



# NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS

## ATTENDANCE

Date: January 17, 2024

### BILLERICA

Andrew Deslaurier \_\_\_\_\_

Christopher Tribou \_\_\_\_\_

Mary McBride (A) Nancy McBride

### CHELMSFORD

Pat Wojtas Pat Wojtas

Annita Tanini \_\_\_\_\_

Douglas Bruce (A) Doug Bruce

### DRACUT

Heather Santiago-Hutchings \_\_\_\_\_

Michael Pestana \_\_\_\_\_

Philippe Thibault (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### DUNSTABLE

Ron Mikol \_\_\_\_\_

Jim Wilkie \_\_\_\_\_

Jason Silva (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### LOWELL

Sokhary Chau \_\_\_\_\_

Gerard Frechette \_\_\_\_\_

Position Vacant (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### PEPPERELL

Chuck Walkovich \_\_\_\_\_

Joan Ladik \_\_\_\_\_

Stephen Themelis (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### TEWKSBURY

Jayne Wellman \_\_\_\_\_

James Duffy \_\_\_\_\_

Alexandra Lowder (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### TYNGSBOROUGH

Ron Keohane Ron Keohane

Steven O'Neill \_\_\_\_\_

Katerina Kalabokis (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### WESTFORD

Christopher Barrett \_\_\_\_\_

Darrin Wizst \_\_\_\_\_

James Silva (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### OTHER

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James Silva (A) \_\_\_\_\_

### OTHER

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\_\_\_\_\_  
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*Jenny, Kelly, Lesley, Sara, Chris Hayes.*



# Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

## NOTICE OF MEETING

The next meeting of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) will be held on **Wednesday, January 17, 2024 at 7:00 p.m. at NMCOG, 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, Lowell, MA 01854** with optional remote access via Zoom. To join this meeting via Zoom, please go to: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83176268692>. The Meeting ID is: 831 7626 8692. If you are joining by phone, dial (309) 205-3325, Meeting ID# 831 7626 8692#

A Multi-Disciplinary  
Regional Planning  
Agency Serving:

## AGENDA

Billerica  
Chelmsford  
Dracut  
Dunstable  
Lowell  
Pepperell  
Tewksbury  
Tyngsborough  
Lowell

- I. **Call to Order and Roll Call**
- II. **Meeting Minutes** – Minutes from 12/20/23 (Vote Required)
- III. **Financial Report and Warrant**  
Income and expense statements 12/19/2023 - 1/16/24 (Vote Required)
- IV. **Strategic Planning Update** – Report Out from 1/13/24 Retreat
- V. **Report of the Executive Director** - December 2023
- VI. **Community Exchange**
- XI. **Reminders and Announcements**  
*At Home in Greater Lowell – Regional Housing Strategy Launch* – February 13, 1-5 PM  
*NMCOG Council Meeting* – February 21, 7 PM  
*Save the Date - Greater Lowell Vision Zero Public Forum* – February 27, 6-8 PM
- XII. **Other Business** not known at the time of posting of this agenda
- XIII. **Adjourn**

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Andrew N. Deslaurier  
Chair

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Jennifer M. Raitt  
Executive Director

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### CITY/TOWN CLERKS: PLEASE POST PURSUANT TO OPEN MEETING LAW

Please contact Lesley Shahbazian at [lshahbazian@nmcog.org](mailto:lshahbazian@nmcog.org) with any questions on this agenda.

