PIONEER VALLEY PLANNING COMMISSION (PVPC)
Minutes of Executive Committee Zoom Meeting
April 23, 2026, 5:00 P.M.

Executive Committee Members Present:
William Dwyer, Chair – Hadley
T.J. Cousineau, Assistant Treasurer – Blandford
Peri Hall, At-large Member – Goshen
Jack Jemsek, At-large Member – Amherst
Jack Luttrell, At-large Member – Wilbraham

PVPC Staff Present:
Kimberly H. Robinson, Executive Director
Laura Bandara, Deputy Director, Land Use and Environment Department
Lisa Edinger, Director of Finance
Anand Fedele, Senior Planner I, Land Use and Environment Department
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 March 26, 2026

   The Executive Committee meeting on April 23, 2026, was called to order at 5:02 p.m. by Chair William Dwyer.

   MOVED BY JACK JEMSEK, SECONDED BY PERI HALL, TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE MARCH 26, 2026, EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

2. Introduction of New Pioneer Valley Planning Commission (PVPC) Employees

   Laura Bandara introduced new staff member Anand Fedele. Mr. Fedele briefly described his background in regional planning, including prior work at the Windham Regional Commission, and noted he is supporting the Pioneer Valley Regional Housing Plan Update, zoning/subdivision work, and clean energy projects; he welcomed commissioner engagement.

3. Listing of Payments/Financial Reports

   Lisa Edinger reviewed the payment listing and a point-in-time financial summary, including a $196,000 Belchertown Sports Haven receivable that was approved through the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and drawn promptly, with a reimbursement check to be sent to the town. Ms. Edinger summarized year-to-date revenue and expenses and noted revenue timing lags due to PVPC billing in arrears and many projects being milestone- or task-based. Ms. Edinger confirmed it is typical for revenue to trail expenses at this point in the year and noted that she could show multi-year comparisons in the future.

4. Approval of the PVPC Chair to Release the Draft Amendment of the FFY2026 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for 21-Day Public Comment at the April 28 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

   Gary Roux noted that the PVPC is required to amend the current FFY2026 UPWP because the Pioneer Valley Transit Authority (PVTA) requested changes in scope, including removing a planned non-rider survey and shifting emphasis to a paratransit survey and initial work on a PVTA southern-tier system survey. Related "bus plus" work is being removed because the PVTA is currently offering fare-free service, so the mobile ticketing app is not used for fare collection and cannot be meaningfully evaluated.

Mr. Roux also described adding updated regional travel time contours to the Information Center task and reducing the Route 202 study budget from $60,000 to $45,000 based on the PVPC's expectation that the work can be completed with targeted consultant support.

MOVED BY PERI HALL, SECONDED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, TO AUTHORIZE THE PVPC CHAIR TO RELEASE THE DRAFT AMENDMENT OF THE FY2026 UNIFIED PLANNING WORK PROGRAM (UPWP) FOR 21-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT AT THE APRIL 28, 2026, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

5. Approval of the PVPC Chair to Release the Draft FFY2027 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for 21-Day Public Comment at the April 28 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

Mr. Roux indicated the UPWP reflects anticipated modest increases in federal planning funds and outlines the PVPC's proposed transportation planning work for the upcoming federal fiscal year.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY JACK LUTTRELL, TO AUTHORIZE THE PVPC CHAIR TO RELEASE THE DRAFT FFY2027 UPWP FOR 21-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT AT THE APRIL 28, 2026, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

6. Approval of the PVPC Chair to Release the Draft FFY2027 - 2031 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) for 21-Day Public Comment at the April 28 Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) Meeting

Mr. Roux described the TIP as the region's multi-year programming document for highway and transit investments. He noted it is structured to allow adjustments as project schedules and cost estimates evolve.

The Committee discussed how far in arrears the region is in meeting transportation needs. Mr. Roux confirmed that it is a continuing struggle because transportation funding increases (around 2% annually) do not keep pace with inflation, and project delays further increase costs over time. Even when money is moved between projects, transportation funding is governed by rules and eligibility requirements that prevent it from being used for certain necessary local repairs, which creates frustration because funds are not fully flexible.

