information at this time.

6.2 Planning & Development

6.2.1 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ADMINISTRATION (EDA) ECONOMIC ADJUSTMENT ASSISTANCE (EAA) GRANT PROGRAM FILLTERR - (Future Industrial Lands for Long Term Economic Recovery and Resiliency) - Action Item - Report and Resolution for Commissioners' Consideration on Feb. 9, 2023, for Matching Funds for the EDA EAA Grant Proposal

REPORT

MRPC is in the process of preparing a competitive, Economic Adjustment Assistance (EAA) grant application to be submitted to the US Department of Commerce (DOC), Economic Development Administration (EDA). The proposal is entitled *Future Industrial Lands for Long Term Economic Recovery and Resiliency (FILLTERR)*.

The purpose of the grant will be to fund a multidisciplinary analysis of lands most suitable for business development throughout the entire region, leading to the retention and creation of jobs for inhabitants of the entire region, thus benefitting all communities. For example, industrial lands will not be developed in all communities throughout the region. This is more likely to occur in the more urbanized and some suburban communities rather than in our rural towns. However, the companies that will locate in the more urbanized sections of the region will provide jobs to inhabitants throughout the entire region.

This proposal is intended to include a 15-month grant term, ideally from April 2023 through June 2024.

EDA requires a dollar-for-dollar match to receive this competitive planning grant. MRPC's Executive Director recommends the use of the following, existing State contract dollars plus a portion of the in-kind salary of the Planning and Development Director which totals \$170,814 and is broken down as follows:

- Up to \$54,692 from two State contracts (Planning Assistance Grant [PAG] program) providing relevant planning assistance in Ashburnham, Hubbardston, Phillipston, Townsend, Lunenburg, and Shirley;
- Up to \$48,955 from the existing contract between MRPC and the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT, where only a portion of the 20% in State matching funds will be used as matching funds for the completion of transit and transportation planning projects related to moving the workforce and goods and services through the region supporting the regional economy);

- Up to \$50,000 in existing DLTA program funds from the FY23 MRPC’s Budget (DLTA Program Year 16) for \$25,000 and an additional \$25,000 from the FY24 Budget (DLTA Program Year 17) for projects that complement this proposal (i.e. planning assistance to the “MBTA communities,” downtown zoning, economic development planning in one of our rural communities, and transportation circulation planning); and,
- Up to \$17,167 of in-kind funding for a portion of the Planning and Development Director’s time to manage this planning project.

Matching dollars from the Planning Assistance Grants (PAGs) (contracts between Massachusetts Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs), MassDOT-MRPC contract, and Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development for the District Local Technical Assistance contracts will be available during the entire period of performance of the EDA planning grant, and the funds are not conditioned or encumbered in any way that may preclude their use consistent with the requirements of EDA investment assistance. (These are requirements of the EDA and MRPC is in full compliance.)

The use of LTA funds as matching funds for the FILLTERR grant is not recommended at this point. Using these funds would contribute to a small increase in the agency’s overhead rate.

As a total of \$170,814 can be raised by the MRPC in matching funds, the total amount of the grant proposal will be equal to this amount, so the total project cost would be \$341,628.

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission approves of the Executive Director’s request to use the funds, as detailed above, as matching funds against the agency’s FILLTERR grant proposal to the US EDA.

P. Cunningham moved to accept the resolution as presented, motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

- A. Reid- yes
- G. Tillotson- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- J. DeRoy- yes
- K. Nartowicz- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes
- M. Bohart- yes
- P. Cunningham- yes
- R. Hoyt- yes
- S. Donahue- yes

6.2.2 Presentation of grant opportunities

See the grant opportunity monthly spreadsheet which shows a list of grants that are available to our communities. This spreadsheet can be found in the meeting folder. We are also working on a master calendar to help communities to better plan ahead.

6.2.3 DLTA and DLTA-A – Action Item

DLTA Program Year 16 (Jan-Dec 2023): \$207,474.

We have a resolution to approve community projects. The second-round deadline is March 7th for the next Commission Meeting.