**Northern Middlesex Council of Governments**  
**672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100**  
**Lowell, MA 01854**

**Minutes from Council Meeting December 20, 2023**

**I.** The December 20, 2023 meeting of the Northern Middlesex Council of Governments (NMCOG) was held hybrid at 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, in the conference room and via Zoom. The meeting was called to order by Andrew Deslaurier at 7:03 p.m. The following were in attendance:

Councilors:

- Andrew Deslaurier, Chair, Billerica Select Board
- Chris Tribou, Assistant Clerk
- Mary McBride, Clerk, Billerica Alternate
- Pat Wojtas, MPO Rep, Chelmsford Select Board
- Philippe Thibault, Dracut Alternate
- Ron Keohane, Tyngsborough Select Board
- Gerard Frechette, Treasurer, Lowell Planning Board
- Stephen Themelis, Vice Chair, Pepperell Alternate
- Chris Barrett, Westford Select Board
- Darrin Wizst, Westford Planning Board
- James Silva, Westford Alternate

Staff:

- Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director
- Kelly Lynema, Deputy Director
- Paul Christner, Transportation Planning Program Manager
- Sara Schreiber, Finance and Benefits Manager
- Lesley Shahbazian, Executive Assistant
- Christopher Glenn Hayes, Housing and Economic Development Manager

## **VI. Draft FFY 2024-2028 TIP Amendment 1 (Pat Wojtas, NMMPO Rep)**

This may be discussed at a future meeting.

## **VII. Resolution to Commit Matching Funds for the Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) Transit Planning Contract with the US Department of Transportation**

NMCOG is still working on the LRTA contract – how much it will be and when it will actually occur. Paul Christner is the lead on this and when the draft resolution is complete, it will be discussed at a future Council meeting.

## **VIII. At Home in Great Lowell – A Regional Housing Strategy - update and discussion**

Chris Hayes gave an overview presentation on the “At Home in Greater Lowell – A Regional Housing Strategy”, which is one of the agency’s largest planning projects in 2024. NMCOG received a planning grant of \$125,000 from the Executive Office of Environmental and Energy Affairs. NMCOG also received a small grant from the Greater Lowell Community Foundation. We are also looking for some additional funds. The kick-off summit is Tuesday, February 13 from 1:00-5:00. The full presentation has been included in this packet.

Kelly Lynema emphasized what we are asking of the Council. First to help recruit people to volunteer for the steering committee and also to spread the word about the summits – getting people to attend these summits and especially city and town board and committee members.

## **IX. Report of the Executive Director, November 2023**

The Executive Director’s report was distributed for review to the Council in advance of this meeting. Ms. Raitt shared some highlights:

- The Greater Lowell Vision Zero Plan has kicked off in earnest. Consultant is on board. There will be multiple engagement events happening next year.
- We ended the traffic counting season in November and a report will be forthcoming.

plans to build a recreational facility on a portion of that property which will include an existing clubhouse that Toll Brothers will help renovate.

**Pepperell** – Stephen Themelis – The Economic Development Advisory Committee added new members and is starting to meet again. The Town Planner is still open. The town has a 90-day contract with a planner until a permanent hire is made.

**Dracut** – Philippe Thibault – The town is continuing work on the new elementary school and proposals from Owners Project Managers are expected soon. Interviews will begin in January. The town started discussions on the MBTA Communities zoning at the last zoning bylaw review committee meeting.

**Chelmsford** – Pat Wojtas – Chelmsford was invited to apply to the MA School Building Authority for a new school building. A brewery is planned to open soon in the town center.

**Billerica** – Chris Tribou - 279 Boston Road was torn down. The Planning Board is trying to encourage a mixed-income and mixed-use development at that location (housing and a restaurant). The Board also discussed MBTA Communities and identified three potential locations for new growth.

Andrew Deslaurier – The town is anticipating a court decision which will determine if the town needs to have a ballot question for the town center project.

#### **XI. Reminders and Announcements**

1. NMCOG Strategic Committee Meeting – January 13, 2023 at 12:00 at the Chelmsford Library.
2. NMCOG Council Meeting – January 17, 2023 at 7:00 PM

#### **XII. Other Business not known at the time of posting of this agenda**

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments  
Vendor & Payroll Warrant  
01/18/2024 through 02/21/2024

Date: January 17, 2024

Amount: \$ 227,633.52

WE THE COUNCILORS OF NORTHERN MIDDLESEX COUNCIL OF GOVERNMENTS BY A MOTION TO APPROVE, VOTE IN FAVOR TO AUTHORIZE PAYMENT OF THIS WARRANT.

