

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

**Minutes of Meeting: September 15, 2021**

The September 15, 2021 meeting of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments was held virtually on the Zoom platform due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The meeting was called to order at 7:00 p.m. with Chair Andrew Deslaurier presiding. The following were in virtual attendance, as indicated in Attachment #1:

Councilors

- Andrew Deslaurier, Chair, Billerica Board of Selectmen
- Chris Tribou, Billerica Planning Board
- Pat Wojtas, Chelmsford Select Board
- Paul McDougall, Chelmsford Planning Board
- George Zaharoolis, Chelmsford Alternate
- Gerard Frechette, Lowell Planning Board
- Mark Mathews, Pepperell Select Board
- Stephen Themelis, Pepperell Alternate
- Jayne Wellman, Tewksbury Select Board
- Anita Tonakarn-Nguyen, Westford Select Board
- Darrin Wizst, Westford Planning Board
- Jim Silva, Westford Alternate

Staff

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

**I. Minutes of Meeting: August 18, 2021**

The minutes of the August 18, 2021 meeting were distributed to all Councilors for review. Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Darrin Wizst, the Council voted to approve the minutes of the August 18, 2021 meeting.

**II. Executive Director's Report**

The Executive Director's Report was previously distributed to the Councilors for review. The report is included as Attachment #2.

### **III. Financial Report and Warrant**

Bert Almeida presented the Financial Report and the Warrant for review and approval. Based on a motion made by Steve Themelis and seconded by Paul McDougall, the Financial Report and Warrant were unanimously approved. The Financial Report is included as Attachment #3. The warrant was sent by mail for signatures due to the COVID pandemic.

### **IV. Old Business**

#### **1. Update from the Executive Director Search Committee**

Andrew Deslaurier informed the Council that the Executive Director Search Committee will continue to collect resumes until the application deadline of September 30<sup>th</sup>. He is hopeful that additional qualified applicants will submit resumes, and following the deadline the Committee will work toward the interview process. The group is hoping for quality over quantity. Andrew encouraged the Council to share the Executive Director posting with others who may be interested and have a background in municipal planning.

#### **2. Update on the Economic Development and Housing Planner, Transportation Planner and Assistant Director Positions**

Beverly Woods provided an update to the Council on the three additional openings at NMCOG. She stated that the Economic Development and Housing Planner position interviews have been held and two finalists interviewed with the Personnel Committee this week. The Committee felt both were high quality candidates but unanimously agreed that one held stronger technical skills and experience. Beverly extended an offer to that person this morning and he expects to provide a response by the end of the week. Pat Wojtas agreed that both finalists were very impressive and the decision was tough. Jerry Frechette seconded that both were quality candidates and that should the interviewee that was unanimously agreed upon not accept the offer, the second candidate would also be a solid addition to the NMCOG team.

In terms of the Assistant Director position, Beverly stated that the deadline for applications was Friday, September 10<sup>th</sup>. She and Jay Donovan reviewed the resumes today and identified four people they would like to interview. They plan to schedule those interviews over the next week and to bring in the Personnel Committee to interview the finalists for that position the following week.

The Transportation Planner position has an application deadline of Friday, September 17<sup>th</sup>. Beverly informed the group that Justin Howard will be involved in the review process for transportation candidates, and staff is hoping to identify a few good candidates to interview.

### **3. Other Old Business**

There was none.

## **V. New Business**

### **1. Community Reports**

Jayne Wellman informed the Council that last month, the Town of Tewksbury's water treatment test came back with an excess of total trihalomethanes. The DEP is evaluating the town's drinking water. She stated that it is partly resulting from combined sewer outflows in the Merrimack River and inquired as to any other communities in the NMCOG region receiving violations in their drinking water quality.

Andrew Deslaurier gave an update that the Town of Billerica has just hired an Economic Development/ Planning Director, and that the town is still advertising for the positions of Library Director, Veterans Agent, DPW Director, and Chief of Police. Vacancies are largely due to scheduled retirements.

### **2. Project Referrals**

There were none.

### **3. Regional Energy Planning Assistance Grant 2 Award**

Beverly Woods informed the Council that NMCOG was recently awarded a \$54,000 Regional Energy Planning Assistance (REPA) Grant from the Massachusetts Department of Energy Resources (DOER). This is a two-year grant that will allow NMCOG to provide the following technical services:

- Assistance with Green Community Annual Reporting for Billerica, Dracut, Dunstable, Pepperell and Tewksbury;
- Assistance with net zero municipal operations for Chelmsford, Pepperell and Westford;
- Preparation of Green House Gas Inventories for Chelmsford and Pepperell;
- Scoping for a Community Net Zero Plan for Chelmsford and Westford; and
- The organizing and hosting of Regional Clean Energy Workshops.

Beverly and David Righter will be meeting with DOER on the 16<sup>th</sup> to discuss the scope in more detail, along with regional clean energy workshops that NMCOG will be hosting. Staff are waiting for DOER to return the signed contract prior to commencing work.

Beverly complimented David Righter for successfully developing the application.

#### **4. Election of NMCOG Officers**

Steve Themelis, NMCOG Clerk, conducted the election process for NMCOG officers stating that nomination forms were sent by mail in July with a return date of August 15<sup>th</sup>. He and Mary McBride, Assistant Clerk, contacted each nominee to ascertain their interest in serving. Election ballots were included in the meeting packet. As the council meeting was held electronically, the Clerk requested authorization to conduct a voice vote.

Election results were as follows:

Chairman – Andrew Deslaurier  
Vice Chair – Anita Tonakarn-Nguyen  
Treasurer – Jerry Frechette  
Assistant Treasurer – Jayne Wellman  
Clerk – Steve Themelis  
Assistant Clerk – Mary McBride  
NMMPO Representative – Pat Wojtas

Pat Wojtas requested that finalized ballots be included in the packet materials which are sent ahead of the meeting in the future so that Councilors have time to formulate their voting plans.

#### **5. Othe New Business**

There was none.

#### **VI. Announcements**

Justin Howard informed the Council that the September NMMPO meeting has been cancelled and the next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, October 27 via Zoom at 2:00 PM.

Beverly Woods reminded the Council that, sadly, this evening's meeting will be the final Council meeting for Jay Donovan as his retirement is set for October 15<sup>th</sup>. The Council expressed their gratitude to Jay for his years of service and many contributions to their communities throughout that time, stating that the communities are all better off for Jay's helping hand. The council wished him the very best and many years of happiness and enjoyment with his growing family. Jay in turn thanked the Council for their support through the years and stated that he's enjoyed every minute of his work within the region.

#### **VII. Adjournment**

Following a motion made by Jerry Frechette and seconded by Paul McDougall, the Council voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 7:39 pm.

**CLERK'S CERTIFICATE**

I certify that this is a true copy of the Minutes of the meeting of September 15, 2021.

Attest:  \_\_\_\_\_

Stephen Themelis, Clerk