

Administration and Finance Committee Meeting Minutes

Draft Memorandum for the Record

June 9, 2022, Meeting

3:00 PM–4:00 PM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Brian Kane, Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee Chair, representing Jamey Tesler, Secretary of Transportation and Chief Executive Officer of the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT)

Meeting Agenda

1. Introductions

See attendance on page 7.

2. Public Comments

There were none.

3. Discuss topics for the Operations Plan—*Brian Kane, A&F Committee Chair*

Brian Kane, A&F Committee Chair, introduced the list of topics for discussion of the Operations Plan. B. Kane asked the committee members if there were additional items that could be added to the list.

Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council (MAPC), stated that the list of topics was a good start for discussion and suggested adding an item regarding bringing project statuses to the MPO board in a timely manner and how those procedures could be incorporated into the Operations Plan.

Lenard Diggins, Advisory Council, asked to add an item to the list of topics regarding interactions with the Advisory Council.

B. Kane asked if Ken Miller, Federal Highway Administration (FHWA), would be willing to speak at an upcoming meeting to discuss best practices and the ways the Boston Region MPO differs from other MPOs.

B. Kane stated he was interested in a discussion regarding the election of board members and permanent members of the MPO, including MassDOT seats. B. Kane questioned whether it made sense that MassDOT controls nine votes.

K. Miller stated that the MPO previously voted to change the election process to have subregions elect the members from their own subregion. A discussion is needed on how the election is conducted, and this is something E. Bourassa needs to think about. K. Miller stated that the Pioneer Valley MPO subregions already choose their own representatives. Finalizing the elections process is something that needs to be prioritized as the elections are approaching.

B. Kane brought up the MPO's subregions and stated that he felt that people in municipalities may not know what subregion their municipality belongs too, and those people may not know they are being represented in the MPO. B. Kane suggested there were different models of representation being used, such as the MBTA Advisory Board, in which every community is represented when the board meets. B. Kane suggested having a conversation regarding whether subregions accurately represent the areas they serve.

E. Bourassa stated that he thought the subregions do work and agreed with B. Kane that while not every municipal official may not know what the MPO is, municipal planning staff does. E. Bourassa reminded the committee that for the upcoming election, municipalities will vote for just the subregional seat that represents their municipality. E. Bourassa suggested creating guidance to determine how the subregional votes are organized. MAPC communicates the elections process at the end of July, seeks nominations by the first week of October, and the MPO election is typically held at the end of October. E. Bourassa suggested defining how the subregional seats work, and if it would be a nomination process or a caucus for electing subregional members.

B. Kane asked about when the last time subregions were evaluated. E. Bourassa responded that subregions have not been reevaluated in a holistic way since at least the beginning of E. Bourassa's tenure.

B. Kane stated it would be helpful to have additional discussions on the MPO subregions and the elections process. B. Kane noted the slight discrepancies between MPO and MAPC subregions.

K. Miller pointed out that the subregions are MAPC subregions and not MPO subregions, and that the MPO adopted these subregions from MAPC. K. Miller stated that having elections by subregion could help to improve community participation and representation. The elections process should also consider the linkage between each region's chief elected official and the representative that is sent to the MPO meetings,

and who officially votes. K. Miller reiterated that there is limited time to rethink the subregions before the MPO has an election.

B. Kane asked if there was institutional information on how the MAPC subregions were created. E. Bourassa responded that Martin Pillsbury has been at MAPC since the early eighties and might have some knowledge. E. Bourassa further stated that MAPC could investigate the evolution of the subregions over time.

B. Kane asked if the MPO was continuing to differentiate between cities and towns, as the line between cities and towns in terms of population size has been blurring. B. Kane agreed that the elections process should be documented, but he was not convinced the way the elections process is currently organized was good or bad.

L. Diggins stated that in respect to subregions, he had no opinion yet as he has not had a chance to consider the subregion elections process.

E. Bourassa stated that the 2021 Elections Process Survey found that many potential candidates choose not to run due to the time commitment, and that a virtual format could make MPO meetings more accessible.

B. Kane asked if the elections process must be competitive.

K. Miller said that in the Pioneer Valley MPO, there are three municipalities who each take turns representing their subregion in the Pioneer Valley MPO. People must want to participate in the MPO and must also have the time to commit.

E. Bourassa stated that it was not realistic to have all ninety-seven municipalities represented in the MPO. E. Bourassa explained that he was initially concerned when the MPO was expanded to twenty-two voting members as he believed that work would be unable to be done, but he was proven wrong. E. Bourassa said that the MPO has functioned well, but there are issues regarding the influence of board members.

L. Diggins stated that the MPO should help to prepare unrepresented municipalities to run for MPO elections and get them up to speed regarding MPO content. L. Diggins further suggested giving other input opportunities to underrepresented municipalities.

