



# Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

## NOTICE OF MEETING

A Multi-Disciplinary  
Regional Planning  
Agency Serving:

Billerica  
Chelmsford  
Dracut  
Dunstable  
Lowell  
Pepperell  
Tewksbury  
Tyngsborough  
Westford

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Andrew N. Deslaurier  
Chair

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Jennifer M. Raitt  
Executive Director

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40 Church Street  
Suite 200  
Lowell, MA  
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The next meeting of the **Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG)** will be held on **Wednesday, June 21, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.** at **NMCOG Offices, 40 Church St, Suite 200, Lowell, MA 01852** with optional remote access via Zoom. To join this meeting via Zoom, please go to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88101757628?pwd=MIl4dEhJaXFHZERLNHlxZzNOZHN6dz09>. The Meeting ID is: 881 0175 7628 and Passcode is: 439793. If you are joining by phone, dial (646) 558-8656, Meeting ID# 881 0175 7628

## AGENDA

- I. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. **Approval of Minutes - May 17, 2023 (Vote Required)**
- III. **Financial Report and Warrant - Income and expense statements 5/16/2023-6/19/2023 (Vote Required)**
- IV. **Report of the Finance Committee – Revised FY 2024 Budget (Vote Required)**
- V. **Welcome to Kelly Lynema, Deputy Director**
- VI. **Report of the Executive Director, May 2023**
- VII. **Community Exchange**
- VIII. **Summer Meeting Schedule**
- IX. **Reminders and Announcements**
  1. NMCOG Strategic Planning Retreat – June 24, 2023 10 AM-12 PM at the Chelmsford Public Library
  2. NMCOG Council Meeting – July 19, 2023 at 7:00 PM
- X. **Other Business not known at the time of posting of this agenda**
- XI. **Adjourn**

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### **CITY/TOWN CLERKS: PLEASE POST PURSUANT TO OPEN MEETING LAW**

Please contact Lesley Shahbazian at [lshahbazian@nmcog.org](mailto:lshahbazian@nmcog.org) with any questions on this agenda.

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

**Minutes from Council Meeting May 17, 2023**

**I.** The May 17, 2023 meeting of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) was held hybrid at 40 Church Street, Suite 200, in the conference room and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Andrew Deslaurier at 7:00 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Councilors:

- Andrew Deslaurier, Chair, Billerica Select Board
- Pat Wojtas, MPO Rep, Chelmsford Select Board
- Annita Tanini, Chelmsford Planning Board
- Philippe Thibault, Dracut Alternate
- Daniel Rourke, Lowell Select Board
- Gerard Frechette, Treasurer, Lowell Planning Board
- Joan Ladik, Pepperell Planning Board
- Stephen Themelis, Pepperell Alternate
- Jayne Wellman, Assistant Treasurer, Tewksbury Select Board
- Darrin Wizst, Westford Planning Board
- Douglas Bruce, Chelmsford Alternate

Staff:

- Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director
- Christopher Hayes, AICP, Housing and Economic Development Planner
- Justin Howard, Transportation Director
- Sara Paz, Finance and Benefits Manager
- Lesley Shahbazian, Executive Assistant

**II. Election of Vice-Chair**

Stephen Themelis has volunteered as Vice Chair. Chair called for other nominations. None were received. Based on a Motion by Darrin Wizst, seconded by Jayne Wellman, on a roll call vote, the Council approved Stephen Themelis as the new Vice-Chair.

### **III. Minutes of Meeting: April 19, 2023**

The Minutes of the April 19, 2023 meeting were distributed to all Councilors for review. Based on a Motion by Stephen Themelis, seconded by Jayne Wellman, on a roll call vote, the Council approved the Minutes of the April 19, 2023 meeting.

### **IV. Financial Report and Warrant – Income and Expense Statements 4/19/2023**

Sara Paz, Finance and Benefits Manager, presented the Financial Report and the Warrant for review and approval. Stephen Themelis asked about the Pictometry cost and Ms. Raitt explained Pictometry contracts are updated every few years with our communities. More details are in the Executive Director's report.

Based on a Motion by Gerard Frechette, seconded by Darrin Wizst, following a roll call vote, the Council unanimously approved the Financial Report and Warrant.

