

## GPCOG Executive Committee

### MINUTES March 15, 2022

#### In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Sue Witonis	Cumberland County
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Sandy Carder	Gray
Jarrold Maxfield	Windham
Mary Fernandes	Casco
Mark Dion	Portland
John Hawley	Naples
Kristina Egan, Tony Plante, Chris Hall, Vincent Edwards, Andrew Clark, Tom Bell	GPCOG Staff

#### Welcome

Sandy Carder opened the meeting.

#### Public Comment

George Rheault said that the recording from the Executive Committee's 2/15/22 meeting was not yet posted on the website. He said that his comments at the last meeting did not paraphrase him accurately in the minutes. He said the 2/15/22 staff report for the brownfields item mischaracterized the amount of housing. He said that the numbers provided on the brownfields item in today's agenda were difficult to understand. He said that the Gorham Connector should not be built.

Ken Capron reiterated that the meeting recordings are not consistently posted. He drew the group's attention to the federal RAISE grants, noting that there is no match required for rural communities. He urged the group to take an in depth look at Microrail as a transportation solution for the region.

#### Acceptance of 2/15/22 Minutes

Matt moved approval. Nat seconded. Kristina noted that she would re-listen to George Rheault's comments and amend the 2/15 minutes if needed. A roll call was conducted. All were in favor. Note: Sue Witonis was struggling with audio and did not vote.

After meeting note: Kristina listened again to George Rheault's comments and she assesses that the minutes accurately paraphrase his comments. The full comments, should others want to listen, are available in the meeting recording in the agenda center on the website.

### **Executive Director's Report**

GPCOG will hold a Coffee with COG with Erich Zimmerman, National Association of Regional Councils, to explore federal transportation funding opportunities in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill. It will be in late April. The Annual Summit will be 5/26/22, in person, at St. Joseph's College in Standish. GPCOG just learned it received a \$50,000 grant to work with Yarmouth, North Yarmouth, Cumberland, Freeport and Brunswick to help communities identify climate priorities.

### **Spotlight: Regional Public Transportation Initiatives**

Using a [slide deck](#), Andrew Clark described several ongoing initiatives, including Transit Together, allocating federal transit funds from CARES and the American Rescue Plan Act, and Rapid Transit.

### **Brownfields Loan**

Tony presented the proposed loan. Matt asked if the loan would provide funding for the final remediation on the site. Tony said that the loan would be for one of the five portions of the property, so there will be more clean-up needed. John asked what the interest rate was for the loan, and Tony replied 3.5%. Nat said that GPCOG may be able to put repayments to good use.

Matt moved approval of the loan request of \$795,000 in Brownfields Revolving Loan Funds to Forefront Commons I, LLC and Forefront Partners I, LP for site remediation at Thompson's Point. Jarrod seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

### **FY23 & FY24 Priorities**

Using a [slide deck](#), Kristina provided an overview of GPCOG's FY22 priorities and how well the agency performed. The group then discussed the proposed priorities for the next two years. Sandy said it's important for smaller towns to have the tools to access some of the federal resources that are newly-available. Nat asked for clarification on whether the priorities reflect work that will continue from the previous year, and Kristina said that work will continue, but the priorities are areas of emphasis or new work. The Executive Committee will review a full annual workplan in the fall, and this will include all of GPCOG's work. The group discussed the importance of strong relationships between GPCOG, York County PACTS communities and Cumberland County, and urged a focus on strengthening relationships.

Matt moved approval of the Proposed FY23 & FY24 GPCOG priorities as drafted in Attachment D. John seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

### **Future of the Loan Program**

Chris Hall recounted that GPCOG added a focus on microloans during the pandemic. The demand for these types of loans has diminished. The group discussed the possibility of using existing funds to support outcomes that address climate change and advance Diversity Equity and Inclusion. As GPCOG updates the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy, this proposed emphasis will fold into the regional discussion on priorities and strategy. The group agreed that some focus on achieving climate and equity outcomes should be further defined in the coming months. Sandy moved that the Executive Committee return the GPCOG loan program to its original purpose, with further definition of that purpose to be developed in coming months. Nat seconded. The roll was call and all were in favor.

#### **Executive Director's Annual Performance Evaluation**

Pursuant to [1 MRS §405\(6\)\(A\)](#), Mary moved the Executive Committee enter executive session to conduct Kristina's annual performance review. It was seconded and all were in favor. Members exited the public Zoom session and entered another Zoom meeting. The group exited the Executive Session and reconvened in the public Zoom session.

Sandy proposed moving the April meeting date to April 26<sup>th</sup>, and all agreed.

Matt moved adjournment of the meeting. Nat seconded. All were in favor and the meeting ended at 1:46 p.m.