MOVED BY T.J. COUSINEAU, SECONDED BY PERI HALL, TO AUTHORIZE THE PVPC CHAIR TO RELEASE THE DRAFT FFY 2027 TO 2031 TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM FOR 21-DAY PUBLIC COMMENT AT THE APRIL 28, 2026, METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION (MPO) MEETING. THE MOTION CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY FOLLOWING A ROLL CALL VOTE.

7. Contracts Signed Under $25,000

Kimberly H. Robinson reported four contracts signed in March totaling $63,340: an Open Space and Recreation Plan for Hampden; assistance to Wales managing Rural Development grant funds for a street culvert design project; assistance to Ayer preparing its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application; and an annual support contract with Springfield providing staff hours to support the Springfield Historical Commission. Ms. Robinson noted that Ayer reached out because its regional planning agency was not providing that service.

8. Human Resources Items

Ms. Robinson highlighted Mr. Fedele's start and announced that Sarah Maroney was selected as Community Development Director through a competitive process and would begin the following Monday, noting the start date was planned so she could complete the current CDBG applications. Ms. Robinson also reported that the PVPC

received attorney comments on the employee handbook, plans to review proposed changes with the full staff at a team meeting to gather input, and will bring the updated handbook to the Executive Committee in May.

9. Executive Director's Highlights and Updates

Ms. Robinson reported attending a MassDOT presentation hosted by Congressman Neal at Union Station on East-West Rail and new funding and requested that MassDOT present to the full Commission in June. She reported that the PVPC supported 10 CDBG applications submitted on Tuesday (one for Ayer and nine for other regional communities) and expects decisions in August or September. It was noted that the process went smoothly and that submissions were early. The next major grant cycle is the Community One Stop, and the PVPC has already held a regional roundtable with communities to identify potential projects. The PVPC will host an upcoming roundtable with the Federal Funding and Infrastructure Office (FFIO) regarding a new municipal/tribal technical assistance program. Ms. Robinson described partnering with the FFIO to connect communities with technical assistance and resources.

Ms. Robinson also reported meeting with Senator Finegold, chair of the Senate Joint Committee on Economic Development and Emerging Technologies, at a Western Mass Economic Development Council (EDC) session, where the PVPC shared the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) and discussed the PVPC's Quantum Training Academy. House budget amendments include an earmark for the PVPC, in conjunction with the EDC, for an industrial lands analysis sponsored by Representative Gonzalez. She also reported ongoing advocacy for DLTA funding, with a goal to increase from $3 million to $4 million, and noted plans to send a template letter for members to use with their representatives. Finally, she reported recent engagement through the Massachusetts Association of Regional Planning Agencies with the new secretary of Economic Development and undersecretary and confirmed that the PVPC is working to schedule a presentation on the PVPC's CEDS work.

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

T.J. Cousineau stated that his community is having difficulty finding a water superintendent and asked other members to share any leads. It was noted that many communities are facing similar recruitment and retention challenges and that shared service models could be worth exploring.

Ms. Robinson added that the PVPC previously tried to organize a shared water operator program. However, the participating towns were unable to finalize it. The PVPC may be interested in attempting a shared approach again if communities want to pursue it.

MOVED BY WILLIAM DWYER, TO ADJOURN TODAY'S EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING. THE MEETING WAS ADJOURNED WITHOUT OBJECTION AT 5:49 P.M.

11. Action Items

- Deanna Young will resolve the agenda PDF hyperlink issue for Zoom meetings.

Respectfully Submitted,
Doug Albertson, Secretary/Clerk

List of Documents and Other Items Distributed at the April 23, 2026, Meeting

1. Executive Committee April 23, 2026, Meeting Agenda

2. April 23, 2026, Possible Motions
3. Executive Committee March 26, 2026, Minutes
4. March 2026 Financial Summary
5. March 2026 List of Payments
6. Signed Contracts – March 2026