

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

**August 4, 2022, Meeting**

9:00 AM, Zoom Video Conferencing Platform

Brian Kane, Chair, representing the MBTA Advisory Board

## **Decisions**

The Administration and Finance (A&F) Committee agreed to the following:

- Approve the minutes of the meeting of June 9, 2022

## **Meeting Agenda**

### **1. Introductions**

See attendance on page 6.

### **2. Public Comments**

There were none.

### **3. Action Item: Approval of June 9, 2022, A&F Meeting Minutes—*Brian Kane, Chair***

*Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar*

1. [June 9, 2022, A&F Meeting Minutes \(pdf\)](#)
2. [June 9, 2022, A&F Meeting Minutes \(html\)](#)

### ***Vote***

A motion to approve the June 9, 2022, A&F Committee meeting minutes was made by the Metropolitan Area Planning Council (Eric Bourassa) and seconded by the Regional Transportation Advisory Council (Lenard Diggins). The motion carried.

### **4. Review of Operations Plan Write-up and MPO Elections Process—*Eric Bourassa, Metropolitan Area Planning Council***

*Documents posted to the MPO meeting calendar*

1. [Operations Plan Writeup – MPO Elections Process \(pdf\)](#)
2. [Operations Plan Writeup – MPO Elections Process \(html\)](#)

***Discussion***

Lenard Diggins, Regional Transportation Advisory Council, asked what the rationale was for allowing chief elected officials (CEOs) to nominate candidates without the approval from their selectboard. E. Bourassa answered that nominations happen in August and are due at the beginning of October, which happens during times where selectboards typically do not meet or meet infrequently. Allowing a CEO to make the nomination speeds up the nomination process. MAPC's experience is that transportation staff or town managers are typically interested in the MPO and approach their selectboard to ask for permission to run.

Derek Krevat, MassDOT Office of Transportation Planning (OTP), asked if there would be an online form to vote and if there would be separate documentation for the election. E. Bourassa answered that there is separate guidance that is more specific and that the guidance is tweaked each year. The nomination process will be conducted via an online nomination form.

Tegin Teich, Executive Director of the MPO staff, stated that this process was the start for the Operations Plan itself, and that this document is the Operations Plan structure MPO staff will continue to build on going forward.

**5. Discussion of Next Operations Plan Topic—Officers of the Board—  
*Brian Kane, Chair***

T. Teich introduced the discussion of the Officers of the Board topic and gave an overview of the draft document. T. Teich presented the committee members with a series of questions to guide the discussion.

***Discussion***

B. Kane asked if there was a process for determining a board member's ability to run for an officer position. B. Kane suggested that the Secretary of Transportation should attend at least one MPO board meeting a year, and that the Secretary of Transportation should officially designate the representatives.

L. Diggins stated that he would not be in favor of requiring the Secretary of Transportation attend meetings as there is only a limited amount of time in the Secretary of Transportation's schedule. L. Diggins stated that it was sufficient for the Secretary of Transportation to inform the MPO of the designees and alternates. L. Diggins further noted that designees do not typically report to their selectboard or to the Secretary of Transportation.

B. Kane noted that the Secretary of Transportation's designee to the MPO acts in their own capacity with the authority of the Secretary but does not necessarily report back to or take direction from the Secretary.

E. Bourassa stated that there should be a process where the Secretary of Transportation designates the representatives on a yearly basis. E. Bourassa noted that in past meetings when the Chair was not in attendance, the Chair's designee or alternate served as the Chair. E. Bourassa stated that having the Secretary of Transportation attend MPO board meetings may not make sense and asked representatives from MassDOT for their opinion on the matter. E. Bourassa suggested the committee formalize the election of the Vice Chair.

Dennis Giombetti, MetroWest Regional Collaborative, asked if a CEO's designation letter would be reused if the designee is reelected. Jonathan Church, MPO staff, answered that if a designee was reelected, the CEO would have to update and resend the designation letter to MPO staff to keep on file.

D. Giombetti asked if the committee should consider using a similar process for agencies to designate their representatives and require a new letter upon term expiration or if the representatives change. B. Kane agreed and stated that the designation letter could be sent by e-mail.

