PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of Executive Committee Zoom Meeting
February 26, 2026, 5:00 P.M.

Executive Committee Members Present:
William Dwyer, Chair – Hadley
George Kingston, Vice Chair – East Longmeadow
Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk – Belchertown
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 Robinson, Executive Director
Rana Al-Jammal, Principal Transportation Planner
Laura Bandara, Deputy Director, Land Use and Environment Department
Ken Comia, Director, Land Use and Environment Department
Lisa Edinger, Director of Finance
Catherine Ratté, Deputy Director
Gary Roux, Director of Transportation Planning
Deanna Young, Administrative Services Coordinator

Guest:
Tanya Campbell, CPA, CBIZ

1. Chairman's Call to Order, Welcome, and Approval of the Minutes of the Operations Subcommittee Meeting Held on October 30, 2025, and the Executive Committee Meeting Held on January 22, 2026

   The Executive Committee meeting on February 26, 2026, was called to order at 5:00 p.m. by Chair William Dwyer.

   MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY MARILYN GORMAN FIL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE OCTOBER 30, 2025, OPERATIONS SUBCOMMITTEE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

   MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE JANUARY 22, 2026, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED WITH ONE ABSTENTION FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. Listing of Payments/Financial Reports

   Lisa Edinger reported that all payments and financial activity were routine and consistent with expectations. Cash flow remains strong, and the Other Post-Employment Benefits (OPEB) trust balance has exceeded $1 million, nearly doubling in value. As of the reporting date, 47% of budgeted revenues had been received, and 63% of budgeted expenditures had been spent, consistent with the time of year.

3. Presentation and Acceptance of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) Fiscal Year 2025 Audit Reports as Prepared by the Commission's CPA Firm, CBIZ

   Tanya Campbell, CPA at CBIZ, presented the fiscal year 2025 audit, reporting an unqualified opinion with no findings, strong internal controls, an improved fund balance, a reduced net pension liability, and continued progress in funding the OPEB trust, which has now exceeded $1 million.

   The Committee questioned whether potential future liabilities related to the state retirement system or state-level audits could affect the Commission. Ms. Campbell explained that while the state retirement system is audited, the issue facing the PVPC concerns unresolved legislative treatment of certain employer contributions, not audit findings, and that many regional planning agencies are in similar circumstances.

   It was noted that the continued separation between unassigned and Board-designated fund balances may need to be reconsidered from a policy perspective. Ms. Campbell confirmed that the designation resulted from a prior Board vote and could be reversed at any time by Commission action.

   Ms. Campbell also reported that the required federal single audit of the Highway Planning and Construction grant was completed with no findings and submitted in advance of the federal deadline.

   MOVED BY JAMES WHALEN, SECONDED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, TO ACCEPT THE PVPC'S AUDIT REPORTS ENCOMPASSING THE PLANNING COMMISSION'S 2025 FISCAL YEAR (I.E., JULY 1, 2024, THROUGH JUNE 30, 2025) AS PREPARED BY THE PVPC'S CPA FIRM, CBIZ. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

4. Presentation of the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) New Interim AI Use and Governance Policy

   Catherine Ratté presented the Commission's new interim AI use and governance policy as an informational item. Ms. Ratté explained that the policy was developed using Commonwealth guidance, internal review by department heads, and staff input, and was intentionally adopted on an interim basis to allow for evaluation and refinement.

   Ms. Ratté noted that the policy permits limited, low-risk use of artificial intelligence for supportive tasks, requires disclosure and human review of AI-generated content, and prohibits sensitive uses such as hiring and applicant screening. Ms. Ratté confirmed that all AI outputs must be reviewed by staff and disclosed to supervisors. Ms. Ratté clarified that supervisory review is standard practice, although not explicitly stated in the policy, and noted that this could be clarified during future revisions.

   The Committee asked whether staff training related to equity, bias, and data protection would be provided as part of the policy's implementation. Ms. Ratté responded that formal training is not yet planned, but that the suggestion will be considered.

5. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement between the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the Town of South Hadley for the Completion of a Community-Wide Historic Preservation Plan, Partially Funded by a Massachusetts Historical Commission Survey and Planning Grant

   Kimberly Robinson presented a proposed contract with the Town of South Hadley for completion of a community-wide historic preservation plan. She explained that the project would take approximately 11 months, would not exceed $28,000.

   The Committee noted that the contract amount was just over the standard threshold.

MOVED BY GEORGE KINGSTON, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE TOWN OF SOUTH HADLEY FOR THE COMPLETION OF A COMMUNITY-WIDE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $28,000. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Authorization for the Executive Director to Negotiate and Execute a Mutually Acceptable Contractual Agreement between the Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) and the City of Springfield to Facilitate Development of the City's ADA Compliance Plan

Ken Comia presented a proposed contract with the City of Springfield to assist with the development of the City's first ADA Compliance Plan. He explained that the work would include a self-evaluation and transition plan under Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act, including review of municipal programs, services, and facilities. Mr. Comia confirmed that building and program accessibility would be part of the self-evaluation phase.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY DOUG ALBERTSON, TO AUTHORIZE THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR TO NEGOTIATE AND EXECUTE A MUTUALLY ACCEPTABLE CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH THE CITY OF SPRINGFIELD TO FACILITATE DEVELOPMENT OF THE CITY'S ADA COMPLIANCE PLAN IN AN AMOUNT NOT TO EXCEED $250,000. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Contracts Signed Under $25,000

Ms. Robinson reported that nine contracts totaling approximately $77,415 were executed in January for planning, technical assistance, historic preservation, energy, and procurement services.

8. Human Resources Items

Ms. Robinson reported that interviews for a Senior Planner position in the Land Use and Environment Department have been completed and an offer had been extended, with a response pending. She also reported that nine applications have been received for the Community and Economic Development Director position and that first-round interviews are underway.

Ms. Robinson advised that Eric Weiss departed the Planning Commission on February 13, 2026, and that internal transition work is ongoing.

9. Executive Director's Highlights and Updates

Ms. Robinson provided updates on recent activities, including a municipal communications roundtable funded through District Local Technical Assistance (DLTA), meetings in Washington, D.C. with members of the congressional delegation, progress on Economic Development Administration funding, and upcoming congressional earmark opportunities.

The Committee discussed eligible projects for earmarks and prior experiences with the application process, including dam infrastructure needs and coordination with congressional offices. Updates were also provided on regional rail planning and DLTA advocacy efforts.

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

Mr. Whalen shared updates on conversations with federal officials related to regional infrastructure and legislative opportunities.

Peri Hall expressed appreciation on behalf of the Town of Goshen for the PVPC staff support during a period of staffing transition, noting the PVPC team's professionalism, responsiveness, and effectiveness.

MOVED BY WILLIAM DWYER, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 6:10 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted,
Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the February 26, 2026, Meeting

1. Executive Committee February 26, 2026 Meeting Agenda
2. February 26, 2026, Possible Motions
3. Operations Subcommittee October 30, 2026 Minutes
4. Executive Committee January 22, 2026, Minutes
5. January 2026 Financial Summary
6. January 2026 List of Payments
7. Signed Contracts – January 2026
8. PVPC FY25 Audit Findings Letter
9. PVPC FY25 Audit Report
10. PVPC FY25 Audit Financial Statements
11. PVPC Interim AI Use and Governance Policy