SIGNED: JM Raitt, Executive Director  
Jennifer Raitt

\_\_\_\_\_, Billerica  
\_\_\_\_\_, Billerica  
Pat Wojtas, Billerica  
\_\_\_\_\_, Chelmsford  
\_\_\_\_\_, Chelmsford  
Doug Bruce, Chelmsford  
\_\_\_\_\_, Dracut  
\_\_\_\_\_, Dracut  
\_\_\_\_\_, Dracut  
\_\_\_\_\_, Dunstable  
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\_\_\_\_\_, Tewksbury  
\_\_\_\_\_, Tewksbury  
\_\_\_\_\_, Tewksbury  
Ron Kehane, Tyngsborough  
\_\_\_\_\_, Tyngsborough  
\_\_\_\_\_, Tyngsborough  
\_\_\_\_\_, Westford  
\_\_\_\_\_, Westford  
\_\_\_\_\_, Westford

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments  
Warrant Report

	<b>Vendor</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Description</b>
1/18	Comcast	144.32	Business internet 1/10-2/9
1/18	Commonwealth of MA	10.00	SOC filing - change of principal office
1/18	K&J Integrated Systems	375.00	Service Call reprogram access system
1/18	National Grid	306.42	Final Bill for Church St
1/18	PCG	125.00	Local back up service agreement Jan/2024
1/18	Precision Electrical	4,780.00	Balance on invoice for electrical work
1/18	Topaz	550.00	Balance on moving Carlin's large printer
1/18	Wolters Kluwer	921.66	2023 Planning Law Manual
1/20	MMA	240.00	Annual MMA Conference - Jenny
1/21	Cytracom	468.21	Phone January 2023
1/18	Middlesex CC	2,952.14	NFWF Consultant project reimbursement
1/18	LPCT	10,175.40	NFWF Consultant project reimbursement
1/18	Joyce Contract Interiors	16,960.50	Balance on office furniture
1/28	Verizon	50.00	Stormwater Mobile Broadband 4GB SHR
1/30	Staples	31.87	Office Supplies
1/31	GMS	250.00	December 2023 Accounting Software
2/1	Canon Financial Services	682.83	Copier Lease January 2023
2/1	Farley White	8,298.40	Rent February 2024
2/1	Guardian Life	375.76	Life Insurance & AD&D February 2024
2/5	Pitney Bowes	175.98	Postage machine lease 2/5-5/4
2/7	PCG	125.00	Local back up service agreement Feb/2024
2/12	Zones	4,420.06	Adobe Creative Cloud subscription renewal
2/17	Comcast	141.14	Business internet 2/10-3/9
2/20	M.I.A. Health Trust	30,584.47	Insurance Employee & Retiree February 2024
2/21	Cytracom	468.21	Phone February 2023

<b>Vendor Totals</b>	<b>83,612.37</b>
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	<b>PAYROLL &amp; TAXES</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Description</b>
1/18	PR-02	46,507.05	Pay period 12/30/23-01/12/24
2/1	PR-03	48,007.05	Pay period 01/13/24-01/26/24
2/15	PR-04	49,507.05	Pay period 01/27/24-02/09/24

<b>Payroll &amp; Taxes Totals</b>	<b>144,021.15</b>
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<b>Warrant Total</b>	<b>227,633.52</b>
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# Northern Middlesex Council of Governments

## Bank Reconciliation - Enterprise Bank General Fund

December 31, 2023

Bank statement balance	228,500.19	Book Balance	228,500.19
Add:		Add:	
Deposits in Transit	0.00	Bank interest	0.00
Bank error	0.00	Receivable Colletions	0.00
Deduct:		Deduct:	
Outstanding Checks	0.00	Safety deposit rental	0.00
ACH/debit payments in Trans	0.00	Book Check Error	0.00
Adjusted bank balance	<u>228,500.19</u>	Adjusted book balance	<u>228,500.19</u>
			0.00