### **V. Report of the Executive Director**

The Executive Director's Report was distributed for review to the Council in advance of the meeting. Ms. Raitt shared some highlights:

- Council Updates:
  - Everyone has to be annually re-appointed to the Council. Ms. Raitt has contacted everyone's Town Manager/Town Administrator to initiate a reappointment letter that we need to have on file.
  - Kelly Lynema is the new Deputy Director and her start date is May 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Staff Updates:
  - Justin Howard is leaving the agency. Ms. Raitt thanked him for his 21 years of service. His position will not be immediately posted until Ms. Raitt has a meeting with the MPO to talk about the scope of work we do for the region and confirm we are moving in the right direction. At that time we will post the position.

Jayne Wellman asked if MIIA is property and casualty. Sara Paz explained MIIA is for our health and dental insurance. Cabot Strategies is our property and casualty insurance. She asked if they made a requirement about Cyber Security – a line in our policy regarding a breach. Sara Paz will inquire about this.

Pat Wojtas asked about the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program - when will the grant begin? Chris Hayes explained that NMCOG is a sub-consultant to MAPC, and working to finalize scope of work and timeline. This work will begin in a matter of weeks. There is a deadline that was requested from the City of Lowell, but that date is negotiable.

Jayne Wellman asked if digital equity will be part of renegotiations with Comcast. Chris Hayes stated this process will take 9 months to 1 year and might be helpful in informing future town telecom contracts.

## **VI. Community Exchange**

- Gerard Frechette mentioned the security breach that occurred in the City of Lowell and the big impact it continues to have. Daniel Rourke explained that online payment information is secure because Lowell uses a third party for these transactions. This is an ongoing investigation by the FBI. It is estimated it will take 16-35 days to get back online. No ransom has been demanded.
- Philippe Thibault shared Dracut just had their election and 589 voters out of 20,000 came out (2%). There were no contested races. June Town Meeting is coming up and it is expected that more voters will attend this meeting than the election.
- Jayne Wellman shared that Tewksbury is getting ready to approve three cannabis dispensaries. Nine applicants will be evaluated. Ms. Raitt offered to share best practices on the selection process.
- Joan Ladik – Pepperell - the Planning Department and the Economic Development Committee held their first Business Owners workshop. There are two grants available that will change the look of Railroad Square. Business owners were invited to ask questions. 30 businesses showed up and expressed their concerns about changes to the Main Street environment. Pepperell created a Wayfinding Committee that will be posting signs around town. Currently there are three kiosks offering businesses to purchase an advertisement with QR codes that lead to business websites/town website along with a brochure.
- Stephen Themelis – Pepperell - mentioned the “Adopt an Island” program has just been endorsed by the Select Board. Five businesses have already signed up. Pepperell Town Meeting voted on May 8<sup>th</sup> to put the Public Safety Complex on a special town meeting ballot on June 12<sup>th</sup> - \$37 million project.

**VII. Reminders and Announcements**

- Lowell Housing Forum on May 31, 2023 at 6:30pm at the Lowell Senior Center
- NMCOG Council Meeting on June 21, 2023 at 7:00pm

**VIII. Other Business not know at the time of this agenda**


**IX. Adjournment**

Following a motion made by Gerard Frechette and seconded by Jayne Wellman, on a voice vote the Council unanimously adjourned the meeting at 7:35 pm.

**CLERK’S CERTIFICATE**

I certify that this is a true copy of the Minutes of the meeting of May 17, 2023.

Attest:



Mary K. McBride, Clerk

**WARRANT**

Date: June 21, 2023 Amount: \$217,983.77

SIGNED: JWRH  
Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director

Signed:

Representing:

[Signature]  
[Signature]  
[Signature]  
[Signature]  
Dorey Bruce

Chelmsford  
Pratt  
Westford  
Billerica  
Chelmsford

## Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

FINANCIAL REPORT  
June 21, 2023

CASH BALANCES AS OF 05/31/2023:

Enterprise Bank - New Investment Acct	\$ 514,837.36
Enterprise Bank - New Operating Acct	\$ 48,457.08
Washington Savings - Investment Acct.	\$ 534,691.97
Salem Five 36 MO.CD *	\$ 173,154.00

TOTAL CASH ACCOUNT BALANCES \$ 1,271,140.41

Restricted Cash Account AS OF 3/31/2023:

OPEB (VantageCare RHS-EIP:Vantagepoint MP Trad Growth Dedicated Retirement Health Savings Plan)	\$ 323,376.40
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ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE - PROJECTS INVOICED:

5/18/23	Proj 30950 - MassDOT #118971 - April 2023 Invoice	\$ 49,887.33
6/15/23	Nearmap 2024	\$ 20,920.00
6/6/23	DOER REPA II April - May invoice	\$ 11,232.20