REPORT:

In response to a first solicitation, issued December 15, 2022, a total of eight (8) proposals were received for use of District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) resources to provide a variety of services. The proposals received are as follows:

1. Groton: Assistance evaluating the economic, transportation, and related impacts of the Groton Hill Music Center.
2. Hubbardston: Assistance developing zoning bylaws and/or districts to promote agricultural uses and agritourism.
3. Hubbardston: Assistance compiling completed chapters of the Master Plan and planning for implementation.
4. Shirley: Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities in conjunction with a 40R District evaluation.
5. Sterling: Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities.
6. Townsend: Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities.
7. Townsend: Assistance evaluating the town's bylaws and recommending changes in order for the town to become a Housing Choice community.
8. Westminster: Assistance complying with the new Chapter 40A, Section 3A for MBTA Communities.

RESOLUTION:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission recommends that #1 through #8 of the above-named project requests for District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), if eligible, be conditionally awarded based upon further communication/clarification/negotiation with the applying communities and approval from the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD). Moreover, all activities in some applications may not be awardable under the DLTA program: MRPC staff reserves the right to negotiate an awardable detailed scope of services and budget amount.

MRPC also reserves the right to work with the Towns of Shirley, Sterling, Townsend, and Westminster to help them obtain funding from other available resources to complete MBTA 3A/TA planning tasks in place of or after the DLTA Program.

Those requests conditionally awarded (#1 through #8) are subject to the conditions listed below.

1. The services to be delivered to the communities will be completed commencing no earlier than a fully executed Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC.
2. Services will be delivered to the subject community(ies) during the implementation of the District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA) program year (2023).
3. The award of services from the MRPC is subject to the:
 - a. Funding available to the MRPC during the program year (2023);
 - b. Successful negotiation of a detailed scope of services, schedule for the completion of the tasks identified in the scope of services, and budget utilizing DLTA and other funds, if available and eligible for the aforementioned project;
 - c. Execution of a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the MRPC and the community(ies); and,
 - d. The MRPC's receipt of a letter from the Chief Elected Official (CEO) of all of the affected communities indicating agreement to this proposal and willingness to participate in this analysis. [Communities may agree to participate in this analysis after the full execution of the MOU between the subject (lead) community and the MRPC but must agree to participate in order to receive the results of the report.]
4. Where and when possible the MRPC will deliver the tasks related to "analysis, preparation and presentation ... report(s) ..." as indicated above. The MRPC and the community requesting services will "outsource" consulting services only when absolutely deemed to be necessary by both the lead community and the MRPC.
5. This is an award of services from the MRPC to the applicable community(ies). This is not a cash award.
6. If at any time DHCD determines that the project is ineligible, the award of services will be null and void.
7. The municipality and all municipal departments shall provide MRPC with cooperation/access/assistance to public data applicable to the DLTA project including the provision of such materials. Related costs associated with this (data collection, photocopying, etc.) will be at the expense of the municipality(s).

L. Shifrin moved to accept the resolution as presented, the motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

A. Reid- yes

G. Tillotson- yes

G. Corbosiero- yes
J. DeRoy- yes
K. Nartowicz- yes
L. Shifrin- yes
M. Bohart- yes
P. Cunningham- yes
R. Hoyt- yes
S. Donahue- yes

DLTA-Augmentation (Jan 2023-June 2024): These are extra funds (\$138,316) awarded to each RPA to spend on assisting our communities with project prioritization and grant applications.

A solicitation to our communities will be sent out next week, with proposals due March 7th for the first round and April 4th for the second round. Commissioners will vote at their meetings on March 9th and April 6th to approve projects. DTLA Augmentation activities and projects may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- identification and understanding of top project priorities;
- research, assessment, and identification of federal, state and other funding opportunities;
- review of grant application guidelines and preparation of applications and/or identification of specialty skills needed (e.g. specialized technical assessment, engineering, cost benefit analysis);
- provision of needed procurement services; and
- assessment of municipal grant reporting capacity and determination if assistance is needed by the RPA.