Northern Middlesex Council of Governments  
 Bank Reconciliation - Washington Savings Bank Savings Account  
 December 31, 2023

Bank statement balance	537,647.29	Book Balance	537,647.29
Add:		Add:	
Deposits in Transit	0.00	Bank interest	0.00
Bank error	0.00	Receivable Colletions	0.00
 Deduct:		 Deduct:	
Outstanding Checks	0.00	Safety deposit rental	0.00
ACH/debit payments in Trans	0.00	Book Check Error	0.00
 Adjusted bank balance	 <u>537,647.29</u>	 Adjusted book balance	 <u>537,647.29</u> 0.00

ACCOUNT OPENED 12/20/2023

To: Northern Middlesex Council of Governments, Council and Alternate Members  
From: Jennifer Raitt, Executive Director  
Re: Executive Director's Report for December  
Date: December 2023

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## REGIONAL PLANNING ACTIVITIES

- **Transportation/ Northern Middlesex Metropolitan Planning Organization (NMMPO)**

- **MassBike 2023 Annual Event**

On December 5, 2023, Jessica Boulanger, NMCOG Transportation Mobility Specialist presented at the 2023 MassBike Annual Event. The virtual meeting was attended by Lt. Governor Kim Driscoll, Senator William Brownsberger, Representative Tommy Vitolo, and Representative Michelle Ciccolo, and included a legislative panel providing suggestions on how to build more bike-friendly momentum on Beacon Hill. Jessica shared how participants can get involved with their local Metropolitan Planning Commission (MPO) to support local bicycle infrastructure and discussed the Greater Lowell Vision Zero Plan. She was joined by MassBike Staff Alexis Hosea Abbott who recently developed a statewide [Bike Advocacy Group Directory](#). [Watch the full event on YouTube](#).

- **Traffic Counting Program**

In December, NMCOG staff uploaded all traffic counting data collected in the 2023 traffic counting season to MS2, the transportation data management system used by MassDOT. Staff also completed and submitted a quarterly count program status report as required by MassDOT, concluding the 2023 season.

Data collected during the 2023 traffic counting season will inform regional traffic volume reports that address topics such as average daily traffic, regional traffic volume trends, traffic growth, and heavy vehicle monitoring. Traffic counting data are also maintained to be used to inform NMCOG reports such as the Greater Lowell Vision Zero Plan.

In December staff drafted a Request for Proposals to retain a consultant to assist with data collection in the 2024 traffic counting season. This RFP is planned to be released in January 2024, with review of bids taking place beginning in February. In the upcoming month, staff will work to determine the count locations for the 2024 season with MassDOT and NMCOG member communities and issue a Request for Proposals for the 2024 traffic counting season.

- Lowell Regional Transit Authority (LRTA) Planning Support**  
 NMCOG staff began scoping a thorough update of LRTA's bus stop inventory, assessing and documenting the condition, accessibility, and amenities at each stop, accompanied by photographs. This project will culminate in a detailed report categorizing bus stop conditions and amenities by sub-region within the LRTA service area. Additionally, staff will identify and address discrepancies in publicly available GTFS data, aiming to enhance the overall rider experience.
- Weights and Measures**  
 During the month of December, NMCOG's Weights and Measures program conducted 37 inspections in the communities of Billerica, Chelmsford, Dracut, Littleton, Lowell, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford. Of those 37 inspections, 12 were annual inspections and 25 were price verifications. The outcome of these inspections resulted in 108 devices being inspected and sealed. In addition, price verification inspections resulted in 1,875 individual items being inspected for price accuracy as well as any sale price that may have been advertised. NMCOG's Weights and Measures Department completed annual inspections for all businesses that required one by December 19, 2023.

