

## MINUTES

The **Municipal Financial Sustainability Committee**  
of the **Woodlands Partnership of Northwest Massachusetts**  
January 13, 2025 (virtual)

**In attendance:** Sam Haupt—*Peru (chair)*; Liz Kidder—*Leyden*; Mark Phelps—*New Ashford*; Art Schwenger—*Heath*

**Absent:** Ron Bosley—*Florida*

**Board/Staff:** Jonathan Lagreze—*Colrain*; Kate Conlin—*Coord.*; Lisa Hayden—*Admin Agent*

**Guests:** Will Cosby—*Hawley*; Stephen Foley—*Collins Center*; Stephanie Lessing—*Collins Center*;

**Call to order:** 4:00 p.m.

**Review & approval of December 10, 2024 minutes:** A. Phelps motion, A. Schwenger seconds. All in favor.

**Discussion with the Collins Center:**

- Survey update and next steps:
  - S. Foley met with fire chief in Lee and police chief in Dalton – both agreed to assist in getting sent to appropriate police and fire chiefs. He is invited to speak at the western mass police/fire chief meeting this Thursday.
  - K. Conlin will send Woodlands Partnership logo after the meeting for survey use.
  - Survey will provide K. Conlin’s email/contact at the end of the survey.
  - What date should the survey close? It should be open for a month once it opens.
  - Paper option? Transfer stations could be useful places for paper copies. Once the document is finalized, S. Lessing will provide Word document of the survey and we can print out however many we need.
  - Data organization: data breakdown for first responders should be by town, as needs/solutions vary by towns; also department-type response (fire, EMS) this may help identify regionalization efforts (as well as macro); community survey will include age because emergency response time is perceived differently among age groups as well as if they have called 911 for emergency services before.
  - Both surveys shown on screen for review, edits: “lack of communication reception/transmission” preferred rather than specify GPS/cell; the definition of tourism as written “out of town visitors utilizing state parks and forests” should be more inclusive and instead be “outdoor recreational spaces.”
  - N/A vs. “not sure”? S. Lessing will review literature about the need for this distinction.
  - “Does the requirement of training limit adequately staffing your department(s)?” -- this will be a discussion question at the public forums.
  - Some questions are randomized to avoid bias.
- Locations for in-person meetings and dates
  - Have paper copies of surveys available
  - Franklin: Shelburne Fire Dept.; Berkshire: Windsor Town Hall (has kitchen) or Adams (ask Joe Nowak) (have hybrid capabilities) February 12 (Windsor), February 27 (Shelburne) - ask if Shawn Fenn can attend February 27<sup>th</sup> date (S. Lessing will attend the 12<sup>th</sup>).

- Scheduling virtual listening session
  - January 30, 6-7 p.m. (general process, how to access survey, questions, discussion)
- Workshop/draft invitation and outreach strategy for listening tour
  - Advertise all three events together and send to newspapers
- Delegation of upcoming tasks and general planning
  - K. Conlin will confirm dates of public forums, confirm hybrid capabilities, draft outreach, other event planning
  - Targeted invites/outreach to promote the survey and attendance of listening sessions will be needed (by the WP Board, WP staff, Collins Center)
  - K. Conlin will provide paragraph of what the WP is, what this project is for, etc. that will display on the first page of the survey (how to make it enticing so people will attend – money, safety, impacts).
  - Preview page of surveys will be sent soon.
  - Education, Outreach, & Research Committee can assist with promotion and filling out the document with all town/newsletter contacts.

**Items not anticipated within 48 hours:**

- Woodlands Partnership state name change legislation passes, signed by Gov. Healey.

**Schedule next meeting:** after virtual public listening session, for guided input, Monday February 3, 4-5pm

**Public Comment:** J. Lagreze, new representative from Colrain, is dropping into various committees to learn about initiatives and which committee he might join.

**Adjourn:** A. Schwenger motion, S. Haupt seconds, 5:24 p.m.