

GPCOG Executive Committee

MINUTES May 17, 2022

In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Sue Witonis	Cumberland County
Carmen Lone	Bridgton
Sandy Carder	Gray
Jarrold Maxfield	Windham
Mary Fernandes	Casco
Mark Dion	Portland
John Hawley	Naples
Kate Lewis	South Portland
Kristina Egan, Josh Kochis, Chris Hall, Teagan Betori, Vincent Edwards, Tony Plante, Belinda Ray, Tom Bell, Chris Chop	GPCOG Staff

Welcome

Sandy Carder opened the remote meeting.

Public Comment

Ken Capron said GPCOG had not promoted the RAISE grants from USDOT. He disputed that PACTS is the MPO. He said that PACTS fails to comply with federal regulation regarding the inclusion of private enterprise in transportation planning.

Ellen Murphy spoke to the recent controversy over the transit funding split letter, noting that she uses both METRO and South Portland bus services. She said that the heads of transit agencies should have the most say about how transit is funded because they are accountable to riders.

Acceptance of 4/26/22 Minutes

Sue moved approval of last month's minutes. Nat seconded. A roll call was conducted. All were in favor.

Spotlight: All about PACTS

Chris Chop delivered a [slide deck](#) explaining the role of PACTS and recent changes to PACTS decision making.

Executive Director's Report

The United States Environmental Protection Agency awarded \$3.9 million to the Greater Portland Council of Governments to help communities redevelop brownfield sites. It's the single-largest grant that GPCOG has ever received.

GPCOG's next step on developing a long-term housing solution to help resettle asylum seekers is to connect municipal managers with state and federal agencies to help surface and answer questions about the impact of hosting families within a municipality. One option GPCOG staff are beginning to explore is an interlocal agreement.

Paul Johnson, Senior Economic Development Manager, joined GPCOG's team this week. He'll be developing and offering a new service to municipalities, helping development projects 'be the best they can be' for a community. He'll be looking to support the integration of affordable housing, climate resilience and impact, walking, biking, and transit, and more into the planning for future development.

FY23 Budget

Sue moved recommending the second draft of the FY23 budget, as included in the agenda's attachment, to the General Assembly. Nat seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

FY23 Executive Committee Members and Officers

Sandy thanked the nominating committee, including Bill Shane and Matt Sturgis, for working to develop the proposed FY23 slate. Kristina said that Sandy, sadly, won't be serving on the Executive Committee next year, and that Sandy has asked Krista Chappell if she would be willing to serve.

Sue moved recommending the proposed FY23 slate of Executive Committee members and Executive Committee Officers to the General Assembly. Mark seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

Executive Director's Annual Performance Goals

The group agreed to strike the first performance metric under the first proposed goal. John moved approval of the goals, as noted below. Jarrod seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

Revised: Annual Performance Goals for Executive Director

Improve public transportation. Continue to build regional collaboration that is both supportive of individual agency needs and results in measurable progress towards a regional system and the investments necessary to build transit ridership. *One metric is to see transit ridership grow at least 5% across the transit network.*

Connect members to larger network. Provide opportunities for members to connect with GPCOG's network of federal and state partners and private sector and non-profit stakeholders, providing access to resources and people for all members, with particular focus on the region's smaller towns. *One metric of success is to provide 4 opportunities per year for cities and towns to meet with members of the Congressional delegation and state agency and legislative leaders.*

Grow COG's advocacy impact. Communicate our regional needs, best practices, and innovative solutions to decisionmakers to support GPCOG's advocacy for regional and state approaches to tackling the significant challenges faced by our communities. *One metric of success is that GPCOG helps catalyze regional response to at least one major regional challenge, likely in FY23 related to the resettlement of asylum seekers in Maine.*

Elevate COG's communications. Enhance the agency's capacity to develop, analyze, and visualize data, tell stories, share the big picture and regional perspective, and compellingly communicate about the choices our region and state face for the future, *with particular focus on the FY23 – FY24 organizational priority to illustrate the impacts and benefits of smart growth.*

FY23 Meeting Calendar

Sue moved adoption of the FY23 Executive Committee calendar, as included in the agenda's attachment. Nat seconded. The roll was called and all were in favor.

Discussion about Recent PACTS Events

Kristina explained the changes in decision making that the PACTS Policy Board has adopted over the last few years, noting that improving public transportation was identified as the top priority of the region's residents in 2018.

This precipitated the broader PACTS communities wanting to increase understanding, planning, and investments in public transportation. The current transit system performs poorly against comparable places, particularly for bus riders. The region called for a coordinated modern service that delivers faster, more frequent, and convenient service for people.

PACTS set a more inclusive table, involving transit riders, employers, environmental specialists, and others in decision making. Transit operators know their system and their current customers. The larger table collectively understands what the region and future customers need and want.

The PACTS table is where individual interests of municipalities and transit agencies are balanced against one another. It's a competitive table where entities seek resources from a regional allocation of federal funds. The individual interests are also balanced with regional priorities.

PACTS has been making progress in setting up scoring criteria and performance measurement to assess regional investments in transportation, including public transportation.

Kristina explained the current situation, citing the sequence of events detailed in the agenda packet, and adding new information from the last few days, including receipt of a letter from four transit operators requesting changes to the split letter and listing topic areas about the PACTS process they would like to revisit. The next step is the PACTS Policy Board meeting, at which the transit operators' recent letter would be discussed.

Sandy asked for public comment. Ken Capron said that South Portland and Westbrook carried a greater cost burden for transit when the communities were part of METRO. Sandy closed public comment.

Kate requested the GPCOG Executive Committee receive a copy of the letter. Kristina said she would send it. For members of the public, it will be included in the agenda for the PACTS Policy Board, which would be published on GPCOG's website in the Agenda Center later in the day. The group asked for an update after the PACTS Policy Board meets.

Executive Session

Before the vote on whether to enter Executive Session, Nat thanked Sandy for her leadership this past year as GPCOG's President, and thanked her for all her work to better our region.

Nat moved the Executive Committee enter executive session, pursuant to [1 MRS §405\(6\)\(A\)](#). Kate seconded. The roll was taken and all were in favor.

At 1:44 p.m., the Executive Committee reconvened in public session. John moved to adjourn. Kate seconded. The roll was called, and all were in favor.