

GPCOG Executive Committee

MINUTES March 21, 2023

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Jarrold Maxfield	Windham
John Hawley	Naples
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Sue Witonis	Cumberland County
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Kate Lewis	South Portland
Mark Dion	Portland

Welcome

Jarrold opened the meeting, and the group congratulated John Hawley on his new job which will take him out of the GPCOG region.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Acceptance of 2/28/23 Minutes

Nat moved approval of the 2/28/23 meeting minutes. Sue seconded. A roll call was conducted. All were in favor.

Spotlight: Climate Action Planning

Sara Mills-Knapp, Director of Sustainability, described municipal climate projects, a regional coastal resilience project called Climate Ready Casco Bay, the regional transportation plan that aims to reduce emissions by 70% by 2045, and GPCOG's statewide work through the Maine Clean Communities program.

Nat described the challenge of a small town trying to attract the market attention of EV chargers. Sara agreed and will follow-up to see if there is a regional opportunity to aggregate demand for new

chargers. A discussion ensued about the fuel source of the electricity being used to power cars, with Sara noting that EVs are more efficient users of energy than internal combustion and that Maine has a relatively clean mix of sources powering the grid. Jarrod suggested EV requirements for multifamily housing, with Kate noting that South Portland has passed such an ordinance for new construction and for parking lots. Sara mentioned Maine Clean Communities has sample EV ordinance language that can be adopted, you can find it here: <https://www.maineleancommunities.org/readinessguides>.

Sara used [this slide deck](#).

Climate & Resiliency Roundtable

In Yarmouth, a community group is proposing to help lower income people weatherize, as a substitute for fuel assistance. South Portland also targets aid to lower-income people. Cape Elizabeth is considering doing a climate action plan, which will unlock grant opportunities. Cape is also working with Scarborough to explore abandoning a road that regularly floods and is looking at needed stormwater upgrades further upstream.

The South Portland sustainability office has saved the City millions of dollars. The municipal solar array powers much of the City's needs. The City has an "electrify everything" campaign, an electric tool lending library, and a "100 Resilient Yards" initiative. GPCOG is supporting the City's work with a Resilience Fellow, supporting the Sustainability's office engagement on the comprehensive plan, and with a flood inundation model.

Portland is purchasing more hybrid vehicles, and Mark noted that this will negatively impact gas tax revenues. A discussion ensued about how to replace this revenue, with Kristina noting a growing understanding that we may need to replace the gas tax with a miles tax. The deterioration of the real value of transportation revenues is a big challenge for the state and the nation.

Advocacy for Regionalism

GPCOG successfully supported the inclusion of technical assistance funding for municipalities and regional councils in LD2003. These funds are proposed in the Governor's budget. GPCOG, along with its 9 peer agencies across the state, is educating the state that regional councils are efficient and effective partners in supporting municipalities in land use planning and grant writing.

The asylum seeker housing crisis continues, and Chris described Sen. Duson's proposed legislation to create transitional housing campuses around the state to serve unhoused people. GPCOG is submitting testimony in favor of LD 1050, a bill directing the Mills administration to ask the federal government for a waiver to the long wait period for work authorization for new arrivals, and also LD 787, directing the Department of Economic and Community Development to coordinate education and employment services for people coming to Maine.

The Maine Transit Association has requested GPCOG support a request for more public transportation funding. Jerre said that the legislature is on track to pass a majority-only budget and that it likely won't have a lot of new initiatives. He wondered what the source of funding would be for the public transportation funding. Chris says it isn't yet known. Matt asked what the overall plan is for transit to rebuild ridership. Kristina said we have Transit Together, which will offer more service to more people, and our hope is that transit agencies will implement the plan. Nat asked if all of the transit agencies are

supportive of the request. Kristina said she hadn't connected with all agencies, but thought it was a safe bet that they would welcome additional funds. Kate asked whether PACTS would support this request. Kristina said that PACTS can't advocate, so this advocacy is funded through GPCOG dues and is a GPCOG activity.

Nat moved endorsing the Maine Transit Association's proposal to increase state transit operations funding to \$6.78M. Matt seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

Proposed Scope for Strategic Plan Update

This item wasn't discussed due to lack of time.

Executive Session

Nat moved the Executive Committee enter into executive session under Title 1 MRS Section 405(6)(A) for the purpose of conducting the executive director's performance evaluation and discussing the executive director's contract. Kate seconded. All were in favor. The group entered Executive Session at 1:10 p.m. and reconvened in public session at 1:45 p.m. Jarrod said that no action was taken in the Executive Session. Matt moved entering the public session, Nat seconded. All were in favor.

Matt moved to adjourn the meeting. Nat seconded. All were in favor.