6.2.4 MBTA Communities Technical Assistance

MRPC is currently working with Leominster under a One Stop Planning Grant, with Lunenburg under an EEA Planning Assistance Grant, with Ashburnham, Groton, and Harvard under an MHP 3A/TA grant, and if awarded tonight, Shirley, Sterling, Townsend, and Westminster under DLTA. Ashby is applying for 3A/TA in June. Options for those with no current technical assistance (Ayer, Fitchburg, Lancaster) are:

- Apply for funds in the One Stop Program: Expressions of interest open until March 17, 2023. Applications now available. Full application submittal opens May 2023 and ends June 2, 2023. These grants last 18 months – two years. MRPC can assist with applications available here: <https://www.mass.gov/guides/community-one-stop-for-growth#-how-to-apply>
- Apply for a Planning Assistance Grant: RFR due out in March 2023, application due in May 2023. MRPC can apply on community's behalf. These grants last 18 months – 2 years. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/planning-assistance-grants>
- MHP 3A/TA: Mass Housing Partnership is offering grants to complete tasks towards compliance. Will open another round of applications in the summer. Three to four month

contracts.

- DLTA: First round due Feb. 7th, second round due March 7th. Contract through December 2023.

6.2.5 Mass Broadband Institute (MBI) Digital Equity

MRPC is an authorized contractor of MBI to provide Digital Equity planning for our communities. The goal of the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program is to enable municipalities to engage in planning activities related to digital equity and bridging the digital divide. These planning activities will result in strategic documents designed to identify the community's needs, interest, and key assets and provide a framework that will guide future municipal decision-making and potential investments and activities that will increase access and usage of the internet for the populations most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The three key areas to be studied in each community and regionally are Internet Availability and Affordability, Device Access, and Digital Skills. The applications are open now and are available here: <https://broadband.masstech.org/municipal> Royalston and Phillipston have already applied as part of a regional plan and MRPC encourages communities to apply as part of this regional plan, or individually if the community prefers.

6.2.6 CPTC Conference March 18, 2023

The Citizen Planner Training Collaborative Spring Conference is back in person at Holy Cross in Worcester on Saturday, March 18, 2023. There will be the traditional CPTC training modules for new board members, as well as timely topics such as MBTA Communities, Digital Equity Planning, Climate Resiliency, Housing, etc.

6.2.7 Planning Assistance Grants

RFR due out in March 2023, with the application due in May 2023. MRPC can apply on a community's behalf. These grants last 18 months – 2 years. These grants are good for Open Space and Recreation Plans, Housing Production Plans, Master Plan chapters, corridor studies, zoning bylaw reviews, etc. The maximum grant per community is \$50,000. Go to the website to see past projects that were funded. <https://www.mass.gov/service-details/planning-assistance-grants>

6.2.8 New Contracts

GRANT	AMOUNT	END DATE
LEOMINSTER PLANNING GRANT – MBTA COMM.	\$ 36,000	06/30/2024
DLTA-16	\$207,474	12/31/2023
DLTA-A	\$138,316	06/30/2024
MHP 3A/TA - ASHBURNHAM	\$ 16,250	06/30/2023
MHP 3A/TA - GROTON	\$ 14,175	06/30/2023
MHP 3A/TA - HARVARD	\$ 16,250	06/30/2023

6.3 Transit & Transportation

No new information at this time.

7. New Business

This time is reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

8. Adjournment

There being no further business to discuss, P. Cunningham moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded.

Roll call vote followed:

- A. Reid- yes
- G. Tillotson- yes
- G. Corbosiero- yes
- J. DeRoy- yes
- K. Nartowicz- yes
- L. Shifrin- yes
- M. Bohart- yes
- P. Cunningham- yes
- R. Hoyt- yes
- S. Donahue- yes

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

This meeting will be recorded by the GoToMeeting app and will be made available for viewing at <https://www.youtube.com/user/MontachusettRegion/videos>.

This notice is subject to change with reasonable notice provided to all.

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Meeting Registration Link: [February 9, 2023, MRPC Meeting Registration](#)

QR Code, below:



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MRPC Meeting Materials: [February 9, 2023, MRPC Meeting Material](#)