In addition, Division of Standards Annual Reports have been completed and submitted as of January 6, 2024. The results were impressive. During the year, NMCOG's Weights and Measures Department held 432 inspections throughout our member communities, with 2,915 devices inspected and 37 price verifications completed. These inspections resulted in a revenue of \$239,667 (not including any outstanding payments).

- Regional and Municipal Digital Equity Planning Program**  
 Throughout November and December, NMCOG and the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC) staff held meetings with each NMCOG municipality to go into depth on outreach strategies and digital equity needs as MAPC collects region-wide data. A press release coordinated with UMass Lowell is anticipated for January to draw attention to this critical planning process. The next steps involve coordinating and interviewing several stakeholder focus groups in areas such as education, literacy, career development, healthcare, housing, and communications. The final Digital Equity Plan will highlight digital equity issues and strategies applying to the entire region and for each individual municipality. A project website has been created to share details about this work, project schedule, upcoming meetings, and project outcomes; visit [nmcog.org/digitalequity](http://nmcog.org/digitalequity) to learn more.
- "At Home in Greater Lowell" Regional Housing Strategy**  
 At Home in Greater Lowell is officially underway. A call for Advisory Committee members was released in December, along with a save the date for the first kickoff summit, scheduled for February 13, 2024 from 1:00 to 5:00pm. The kick-off summit

preferred scenarios and monitor compliance with the law. To date, Billerica, Chelmsford, Tewksbury, Tyngsborough, and Westford have submitted draft zoning for EOHLC's preadoption review. EOHLC review will ensure that zoning amendments submitted to and subsequently approved by Town Meeting will maintain a community's compliance with MGL Chapter 40A, Section 3A, and thereby preserving community eligibility for a host of state grant programs. In addition, Lowell previously submitted the multifamily zoning adopted by its City Council for EOHLC recognition of district compliance

Additionally, staff resumed work with Dracut to plan for MBTA Communities compliance by participating in a joint meeting of the Dracut Select Board, Planning Board, Zoning Board of Appeals, and Zoning Bylaw Review Committee on December 12, 2023 at Town Hall. The session covered general information and education about the Section 3A MBTA Communities Multi-Family Zoning requirement, Dracut's efforts on developing district scenarios thus far, the intended planning process to develop a complaint district, and time for joint board discussion, comments, and questions and answers about the law and planning process.

NMCOG also hosted a monthly technical support conference call with all seven participating MBTA Communities from the NMCOG region on December 12.

- **Pepperell Subdivision Regulations Ordinance**

NMCOG officially completed Pepperell's new Subdivision Regulations Ordinance, which was delivered to the Town in December. The Planning Board will hold a public hearing to review the updates and edits sometime in 2024. As of December, the project is now completed.

- **Dunstable Union Building Rehabilitation and Future Use**

NMCOG administered a project survey on potential future uses of the historic Union School Building—a Town-owned former schoolhouse that will no longer be needed by the Groton-Dunstable school district after June. The survey received over 160 responses. NMCOG, the Town, and SPG Architects are planning a public meeting on February 8.

- **Dunstable Walk Audit**

NMCOG completed the Walk Dunstable final report, which was presented to the Dunstable Select Board on December 7. The report identifies community-informed recommendations for ways to improve walkability in Dunstable Town Center, along with recommendations on project prioritization and potential grant programs through which the Town can potentially finance future improvements.

- After a nearly nine-month process, beginning with a Council subcommittee helping to develop a Request for Proposals, NMCOG officially moved into 672 Suffolk Street, Suite 100, at Wannalancit Mills in Lowell. The bright, sunny office space is welcomed and staff have begun settling into their new spaces. NMCOG staff are organizing an Open House in early 2024 to officially celebrate the new space. A special thank you to the staff team behind the numerous, and complicated, details associated with the move: Carlin Andrus, Kelly Lynema, and Lesley Shahbazian.

#### **NMCOG Audit**

- Anstiss & Co., P.C. is working on NMCOG's audit. We are anticipating wrap-up and a presentation to the Council at the March meeting.