

PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of Executive Committee Zoom Meeting
September 25, 2025, 5:00 P.M.

Executive Committee Members Present:

William Dwyer, Chair – Hadley
George Kingston, Vice Chair – East Longmeadow
Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown (from 5:06 p.m.)
Peri Hall, At-large Member – Goshen
Jack Jemsek, At-large Member – Amherst
Jack Luttrell, At-Large Member – Wilbraham

Guests:

Silvia Bermudez, International Fellow, Institute for Training and Development, Tuxtla Gutiérrez

PVPC Staff Present:

Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Becky Basch, Principal Planner
Lisa Edinger, Director of Finance
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning
Deanna Young, Administrative Services Coordinator

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome, and Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on August 28, 2025

The Executive Committee meeting on September 25, 2025, was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair William Dwyer.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY JACK JEMSEK, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE AUGUST 28, 2025, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. Listing of Payments/Financial Reports

The list of payments and financial reports was provided in the meeting package.

3. Authorization by the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources to Provide Clean Energy Planning and Program Management to Several Municipalities

Becky Basch shared that the project, led by Mimi Kaplan, is funded by a regional energy planning assistance grant. It will help Montgomery achieve green community certification, support nine towns integrating their schools into energy reduction plans, assist 22 communities with competitive grant applications, and help 25 communities with annual reports. The project also includes quarterly regional meetings and workshops for education and collaboration, as well as a pilot program to coach homeowners and renters on transitioning from fossil fuels to heat pumps.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY JACK JEMSEK, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT ENDING MAY 31, 2027, WITH THE MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY RESOURCES IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$140,700, TO WORK WITH VARIOUS COMMUNITIES IN THE PIONEER VALLEY ON CLEAN ENERGY PLANNING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

4. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the City of Springfield to Serve as the Lead Facilitator for the City's MVP 2.0 Process

Ms. Basch explained that the Municipal Vulnerability Program (MVP) 2.0 process is focusing on community engagement, and that Springfield has selected its organization as the planning lead, working with Live Well Springfield and climate initiatives funded by the Kresge Foundation. The project will update Springfield's Climate Action Plan and involves a core team of municipal representatives and community liaisons, with a \$50,000 seed grant awarded after the process. Ms. Basch clarified that approximately \$29,000 of the contract is allocated for staff time, \$17,000 for community liaisons, and the remainder for engagement expenses, including food and incentives.

Peri Hall commented that the Town of Goshen recently completed the pilot planning phase and found the PVPC's management helpful, especially in handling liaisons and community engagement activities, which increased participation and avoided incurring town expenses on events. Ms. Basch added that this year, each community will work with an equity partner to help form the core team and select the planning vendor, and that a social vulnerability analysis using data and mapping tools will be included.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$54,000 TO FACILITATE THE CITY'S MUNICIPAL VULNERABILITY PREPAREDNESS (MVP) 2.0 PROCESS. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with the United States Environmental Protection Agency for the Construction of Infrastructure Improvements at the Sportshaven Mobile Home Community in Belchertown

Kimberly H. Robinson shared that nearly \$1 million in funding for a sewer system at the Sportshaven mobile home community in Belchertown has been secured through an earmark procured by Congressman Richard Neal, and the contract with the EPA now needs to be signed. Doug Albertson added that this project has been decades in the making and is urgently needed due to severe septic failure, overflow into neighboring wetlands, and water contamination affecting the community. Mr. Albertson described the park as having begun as a campground in the 1950s, with approximately 40 mobile homes, and having suffered from absentee ownership, unpaid taxes, and condemned units. Residents formed an association, worked with federal and state agencies, and received help in mitigating back taxes. Water improvements were completed in 2024, and the next step is installing a new septic system. Ms. Robinson clarified that the funding for the project is an earmark, which are now processed through various agencies, unlike previously.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY JACK JEMSEK, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$928,000 FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS AT THE SPORTSHAVEN MOBILE HOME COMMUNITY IN BELCHERTOWN. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with Amy Waldman for Consultation Support for the Rural Network to End Domestic Violence (RNEDV)

Ms. Robinson shared that the Rural Network to End Domestic Violence (RNEDV) was launched in September 2024, by the PVPC and other stakeholders. The network brings together six rural domestic violence task forces in western and north central Massachusetts to strengthen collaboration and advocate for rural communities. Monica Moran and Amy Waldman coordinate the project, with Ms. Waldman providing technical assistance and helping implement

regional initiatives. It was clarified that Ms. Waldman's role is structured as a consultant, not as an employee.

MOVED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, SECONDED BY JACK LUTTRELL, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH AMY WALDMAN FOR CONSULTATION SUPPORT FOR THE RNEDV IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED \$37,500. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Contracts Signed Under \$25,000

The contracts under \$25,000 for August 2025 were provided in the meeting package.

8. Human Resources Items

Ms. Basch introduced Silvia Bermudez, an international fellow from Tuxtla Gutiérrez (Chiapas, Mexico), who is visiting for two weeks through the Institute for Training and Development. Ms. Bermudez works as an economic development coordinator and is developing an action plan involving the city and small businesses.

Ms. Robinson reported that recruitment for a Deputy Director of Land Use and Environment is ongoing, with many responses received. The organization is seeking a housing rehabilitation specialist, typically hired as a part-time consultant, and has recently conducted procurement for this role. Ms. Robinson also shared that they launched a new website and recently updated staff headshots. Monthly team gatherings have been established since February/March, with each department hosting snacks and activities to foster connection. The latest event included kettle corn, apple cider, and a music guessing game with certificates as prizes.

9. Executive Director's Highlights and Updates

Ms. Robinson reported that since June, there have been 24 press mentions, with coverage steadily increasing, especially noted by Kate Norton of Norton Communications. Social media channels and the website are now live; followers are encouraged to join on Instagram, Bluesky, and Facebook. The October 9, 2025, Commission meeting is upcoming, with invitations and reminders sent out.

Ms. Robinson noted that the MARPA/DLS conference is scheduled for October 7, 2025, at the College of Holy Cross, organized by the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies and the Department of Local Services. It features morning workshops, and registration support is offered.

Updates on Community Development Block Grant funds and One Stop grants are still pending; announcements are expected soon. The organization will be introducing a new logo and letterhead starting Monday, ensuring that all future communications reflect this change.

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

Jack Jemsek requested additional information about the upcoming Commission meeting. Ms. Robinson explained that the meeting will cover accomplishments from the past year, highlight projects from each department, and present regional service awards to Aaron Vega and former Mayor LaChapelle. There will also be a moderated panel discussion featuring federal and state government relations specialists.

George Kingston inquired about the recent freeze on trails and bicycle lanes and their potential impact on transportation projects. Gary Roux responded that MassDOT has encouraged the continuation of the current work program, with a new program set to start on October 1, 2025. He noted that uncertainty may arise with the

reauthorization of the federal transportation bill, which could affect future planning.

MOVED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, SECONDED BY JACK LUTTRELL, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 5:38 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the September 25, 2025 Meeting

1. Executive Committee September 25, 2025 Meeting Agenda
2. Executive Committee August 28, 2025 Minutes
3. September 25, 2025 Possible Motions
4. August 2025 List of Payments
5. August 2025 Financial Summary
6. Signed Contracts – August 2025