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

Minutes of Meeting: June 19, 2019

The June 19, 2019 meeting was held at the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments office, 40 Church Street, Lowell, Massachusetts. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Chair Pat Wojtas presiding. The following were in attendance, as indicated in Attachment #1:

Councilors

- Christopher Tribou, Billerica Planning Board
- Mary McBride, Billerica Alternate
- Pat Wojtas, Chair, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen
- Philippe Thibault, Dracut Alternate
- Sen. Edward Kennedy, Lowell City Council
- Jerry Frechette, Lowell Planning Board
- Stephen Themelis, Pepperell Alternate
- Darrin Wizst, Westford Planning Board

Guests

- Chris Kluchman, Housing Choice Program Director, DCHD
- Natasha Vance, City of Lowell Transportation Engineer

Staff

- Beverly Woods, Executive Director
- Jay Donovan, Assistant Director
- Carmen Bellerose, Financial Officer
- Katrina Garavanian, Executive Assistant
- Alicia Geilen, Environmental Planner
- Justin Howard, Transportation Program Manager

I. Presentation: Proposed Housing Choice Legislation – Chris Kluchman, Housing Choice Program Director, Department of Housing and Community Development

Chris Kluchman from the Department of Housing and Community Development (DCHD) provided an overview of the proposed Housing Choice legislation and answered questions regarding the legislation and the Housing Choice program. She explained the types of development which would be allowed to undergo zoning changes by simple majority should the
legislation pass. Jerry Frechette expressed his concerns relative to no longer requiring a super majority vote to enact zoning changes.

Following much discussion about the proposed bill, Chris encouraged the Councilors to contact her with any additional questions, noting that her contact information can be found on the State website at mass.gov/housingchoice.

II. Minutes of Meeting: May 15, 2019

The minutes were distributed to all Councilors for review. Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Mary McBride, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the May 15, 2019 meeting.

III. Executive Director’s Report

The Executive Director’s Report was previously distributed to the Councilors for review. Upon a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Darrin Wizst, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Executive Director’s Report as presented. The report is included as Attachment #2.

IV. Financial Report and Warrant

Carmen Bellerose presented the Financial Report and the Warrant for review and signature. Based on a motion made by Phil Thibault and seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Financial Report and Warrant were unanimously approved. The Financial Report is included as Attachment #3.

V. Old Business

1. FY 2020 Unified Planning Work Program

Justin Howard informed the Council that the MPO voted to release the FY2020 Unified Planning Work Program (UPWP) for a 21-day public comment period at its last meeting. Justin included in the Council packet comments received from MassDOT, which he detailed for the Council. Most comments pertained to formatting and task schedules. Changes have been made to the UPWP to address comments received. Justin requested that the Council authorize the Chair to vote in favor of endorsing the draft document at the June 26th NMMPO meeting.

Based on a motion made by Sen. Ed Kennedy and seconded by Mary McBride, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to vote in favor of adopting the FY 2020 UPWP at the June 26th NMMPO meeting.

2. Draft Regional Transportation Plan (RTP)

Justin Howard informed the Council that the NMMPO will vote to release the draft Regional Transportation Plan for a 21-day public comment period at its upcoming meeting on June 26th.
He included an executive summary of the Plan in the Council packet, stating that the full draft document is available on NMCOG's website. Specific discussion regarding the Rourke Bridge design and construction project focused on how the project will be incorporated into the document. Beverly Woods stated that MassDOT is supposed to provide further guidance on this issue at the MPO meeting.

Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis, and seconded by Phil Thibault, the Council voted unanimously to authorize the Chair to vote in favor of releasing the Draft Regional Transportation Plan for 21-day public comment period at the June 26th NMMPO meeting.

3. **Producer Responsibility Resolution**

At the May Council meeting, John Hite from the Conservation Law Foundation provided a presentation on potential solutions that the Foundation sees as effective ways for municipalities to navigate trash/recycling issues. Beverly Woods included in the Council meeting packet a draft resolution provided by the Conservation Law Foundation for communities that may be interested. The proposed initiatives would require manufacturers to be responsible for disposal of their products at the end of product life. She provided links to producer responsibility bills under consideration this legislative session.

Chair Pat Wojtas expressed interest in consolidating numbers from all NMCOG communities and sending the resolution. Beverly Woods will add this item to the July meeting agenda.

4. **Update on the Northern Middlesex Regional Emergency Communication Center Project**

Jay Donovan provided an update on the construction schedule for the Northern Middlesex Regional Emergency Communication Center. Included in the Council meeting packet was a copy of the most recent schedule. He stated that the project is going smoothly. Jay will update the Council as to the opening ceremony date.

5. **Other Old Business**

Beverly Woods introduced Alicia Geilen, NMCOG’s new Environmental Planner. Alicia expressed her enthusiasm for the position and thanked the Council for their vote to hire her.

VI. **New Business**

1. **Community Reports**

There were none.

2. **Project Referrals**

Beverly Woods stated that currently there are five projects in the region under MEPA review:
• The Final Environmental Impact Report for the Lowell Area Gas Modernization Project;
• The Environmental Notification Form (ENF) for the River Road Well project in Tyngsborough;
• The ENF for the installation of 11,246 kW ground mounted solar modules and energy storage in Dunstable;
• The ENF for the Main Street Well Station and Access Road in Dunstable; and
• The ENF for the Bemis Road Water Treatment Plant in Pepperell.

A copy of the MEPA table was included in the Council packet, along with staff comment letters on the Lowell Area Gas Modernization project and the Bemis Road Water Treatment Plant.

Based on a motion by Jerry Frechette, seconded by Mary McBride, the Council voted unanimously to approve the staff comment letter regarding the Lowell Area Gas Modernization project.

Based on a motion by Phil Thibault, seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted unanimously to approve the staff comment letter regarding the Bemis Road Water Treatment Plant in Pepperell.

3. Approval of the Adjusted FY 2020 Budget

Beverly Woods stated that the Adjusted FY 2020 Budget, which takes effect on July 1, 2019, contains a difference in bottom line of only $400 from the initial budget which was set in February. She detailed the adjustments comprising the difference.

Based on a motion made by Sen. Ed Kennedy and seconded by Jerry Frechette, the Council voted unanimously to accept the Adjusted FY 2020 Budget as presented.

4. Summer Meeting Schedule

Beverly Woods suggested the Council meet in July to vote on the Regional Transportation Plan, and take a hiatus in the month of August unless a need to meet should arise.

5. Other New Business

There was none.

VII. Announcements

There were none.

VIII. Adjournment

Following a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Mary McBride, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 8:30 p.m.
CLERK’S CERTIFICATE

I certify that this is a true copy of the Minutes of the meeting of June 19, 2019.

Attest: [Signature]

Stephen Themelis, Clerk