B. Kane stated that the time commitment is an issue for a lot of smaller municipalities that do not have the resources to be represented and that communities that are wealthier tend to have time to attend MPO meetings. B. Kane also stated that if the MPO wants to increase diversity but women and people of color are not being elected, that might be hard to achieve. B. Kane reiterated his support for discussing permanent

members and the role of MassDOT and its large presence. B. Kane stated that he would like to discuss this with the MassDOT Secretary as well but was unsure where to discuss representation and MassDOT's power as a member of the board.

K. Miller stated that discussing permanent members and MassDOT's role might be beyond the scope of the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). Addressing MPO membership questions with the Operation Plan may help MPO members to better understand how the board functions. K. Miller suggested that the MPO membership discussion might be more fruitful if discussed after the Operations Plan is created.

B. Kane suggested the discussion move to officers of the board.

L. Diggins said the MPO should regularly elect the Chair and the Vice Chair for the meetings.

Tegin Teich, Executive Director of Central Transportation Planning Staff, which is the staff to the Boston Region MPO, stated that in the MOU the Chair is MassDOT. In the Operations Plan memo, MPO staff suggested defining and further clarifying through the Operations Plan when the election of the Vice Chair takes place.

E. Bourassa stated that the Vice Chair is supposed to be an elected position. Previously, MassDOT had annually nominated MAPC for the role of Vice Chair, but this has not happened in a while. E. Bourassa suggested identifying the term length for the Vice Chair. E. Bourassa agreed with T. Teich that items spelled out in the MOU are not in the current scope of these discussions and that the Operations Plan memo lays out the focus of the discussions.

B. Kane asked if there was anything written about the Vice Chair in the MOU.

E. Bourassa answered that the MOU states that there will be a Vice Chair and that the Vice Chair will be elected.

B. Kane asked about the procedures for agenda setting. K. Miller responded that agenda setting is something that is described in the MOU. K. Miller stated that having MassDOT be the Chair was a compromise that was made in the nineteen nineties. K. Miller stated that he was not opposed to opening the discussion, but the Operations Plan would help members better understand the agenda setting process.

B. Kane requested a document be created with action items including a rough timeline as outlined by the MOU. T. Teich responded that she could create a trimmed down version of the MOU, which would include cutting and pasting of language from the MOU.

E. Bourassa stated that the FHWA went through the MOU as part of the 2019 Certification Review and highlighted several areas for adjustments. The MPO staff then built the Operations Plan memo from those recommendations.

T. Teich stated that there are ways the MPO staff can try to process and share information to make it easier to navigate. If a trimmed down MOU is useful, the MPO staff can work to create it.

B. Kane stated that a trimmed down MOU document would be helpful to develop a timeline. B. Kane asked someone to go through the MOU and pull out language relating to the election of the Vice Chair. Jonathan Church, MPO staff, stated he could work on the document.

B. Kane requested that MPO staff record dates that MPO work products should be complete by, and then work to integrate this information into the Operations Plan.

T. Teich stated that in the discussion topics for the Operations Plan, there is a section about MPO work products as well as sections regarding dates and elections. Some of the topics the MPO staff can complete right away, and some will evolve as the A&F Committee moves through the process. T. Teich asked to confirm a next meeting of the committee and suggested a poll to find a time to meet.

L. Diggins requested a short response time for the poll and to limit turnaround time to three or four days.

E. Bourassa suggested creating a schedule for each meeting and covering three to four topics each. E. Bourassa suggested using these meeting times to flesh out questions or react to documents prepared by MPO staff.

B. Kane reiterated his request for a pared down MOU with timings noted. B. Kane further reiterated his request to discuss the election process and permeant members.

E. Bourassa asked if there was a deadline for the Operations Plan. K. Miller stated that the recommendation to develop an Operations Plan was a result of the 2019 Certification Review, and that this could become a requirement in the future if not completed.

E. Bourassa clarified that he wanted to know if the committee could get the elections process finished by the end of the summer, and if the election was going to be a ballot vote.

K. Miller stated that the committee should work with MPO staff to define options and allow time to create the requested documents. K. Miller suggested prioritizing issues that need to be developed as soon as possible, such as the elections process.

T. Teich said MPO staff can work with committee members to add questions and information to the requested documents to help facilitate future discussions.

B. Kane said he would like to understand what tasks the board has committed to doing and when to help understand what the gaps are in the MOU.

4. Members' Items

There were none.

5. Adjourn

A motion to adjourn was made by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

Attendance

Members	Representatives and Alternates
MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins
MassDOT	Derek Krevat
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa

Other Attendees	Affiliation
Ken Miller	FHWA
Jon Fetherston	MetroWest Regional Transit Authority

MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director
Gina Perille
Jonathan Church
Hiral Gandhi
Silva Ayvazyan
Betsy Harvey
Sandy Johnston
Matt Genova
Srilekha Murthy
Logan Casey

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Title VI Specialist

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857.702.3700 (voice)

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