

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments
40 Church Street, Suite 200
Lowell, MA 01852

Minutes of Meeting: December 21, 2022

I. The December 21, 2022 meeting of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) was held in hybrid form via Zoom and in person at the NMCOG office at 40 Church Street, Lowell, Massachusetts. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Chair, Andrew Deslaurier, presiding. The following people were in attendance:

Councilors

- Andrew Deslaurier, NMCOG Chair, Billerica Select Board
- Mary McBride, Clerk, Billerica Alternate
- Pat Wojtas, MPO Rep., Chelmsford Select Board
- Paul McDougall, Chelmsford Planning Board
- Daniel Rourke, Lowell City Council
- Gerard Frechette, Treasurer, Lowell Planning Board
- Stephen Themelis, Pepperell Alternate
- Jayne Wellman, Asst. Treasurer, Tewksbury Select Board
- Jim Duffy, Tewksbury Planning Board
- Anita Tonakarn-Nguyen, Vice Chair, Westford Select Board
- Darrin Wizst, Westford Planning Board

Guest

- State Representative Rodney Elliott

Staff

- Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director
- Bert Almeida, Financial Officer
- Christopher Hayes, Housing and Economic Development Planner
- Jeff Owen, Regional Planner
- Jessica Boulanger, Transportation Planner
- Daniela Garcia Moreno, Sustainability Planner
- Katrina Garavanian, Executive Assistant

II. MINUTES OF MEETING: NOVEMBER 16, 2022

The minutes of the November 16, 2022 meeting were distributed to all Councilors for review.

Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Jayne Wellman, on a roll call vote, the Council approved the minutes of the November 16, 2022 as presented. Andrew Deslaurier, Dan Rourke, Jim Duffy and Darrin Wizst abstained as they were not present for the November meeting.

III. FINANCIAL REPORT AND WARRANT – INCOME AND EXPENSE STATEMENTS 11/17/2022 – 12/19/2022

Bert Almeida presented the Financial Report and the Warrant for review and approval. Based on a motion made by Daniel Rourke and seconded by Mary McBride, following a roll call vote, the Council unanimously approved the Financial Report and Warrant. The Financial Report is included as Attachment #2.

IV. EMPLOYEE HANDBOOK

Ms. Raitt presented a draft NMCOG Employee Handbook with updated policies and forms for consideration of adoption by the Council. She stated that the Handbook has been reviewed by KP Law and is compiled with input from several sources including other Regional Planning Agencies within the Commonwealth, NMCOG's attorneys, municipalities, and NMCOG staff. While there remain a few items that need editing, the overall document is comprehensive and a policy should be adopted and put into place for the purpose of equitable and fair procedures for all. Andrew Deslaurier requested additional time to review the document and upon voiced agreement of the Council, the Employee Handbook will be placed on the January 18, 2023 Council meeting agenda for discussion and consideration of adoption.

V. RESOLUTION TO COMMIT MATCHING FUNDS FOR THE LOWELL REGIONAL TRANSIT AUTHORITY (LRTA) TRANSIT PLANNING CONTRACT WITH THE US DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION

Ms. Raitt requested the Resolution to Commit Matching Funds for LRTA Transit Planning document be placed on the January meeting agenda as she is awaiting clarification and further information prior to the Council endorsing the Resolution.

VI. REPORT OF THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The Executive Director's Report was distributed to the Council for review prior to the meeting. Ms. Raitt provided an overview of a few highlights, including Envision 2050 the Regional Long Range Transportation Plan, updates to the Weights and Measures program, the Municipal Digital Equity program, the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) imperative webinar, the Northern Middlesex Municipal CEO Group, upcoming funding opportunities, personnel updates and a Council Strategic Planning session in January.

VII. COMMUNITY EXCHANGE

Jayne Wellman informed the group that the new Center Elementary School in Tewksbury will open in January, early and under budget. She also thanked Ms. Raitt for her December 20th MBTA Communities presentation to Tewksbury’s combined Board of Selectmen and Planning Board meeting.

VIII. REMINDERS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Ms. Raitt reminded the Council that the next meeting is scheduled to be held Wednesday, January 18, 2023 at 7:00 PM.

IX. OTHER BUSINESS NOT KNOWN AT THE TIME OF THE POSTING OF THIS AGENDA


Ms. Raitt invited those present to gather at The Keep immediately following the meeting for an informal holiday season celebration.

X. ADJOURN

Following a motion made by Jerry Frechette and seconded by Darrin Wizst, on a voice vote the Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 7:46 pm.

CLERK’S CERTIFICATE

I certify that this is a true copy of the Minutes of the meeting of December 21, 2022.

Attest: 
Mary K. McBride, Clerk