TOTAL PROJECT RECEIVABLES: \$ 82,039.53

ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE - FY 2024 MEMBER ASSESSMENTS: \$ 108,231.16

OTHER RECEIVABLES:

TOTAL ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLES: \$ 190,270.69

NET CASH TOTAL INCLUDING RECEIVABLES: \$ 1,461,411.10

ACCOUNTS PAYABLE :

A/P CHECKS PRESENTED FOR SIGNATURE	\$ (55,079.82)
ANTICIPATED EXPENSES / INVOICES PENDING	\$ (86,903.95)
ANTICIPATED PAYROLL & TAXES (Through May 11, 2023)	\$ (76,000.00)

TOTAL WARRANT: \$ (217,983.77)

TOTAL ACCOUNTS PAYABLE: \$ (217,983.77)

NET CASH TOTAL (INCLUDING RECEIVABLES, LESS ACCOUNTS PAYABLE): \$ 1,243,427.33

Other Outstanding Obligations:

Contract Advance-DLTA XV	\$ (54,807.00)
Due to/from Grantor-MHD Contracts FY94 - FY22	\$ (125,827.00)
	<u>\$ (180,634.00)</u>

NET CASH TOTAL (Less) OTHER OUTSTANDING PAYABLES: \$ 1,062,793.33

**Northern Middlesex Council of Governments  
Summary Budget FY24**

	FY24 Budget	FY23 Budget Comparison
<b>Total Revenue</b>	\$ 2,493,554	\$ 1,661,859
<b>Less: Direct Non-Staff Project Costs</b>	\$ 243,599	\$ 41,577
<b>Less: Direct Staff Planning Costs</b>	\$ 32,566	\$ 28,423
<b>Net Available for Internal Operations</b>	<b>\$ 2,217,389</b>	<b>\$ 1,591,859</b>
<b><u>Internal Operating Expense</u></b>		
<b>Direct Labor</b>	<b>\$ 897,639</b>	<b>\$ 1,366,131</b>
<b>Indirect Expenses</b>		
<b>Administrative Labor and Employee Benefits</b>	\$ 891,909	
<b>Travel</b>	\$ 300	\$ 500
<b>Operational Services</b>	\$ 274,430	\$ 194,195
<b>Other Expenses</b>	\$ 104,145	\$ 43,615
<b>Less Administrative Transfer Payments</b>	\$ (35,000)	\$ (35,000)
<b>Total Indirect Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 1,235,783</b>	<b>\$ 203,310</b>
<b>Total Internal Operating Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 2,133,422</b>	<b>\$ 1,569,441</b>
<b>Fund Balance</b>	\$ 83,967	\$ 22,418
<b>Total Direct &amp; Indirect Expenses plus Fund Balance</b>	<b>\$ 2,493,554</b>	<b>\$ 1,661,859</b>
<b>Excess/(Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ 83,967</b>	<b>\$ 22,418</b>



**Northern Middlesex Council of Governments  
Expense Budget FY24**

	Expenses
Admin Salaries & Dir Staff Indirect Labor*	281,023
Employee Benefits	610,886
Travel	300
<b>Total Indirect Salaries, Benefits &amp; Travel</b>	<b>\$ 892,209</b>
<b>Direct Non-Staff Project Costs:</b>	
Consultants	190,194
Conference Costs/Training	1,109
Contract Travel	4,855
Advertising	4,649
Translation	13,101
Equip Maintenance/IT Direct	13,976
Project Supplies	11,364
Telephone	600
Other Reserve 10%	3,750
<b>Total Direct Non-Staff Project Costs</b>	<b>\$ 243,599</b>
<b>Operational Services:</b>	
Facilities (rent, maintenance, repairs, utilities)	156,072
Office Furniture and Equipment	20,000
Insurance	5,400
Office Machine Maintenance/Lease	8,200
Depreciation (Server 5 Year Life)	3,711
Office Supplies	18,462
Telecommunications (Phones, Internet, not IT services)	7,293
Advertising/ Postage	3,984
Meeting Expenses	4,608
Accounting System Annual Fees	3,700
Audit Fees	18,000
Legal Fees	25,000
<b>Total Operational Services</b>	<b>\$ 274,430</b>
<b>Other Expenses:</b>	
Memberships	7,729
Subscriptions/ Publications	1,000
Website Maintenance	5,416
IT Services	45,000
Professional Development	10,000
OPEB Unfunded	35,000
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>\$ 104,145</b>
<b>Less Administrative Transfer Payments</b>	<b>\$ (35,000)</b>