D. Giombetti stated that he found it confusing that if the MPO Chair is not present, another MassDOT representative would serve as the Chair rather than the Vice Chair.

D. Krevat stated that the rationale for having other MassDOT representatives serve as Chair is due to day-to-day coordination between the MPO staff and MassDOT OTP and the familiarity staff members have with MPO processes and topics.

B. Kane stated that the close relationship between the MPO staff and MassDOT is assumed, and not specifically mentioned in the Memorandum of Understanding.

E. Bourassa suggested that in the absence of the Chair, the designee or alternate from MassDOT should serve as Chair, and the Vice Chair and the Vice Chair's alternate would be next in the order.

B. Kane suggested having an election day for the MPO.

E. Bourassa suggested that during the first meeting of the MPO after the election of new board members, the Secretary of Transportation should preside and designees shall be appointed.

L. Diggins stated that he liked the idea of the Chair being passed to members of MassDOT in the Chair's absence as it gives MassDOT representatives more incentive to attend meetings.

T. Teich stated that she had not heard of another MPO that has its state department of transportation as the Chair and she does not believe that MassDOT's participation is necessarily tied to holding the position as Chair of the MPO.

D. Krevat stated that there are unique factors in Massachusetts compared to other MPOs in the United States. MassDOT provides funding matches for projects in the state. MassDOT has a unique agreement with the Federal Highway Administration that prohibits funds from flowing without MassDOT's Highway Division playing a role in the development of the project, as well as allowing MassDOT oversight on the design of projects in the state.

Cassandra Ostrander, Federal Highway Administration, stated that MassDOT's position as Chair of the MPO was unique and she was not aware of other states that have a similar structure, although some states still provide a funding match.

Jen Rowe, City of Boston, suggested that in regard to the Chair facilitating the MPO meetings, it is helpful to have a facilitator no more than 20 percent invested in the outcome of a decision.

E. Bourassa agreed with J. Rowe but was unsure how to address the current process of having MassDOT as Chair. On another topic, E. Bourassa stated that regarding the responsibilities of the Chair, it would be important to define "timely information" and he suggested that MPO staff outline the specifics of timings for review and approval of documents by MPO board members.

B. Kane asked E. Bourassa to explain his opinion on the agenda-setting process. E. Bourassa answered that the agenda-setting process is currently working and that MPO staff create the proposed agenda and present it to MassDOT and MAPC for comments and approval.

D. Giombetti stated that the agenda-setting process lacked details about how MPO board members can request agenda items and he suggested a written process for proposing an agenda item.

E. Bourassa suggested clarifying the use of the Members' Items agenda topic to remind MPO board members of their ability to bring requests to the MPO board and staff during the Members' Items agenda item.

D. Giombetti agreed with E. Bourassa and stated that even though there is an agenda item for Members' Items, there have been times when issues were brought up and not addressed or delayed for several months. D. Giombetti emphasized the importance of creating a written process for proposing an agenda item.

L. Diggins suggested that on some boards, topic requests are honored as a courtesy to the board members. Due to the MPO board's large size, the MPO cannot honor all requests. L. Diggins suggested that the MPO could create a formal process for accepting agenda items proposed by board members.

B. Kane requested MPO staff create a draft of the Officers of the Board topic based upon the committee's discussion and present any unanswered discussion questions at the next meeting of the A&F Committee.

## **6. Members' Items**

There were none.

## **7. Adjourn**

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

## Attendance

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### Members

### Representatives and Alternates

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MBTA Advisory Board	Brian Kane
Metropolitan Area Planning Council	Eric Bourassa
MetroWest Regional Collaborative (City of Framingham)	Dennis Giombetti
Regional Transportation Advisory Council	Lenard Diggins

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### Other Attendees

### Affiliation

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Cassandra Ostrander	Federal Highway Administration
Jennifer Rowe	City of Boston

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### MPO Staff/Central Transportation Planning Staff

Tegin Teich, Executive Director  
Jonathan Church  
Logan Casey  
Gina Perille  
Silva Ayvazyan  
Sandy Johnston  
Annette Demchur

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**Title VI Specialist**

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