PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of Executive Committee Zoom Meeting
October 23, 2025, 5:00 P.M.

Executive Committee Members Present:
William Dwyer, Chair – Hadley
George Kingston, Vice Chair – East Longmeadow
Marilyn Gorman Fil, Treasurer – Monson
T.J. Cousineau, Assistant Treasurer – Blandford
Peri Hall, At-large Member – Goshen
Jack Jemsek, At-large Member – Amherst
Jack Luttrell, At-Large Member – Wilbraham
James Whalen, At-Large Member – Holland

PVPC Staff Present:
Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Ken Comia, Director, Land Use and Environment Department
Lisa Edinger, Director of Finance
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning
Eric Weiss, Director of Economic and Municipal Collaboration
Deanna Young, Administrative Services Coordinator

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome, and Approval of the Minutes of the Executive Committee Meeting Held on September 25, 2025

The Executive Committee meeting on October 23, 2025, was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Chair William Dwyer. Minutes for the September 25, 2025 Executive Committee Meeting are approved alongside an amendment to include the country of the PVPC's International Fellow (item #8).

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE SEPTEMBER 25, 2025, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. Listing of Payments/Financial Reports

The fiscal year 2025 financial report was presented and discussed in detail. Lisa Edinger addressed an issue with the check register, noting that a paperwork error required voiding and rerunning checks, resulting in numerous "in and out" amounts. The accounts receivable balance was reported as unusually high, primarily due to outstanding payments for invoices issued at year-end through June 30, while accounts payable remained low. Most payroll and project invoicing extended into July, with the majority of invoices sent in August and additional invoices for July, August, and September already dispatched, contributing to the inflated receivables.

The fiscal year 2025 budget was presented and set at $7,580,048, with actual revenue received totaling $6,995,056. The shortfall was attributed to delays in the "Safer Streets" contract, which will be recognized in fiscal year 2026. Revenue sources included $3.2 million from local funds, $1.8 million from federal sources, $1.6 million from state funds, and $305 thousand from other sources. The distribution of revenue was as follows: local funds accounted for 45.8%, federal funds for 26.6%, state funds for 23.2%, and other sources for 4.4%, demonstrating a diversified funding base.

Expenses for fiscal year 2025 totaled $6,571,063, which was below the budgeted amount. The expenses were categorized into administrative salaries, staff leave, other administrative costs, OPEB contributions, project salaries, and project expenses. The anticipated OPEB contribution for the year is $80,902, with final adjustments pending the

completion of the audit.

3. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with Doug Desmarais to Provide Housing Rehabilitation Specialist Consultant Services for CDBG-Funded Housing Rehabilitation Projects in Various Communities within the Region

   Kimberly H. Robinson discussed authorizing the Executive Director to negotiate and execute a contract with Doug Demarais for housing rehabilitation specialist consultant services for CDBG-funded projects. Mr. Demarais has provided these services for the past three years and was the only applicant in the recent RFP process. The team expressed satisfaction with Mr. Demarais's work, noting that it was superior to that of previous consultants. Over the past year, the program assisted 72 housing units across 18 communities.

   MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH DOUG DESMARAIS TO PROVIDE HOUSING REHABILITATION SPECIALIST CONSULTANT SERVICES FOR CDBG-FUNDED HOUSING REHABILITATION PROJECTS IN VARIOUS COMMUNITIES WITHIN THE REGION. 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 Norton Communications to Provide Communications Consultant Services to the PVPC

   Ms. Robinson presented the motion to authorize the Executive Director to negotiate and execute a contract with Norton Communications to provide communications consulting services to the PVPC. Kate Norton has served the PVPC for two years, primarily handling press releases and significantly enhancing media coverage. Ms. Norton was responsible for designing a recent event and successfully project-managing the organization's website update. Ms. Robinson noted that contracting communications services is more cost effective than employing a full-time staff member, typically resulting in at least a 50% reduction in costs.

   MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH NORTON COMMUNICATIONS TO PROVIDE COMMUNICATIONS CONSULTANT SERVICES TO THE PVPC. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Accept Proposals for and Negotiate a New Three-Year Vehicle Lease to Replace the PVPC’s Expiring Vehicle Lease

   Ms. Robinson presented the motion for the Executive Director to accept proposals and negotiate a new three-year vehicle lease to replace the PVPC’s expiring lease. The current leased vehicle, a Ford Escape, supports transportation-related tasks and is available for staff use; its lease ends in December, 2025. Quotes for a replacement have been requested from several local dealerships, and the Executive Director will negotiate once responses are received. No expenditure had yet been approved; only permission to negotiate had been granted. Gary Roux explained that leasing is preferred because it minimizes maintenance costs and allows mileage reimbursement at the government rate, while purchasing with federal funds involves more restrictions and complex reimbursement rules.

   MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY JACK LUTTRELL, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO ACCEPT PROPOSALS FOR AND NEGOTIATE A NEW THREE-YEAR VEHICLE LEASE TO REPLACE THE PVPC’S EXPIRING VEHICLE LEASE. 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 the Town of Monson to Partner in a MassDEP 319 Grant to Improve Water Quality in Chicopee Brook

   Ms. Robinson requested authorization for the Executive Director to negotiate and execute a contract with the town of Monson to partner on a MassDEP 319 Grant. The goal is to improve water quality in Chicopee Brook. Ken Comia explained that the Town of Monson received a DEP grant to fund projects aimed at preventing, controlling, and reducing non-point source pollution. The PVPC will assist with stormwater best management practices and landscape management. The environmental team, including Patty Gambarini, will work with the town's conservation agent on these efforts.

   MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY JACK JEMSEK, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF MONSON TO PARTNER IN A MASSDEP 319 GRANT TO IMPROVE WATER QUALITY IN CHICOPEE BROOK. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement with The Town of Amherst for the Performance of a "Zero Waste Study"

   Ms. Robinson requested authorization for the Executive Director to negotiate and execute a contract with the Town of Amherst for a zero-waste study. Eric Weiss explained that the initiative began with Jack Jemsek and involved discussions with Paul Brockleman, the town manager of Amherst. Amherst aims to develop a state-of-the-art zero-waste collection system that diverts as much material as possible from landfills and incinerators. The study will examine all aspects of solid waste management to achieve this goal. There is significant local interest, and a committee will be involved.

   James Whalen asked if the study could be replicated across other valleys. Mr. Weiss confirmed that the goal is to prepare an RFP to bid out the system and that the approach could be replicated in other communities.

   MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF AMHERST FOR THE PERFORMANCE OF A "ZERO WASTE STUDY." THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

8. Contracts Signed Under $25,000

   Two contracts were signed in September 2025, totaling $8,377. Work is being undertaken with the Town of Wales and its highway superintendent to complete grant administration for the DER Municipal Culvert Replacement Program. Additionally, assistance will be provided to the Town of Ludlow in completing the Age- and Dementia-Friendly Community Assessment Action Plan.

9. Human Resources Items

   Ms. Robinson reported that the PVPC is currently conducting interviews for the Deputy Director position in Land Use and Environment as Mr. Comia has recently been promoted to Director. There were 15 applications received for the Deputy Director role, representing a significant increase compared to previous years. The interview process is ongoing, and an announcement regarding the appointment is expected in early December 2025.

10. Executive Director's Highlights and Updates

Ms. Robinson noted that the October 9th Commission Meeting held two weeks ago was a great success, with 99 individuals in attendance. Attendees were encouraged to share their thoughts via email or phone. Since the meeting, announcements for CDBG applications for fiscal year 2025 have begun to come out. One Stop applications were released about two weeks ago. However, the governor's office has placed the details under embargo, so specifics cannot be shared yet.

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

There is a PVRVC meeting the week of October 27 The agenda for the meeting has not yet been sent out, as this week's focus was on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) meeting. The Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) committee recently reconvened to discuss changes in federal funding and resource prioritization. The next CEDS meeting is scheduled for early December 2025.

The Operations Subcommittee meeting is scheduled for October 30, 2025. The main topic is the Executive Director's evaluation, which will be based on her presentation at the October 9th Commission meeting. Ms. Robinson is expected to provide a summary before the meeting. The goal is to move to a fiscal year evaluation basis. The Executive Committee will receive a recommendation in November 2025.

Mr. Whalen shared that the Town of Holland has decided to join the IT contract organized by the PVPC. Other towns, including Monson, Hatfield, Williamsburg, and Palmer, are also considering participation. The contract is expected to streamline processes and reduce the need for frequent bidding. The select board in Holland is confident in this approach.

The ECO One Stop grant program was discussed. Expressions of interest are due October 28. Communities can submit up to four expressions of interest, and the application process will open in the new year. The program covers MVP action grants, planning assistance grants, dam and seawall municipal culvert repair, and cooler corridor grants, offered by the Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs.

MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY JACK LUTTRELL, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 5:47 P.M.

12. Action Items

- Deanna Young will add the international fellow's country to the minutes of the September 25th ECM.
- Ms. Edinger and Ms. Young will ensure that Executive Committee members receive the financial presentation prepared by Ms. Edinger.
- Ms. Edinger will prepare a breakdown/explanation of the surplus amount by November 20, 2025, for the next meeting.
- Ms. Young and Ms. Robinson are to arrange the Operations Subcommittee meeting by October 24, 2025 (noting that Mr. Dwyer, George Kingston, and Marilyn Gorman Fil are available for October 30, 2025).
- Mr. Comia will share details of the ECO One Stop program, which closes on October 28, 2025, with the Executive Committee by email.

Respectfully Submitted,
Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the October 23, 2025 Meeting:

1. Executive Committee October 23, 2025, Meeting Agenda
2. Executive Committee September 25, 2025, Minutes
3. October 23, 2025, Possible Motions
4. September 2025 List of Payments
5. September 2025 Financial Summary
6. Signed Contracts – September 2025
7. FY25 Revenue and Expenses
8. September 2025 AP Payment History
9. September 2025 Check Listings