\*Admin Salaries & Dir Staff Indirect Labor includes Executive Director, Finance and Benefits Manager, and Executive Assistant

To: Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, Council and Alternate Members  
From: Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director  
Re: Executive Director's Report for May 2023  
Date: June 2023

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## **REGIONAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES**

### **Program Year 2023 District Local Technical Assistance Announcements**

In early May, NMCOG shared a press release and sent letters to each community announcing nearly \$800,000 in technical assistance across the region. These projects include District Local Technical Assistance and Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) funding, and address housing, energy and sustainability, economic development, and transportation. Local projects funded through DLTA and/or UPWP include:

- Billerica: Compliance with MBTA Zoning
- Chelmsford: Compliance with MBTA Zoning
- Chelmsford: Housing and Demographic Data Report
- Dracut: Transportation Prioritization and Grant Assistance
- Dunstable: Electric Vehicle Charging Stations
- Dunstable: Union Building Future Use Planning Process
- Lowell: Downtown Lowell Open Streets Planning
- Lowell: Lowell Housing Production Plan Phase 2A
- Pepperell: Housing Market Study Grant Seeking/Writing Assistance
- Pepperell: Subdivision Regulation Update Phase II
- Tewksbury: MBTA Zoning Compliance Modeling
- Tyngsborough: Compliance with MBTA Zoning
- Westford: MBTA Zoning Compliance Modeling

In addition, seven DLTA projects, which serve all nine communities, were awarded assistance:

- Regional Housing Workgroup and Subsidized Housing Inventory Review
- Housing Choice Initiative Support
- Regional Weights and Measures Program
- Regional Energy Efficiency Opportunity Support
- Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) Implementation
- Northern Middlesex Municipal CEO Group

- The MPO also heard updates on development of the Regional Transportation Plan, Envision 2050. Staff will present the draft Long-Range Transportation Plan, Envision 2050, to the MPO at their July meeting and release it for public comment. It is anticipated that the plan will be endorsed at the August MPO meeting and be in effect for the next federal fiscal year starting on October 1 for four years.

The next meeting of the MPO will be on June 28 at 2PM. Meeting topics will include FFY 2024-2028 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP), FFY 2024 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP), FFY 2023-2027 TIP Amendment 5, FFY 2025 -2050 Draft Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan (Envision 2050) and Draft Coordinated Public Transit Human Services Plan.

Jessica Boulanger is working to update the agency 2023 Coordinated Human Services Transportation Plan. This plan must be updated every 3 to 5 years in order for direct recipients and sub-recipients to receive formula funds through Section 5310. The Section 5310 Program is intended to enhance mobility for seniors and persons with disabilities. Jessica made presentations on the Coordinated Public Transit – Human Services Plan in May at the Cameron Center in Westford and to seniors and the Disability Commission in Billerica. The discussion and feedback obtained during both sessions will be used to further inform this plan update providing insights on transportation challenges. On May 25, NMCOG staff hosted a Regional Coordinating Council meeting in partnership with the Merrimack Valley Planning Commission in fulfillment of the requirements of this plan update.

### **Weights and Measures**

During the month of May, NMCOG's Weights and Measures program conducted 23 inspections in the communities of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Littleton, Lowell, and Tewksbury. Of those 23 inspections conducted in May, 20 were annual inspections and three were new devices/businesses being added. The outcome of these inspections resulted in 218 devices being inspected and sealed. NMCOG's newly hired part-time sealer Ricardo Machado is making good progress on the processes of the Weights and Measures program. Gas stations and new business openings continue to be the bulk of our workload at the present time with the nice weather upon us.

### **Regional and Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program**

The Massachusetts Broadband Institute (MBI) notified the City of Lowell of their award for the Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program on behalf of the nine NMCOG communities. The nine communities selected the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) and NMCOG to assist with the regional planning process. MAPC submitted their proposed budget, including a final proposal for \$137,187 in funding to NMCOG as a subconsultant, on June 5. It is anticipated that MBI, MAPC/ NMCOG, and the City of

Westford. Additional approvals are anticipated for Billerica, Chelmsford, and Tyngsborough. NMCOG assisted with reviews and development of Action Plans for Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, and Tyngsborough. NMCOG recently kicked off MBTA Communities planning work with meetings with Billerica and Chelmsford's Planning Boards on June 12 and June 14, respectively. Staff have also begun providing technical for Lowell and Tewksbury by mapping GIS boundaries and reviewing proposed districts against the EOHLC's compliance modeling tool. Housing Production Plans

### **Dunstable Housing Production Plan**

NMCOG and the Town of Dunstable Affordable Housing Committee are looking forward to hosting a public meeting to review survey results and comprehensive needs assessment findings, discuss housing goals, and collaboratively develop the housing vision on June 26, 2023. The meeting will be held at Dunstable Town Hall.

