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

Minutes of Meeting:  September 19, 2018

The September 19, 2018 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

- Andrew Deslaurier, Billerica Board of Selectmen
- Marti Mahoney, Billerica Planning Board
- Mary McBride, Billerica Alternate
- Pat Wojtas, Chair, Chelmsford Board of Selectmen
- Henry Parlee, Chelmsford Planning Board
- S. George Zaharoolis, Chelmsford Alternate
- Philippe Thibault, Dracut Alternate
- Ed Kennedy, Lowell City Council
- Jerry Frechette, Lowell Planning Board
- Roland Nutter, Pepperell Board of Selectmen
- Chuck Walkovich, Pepperell Planning Board
- Stephen Themelis, Pepperell Alternate
- Rick Reault, Tyngsborough Board of Selectmen
- Ron Keohane, Tyngsborough Alternate
- Darrin Wizst, Westford Planning Board

Staff

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

Guests

- Natasha Vance, City of Lowell Transportation Engineer
I. Minutes of Meeting: June 20, 2018

The minutes were distributed to all Councilors for review. Based on a motion made by Stephen Themelis and seconded by Roland Nutter, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the June 20, 2018 meeting. Pat Wojtas and Jerry Frechette abstained as they were not present at the June meeting.

II. Executive Director’s Report

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

III. Financial Report and Warrant

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

IV. Old Business

1. Update on the Rourke Bridge Replacement Project

Beverly Woods informed the Council that MassDOT recently announced their selection of the firm HNTB as the consultant for the Rourke Bridge Replacement project. The firm will be responsible for the design and permitting of the project under a contract valued at $5 million. MassDOT gave a presentation at a recent Lowell City Council meeting where they stated that the project is at least 8-1/2 years away from completion. The project cost estimate stands at $70 million.

2. Update on the 2018 MassWorks Applications

Jay Donovan informed the Council that four MassWorks applications were submitted to EOHED from communities in the region. The applications included: the Town of Chelmsford’s Enhanced Mobility project for Route 129 Billerica Road; the Town of Dracut’s Lakeview Avenue/Mammoth Road Economic Development project; the City of Lowell’s Upper Merrimack Street Revitalization project; and the Town of Tyngsborough’s Phase 2 Sewer and Water Main project. A detailed handout was included in the meeting packet outlining specifics on the projects. The State will announce the approved MassWorks grants during the month of October 2018.
3. **Update on DLTA XII Funding**

Beverly Woods informed the Council that the DLTA XII funding was included in the budget signed by Governor Baker. NMCOG expects to have a contract in place by the end of the calendar year, with project solicitation to begin in January.

4. **Other Old Business**

There was none.

V. **New Business**

1. **Community Reports**

Phil Thibault announced that Dracut’s recent primary elections included a ballot question to fund a new fire station in the town’s Collinsville neighborhood. The question passed, so the Town will begin preparing architectural plans and construction documents, with a bid process to start in January.

Andrew Deslaurier reported that the MassWorks project on Boston Road in Billerica was recently celebrated with a ribbon cutting. Billerica citizens are excited with the improvements and looking forward to reaping new economic development benefits as well.

2. **Project Referrals**

Beverly Woods stated that two projects were under MEPA review during the summer. An ENF was filed for an agricultural preservation restriction (APR) transfer at 315 Marsh Hill Road in Dracut. The request is to remove 2.27 acres containing a homestead from the APR at Ogonowski Farm and replace it with an adjacent 9.5-acre lot more suitable for farming. An ENF was also filed for the construction of a traffic signal at the intersection of Route 40 and Dunstable Road in Westford. The filing of the ENF was triggered by the need to cut nine shade trees of 14 or more inches in diameter. Staff comment letters were included in the Council packet.

Based on a motion made by Roland Nutter and seconded by Marti Mahoney, the Council voted to approve both staff comment letters to the EOEEA / MEPA office.

3. **Report of the Personnel Committee – Staff Performance Reviews**

Prior to the Council meeting, the Personnel Committee met to discuss the recent NMCOG staff performance reviews and possible staff salary adjustments. Jerry Frechette informed the Council that the last salary increase was given in May 2017. As DLTA funds are now secured, the Personnel Committee recommended staff salary increases averaging 2.86%.
Based on a motion by Roland Nutter and seconded by Andrew Deslaurier, the Council voted to approve the increases as presented by the Personnel Committee.

4. **Election of NMCOG Officers**

Marti Mahoney presented and distributed the 2018 NMCOG Council Election Ballot. Nominees were previously contacted to determine their interest in serving in the office for which they were nominated.

Upon completion of the election process, the following officers were elected to serve over the upcoming year:

- Pat Wojtas, Chair;
- Andrew Deslaurier, Vice Chair;
- Jerry Frechette, Treasurer;
- Rick Reault, Assistant Treasurer;
- Steve Themelis, Clerk;
- Phil Thibault, Assistant Clerk; and
- Chuck Walkovich, NMMPO Representative.

5. **Lease Renewal**

Beverly Woods stated that NMCOG’s current lease expires October 31, 2018. Lease negotiations have been underway over the summer months resulting in the following proposed extension terms:

- From November 1, 2018 to October 31, 2020-$7,995 per month; and
- From November 1, 2020 to October 31, 2022-$8,194.88 per month.

Beverly Woods noted this is considerably less than the 2.25% annual increase that was initially proposed by the landlord, and added that last increase occurred four years ago.

Based on a motion by Roland Nutter, seconded by Steve Themelis, the Council voted unanimously to approve the lease extension as negotiated.

6. **Upcoming Annual Meeting**

The Annual Meeting will be held October 17, 2018 at the Tewksbury Country Club. An invitation was included in the Council packet, and a copy was mailed to each Councilor. Beverly Woods has confirmed Eileen Donoghue, Lowell City Manager, as the guest speaker. A very brief Council business meeting will be held at 6:00 pm to address essential business only. The reception will begin at 6:30 pm, followed by dinner and the speaking program at 7:00 pm.
7. **Other New Business**

Rick Reault offered congratulations to Ed Kennedy, the Democratic State Senate nominee.

VI. **Announcements**

There were none.

VII. **Adjournment**

Following a motion made by Rick Reault and seconded by Roland Nutter, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:35 p.m.

**CLERK’S CERTIFICATE**

I certify that this is a true copy of the Minutes of the meeting of September 19, 2018.

Attest:  

[Signature]

Stephen Themelis, Clerk