

Administration and Finance Committee Meeting Draft Memorandum for the Record Boston Region Metropolitan Planning Organization Meeting

September 7, 2023, Meeting

9:00 AM–10:04 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Brian Kane, Chair, representing the MBTA Advisory Board

Decisions

The Administration and Finance Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the summary of the May 11, 2023, meeting
- Approve the summary of the May 18, 2023, meeting
- Approve the summary of the June 1, 2023, meeting

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 5.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Action Item: Approval of May 11, 2023, Meeting Summary

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [May 11, 2023, meeting summary \(pdf\)](#)
2. [May 11, 2023, meeting summary \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 11, 2023, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried.

4. Action Item: Approval of May 18, 2023, Meeting Summary

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [May 18, 2023, meeting summary \(pdf\)](#)
2. [May 18, 2023, meeting summary \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of May 18, 2023, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried.

5. Action Item: Approval of June 1, 2023, Meeting Summary

Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar

1. [June 1, 2023, meeting summary \(pdf\)](#)
2. [June 1, 2023, meeting summary \(html\)](#)

Vote

A motion to approve the minutes of the meeting of June 1, 2023, was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the MetroWest Regional Collaborative (Dennis Giombetti). The motion carried.

6. State Fiscal Year (SFY) 2023 Year-End Budget Update—*Hiral Gandhi and Silva Ayvazyan, MPO Staff*

Hiral Gandhi, MPO Staff, began with an overview of the past three fiscal years, stating that in the three years prior to SFY 2023, CTPS has experienced a deficit in its operating budget. The goal in SFY 2023 was to offset that deficit with either a surplus or a balanced budget. This year, CTPS had a surplus of \$250,000 at the end of the fiscal year, leveling out the deficits from the previous years.

Some unique occurrences related to the surplus included the procurement of the Safe Streets and Roads for All grant, a midyear salary increase, and a change in accounting for expenses across the fiscal year. Additional successes included the purchasing of new office furniture, hybrid work technologies, and IT resources for increased cyber security. Challenges were primarily found in recruitment, which has implications for charging of contracts, resulting in unobligated funds.

Silva Ayvazyan, MPO Staff, then outlined the changes in revenue by quarter, noting that revenue peaked in Quarter 3 as project managers are trying to close out their projects by the end of the year. Expenses remained fairly steady throughout the year, primarily due to a new budgeting practice of spreading out the payment of large invoices over the course of the year. Generally, CTPS charged to its funding sources close to the amount that it was expected to. The overhead rate for SFY 2023 was projected to be 119.34 percent, but was ultimately 108.76 percent, a 10.58 percent difference.

Discussion

D. Giombetti asked whether revenue and contracts were different. H. Gandhi replied that revenues and funding sources were the same. Contracts fall under the federal fiscal year cycle, while revenue (and therefore operating budget) is on the state fiscal year cycle. Tegin Teich, Executive Director, additionally shared that staff are not charging to a given contract, which can result in a difference in revenue.

Brad Rawson (City of Somerville) asked whether a lag in commencing a contract-based project affects the MPO's cash flow. H. Gandhi stated that while staff can project potential costs related to a contract-based project, CTPS cannot recognize the revenue until a contract is signed and invoiced. B. Rawson asked about the risk factors associated with larger scale projects for external partners. T. Teich stated that there is a risk associated with taking on larger projects versus working with MassDOT PL funds.

B. Kane commended staff for investing in office equipment and hybrid technology, and asked what CTPS will do with the \$230,000 surplus funds. H. Gandhi replied that since CTPS does not actually hold the surplus funds, depending on whether the actual overhead rate is above or below the projected rate, CTPS will either have to pay back the unspent amount in a contract or bill the client for the additional expenses.

Len Diggins (Regional Transportation Advisory Council) asked how staff spend down the surplus. H. Gandhi replied that staff will examine administrative expenses and determine if there are purchases or expenses that can be moved up into the current fiscal year.

B. Rawson asked whether there is a federal equivalent to municipal special funds for MPOs. T. Teich replied that because of how the money is distributed to the MPO by MassDOT, unspent funds revert to MassDOT. The federal government allows the spending of carryover funds but the process to access those funds is complex.

D. Giombetti asked how staff make decisions on spending down the surplus funds. H. Gandhi replied that the leadership team holds discussions on needs and consults the chair of the A&F Committee on the spending choices made.

7. Goals Update—Tegin Teich, Executive Director

T. Teich provided an overview of some of the agency's goals, beginning with the Executive Director evaluation process. Some of the Executive Director's goals included obtaining board approval of an operations plan, revisiting employee policies that may have become less competitive, reaching full intended staff capacity, addressing MOU recommendations in the federal certification report, and completing a new fiduciary agent agreement, among others. T. Teich outlined the next steps towards achieving

these goals, which include summarizing any recommended updates, developing a format to include quarterly updates, and developing a new format for annual evaluations.

8. Members' Items

There were none.

9. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Advisory Council (Len Diggins) and seconded by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
City of Boston (Boston Planning & Development Agency)	Jim Fitzgerald
Massachusetts Department of Transportation	Miranda Briseno
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
	Amira Patterson
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Ali Kleyman	MBTA
Jon Seward	
Jen Rowe	City of Boston
Morgan Griffiths	City of Natick
Sandy Johnston	MBTA
Brad Rawson	City of Somerville
Jeff Epstein	

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Annette Demchur
Hiral Gandhi
Gina Perille
Silva Ayvazyan
Ethan Lapointe

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Title VI Specialist

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By Telephone:

857.702.3700 (voice)

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