### **Lowell Housing Production Plan**

NMCOG and the City of Lowell held a successful citywide workshop on May 31, with over 60 people discussing stories about Lowell's homes, housing, and community. A diverse set of opinions, needs, and goals were recorded, and attendees provided positive feedback on the meeting's format. Some learned of new perspectives for the first time from different communities within Lowell. These goals will be further refined in the next Lowell Forward public forum on June 21, 2023.

### **Tewksbury Housing Production Plan**

The draft Tewksbury Housing Production Plan for 2023-2027 was completed in early June and will be presented to the Planning Board and Select Board over the coming month. This is the culmination of dedicated work by NMCOG and Town of Tewksbury planning staff and represents a bold vision for continued affordable housing production and diversifying housing options in Tewksbury.

### **Dracut Recommendations for Inclusionary Zoning Implementation**

In early May, NMCOG completed a technical memorandum on Inclusionary Zoning for the Town of Dracut. This included recommendations based on best practices identified in the background research, goal statements in previous planning, data collected during the project, and the feedback gathered at the public meeting. Next steps are outlined in the technical memorandum, including conducting an Economic Feasibility study, convening local and regional stakeholders, developing consensus-building opportunities, and conducting informant interviews with communities who have passed Inclusionary Zoning. The Dracut Affordable Housing Partnership and Community Development Director, Alison Manugian, was instrumental in guiding the work.

information on the Graniteville Brownfields Inventory or the upcoming charrette, please contact Sustainability Planner, Daniela Garcia Moreno [dgarciamoreno@nmcog.org](mailto:dgarciamoreno@nmcog.org)

## **GIS AND DATA SHARING**

NMCOG's work on the first phase of the Massachusetts statewide trail mapping project was completed on May 15. In the coming weeks the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) will finalize the first versions of the data standard and the statewide trails dataset. This initial statewide trails data is a demonstration dataset to be used for the development of the Phase 2 trail data management applications and will not be released to the public in its current form.

Mapping and data GIS support was provided for the Dracut Open Space and Recreation Plan, the Envision 2050 Regional Transportation Plan, the Westford Brownfields Inventory, the Coordinated Transit Plan, the Lowell Forward Housing Production Plan, the Tewksbury Housing Production Plan, and MBTA 3A Communities.

The Request for Proposals (RFP) for NMCOG IT Consulting Services was posted on May 11 and publicized to a number of IT consulting companies as well as COMMBUYS. Other IT tasks included onboarding, procurement, and equipment configuration for two new employees and public records retention archiving. Copies of the [nmstormwater.org](http://nmstormwater.org) and current [nmcog.org](http://nmcog.org) websites were downloaded and archived to facilitate migration and updates to an updated [nmcog.org](http://nmcog.org) site.

## **REGIONAL SUPPORT ACTIVITIES**

### **Northern Middlesex Municipal CEO Group**

Town/ City Managers and Town Administrators in the region met in Chelmsford hosted by Town Manager Paul Cohen at Town Hall to continue a discussion from March regarding potential opportunities for regionalization and regional cooperation. The group honed in on the need for regional assistance and collaboration with: cybersecurity training; OSHA compliance and training; inspectional services; human resources/ diversity, equity, and inclusion; animal control; and climate change/ adaptation/ sustainability and energy planning. The next meeting is being hosted by Tyngsborough in June to discuss legislative priorities and the fall meeting schedule for the group.

### **NMCOG Website Update**

The NMCOG website has been updated to simplify and reorganize content, improve navigability, and better highlight the agency's services. Visit us at [www.nmcog.org](http://www.nmcog.org)!

Concentration in American Music from Carleton College. She is passionate about finding solutions to address any and all challenges related to planning and community development. She lives with her husband in Lowell. Isabel is a certified planner with the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) and a Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Green Associate.

***Ricardo Machado***

Ricardo joined NMCOG as a part-time Sealer in May. Ricardo was born in Sao Paulo, Brazil, and has lived in the Greater Lowell area for over 40 years with his family. Ricardo comes to us with extensive experience as a QA inspector for computer circuit boards and a graphic artist with various companies, as well as a small business owner. Ricardo is also a licensed paid soccer coach with state and international confederations.