

**Mohawk Trail Woodlands Partnership
Finance & Budgeting Standing Committee
November 29, 2021, 3 pm**

Minutes

Members Present: Whit Sanford, Rick Chandler, Emily Johnson (attended until 4 pm), Chair Keith Ross (joined partway through meeting)

Others: Hank Art, Board Chair; Lisa Hayden, Admin. Agent; Brian Rhodes, reporter - iBerkshires

1. Meeting was called to order at 3:10 p.m. by R. Chandler, filling in for the Chair, who was delayed.
2. Approval of minutes from July 15 was moved by W. Sanford, seconded by R. Chandler, and passed unanimously with E. Johnson abstaining as she was not a member at the time.
3. The Committee reviewed the 2018 Draft Business plan, which had been prepared about three years ago by FRCOG and BRPC (who formerly served in the Agent role) as a template working budget outlining how the MTWP could plan spending of revenue envisioned in enabling legislation (which mentions a \$30 million revolving fund) but is yet to be funded or realized. H. Art noted some confusion about the difference between the Partnership Plan and 2018 Draft Business Plan, which have the same first page, and was unclear about whether the Board had ever approved the 2018 Draft. He suggested calling the 2018 Draft “a budget” implies the MTWP has money to spend, but it is really more like a bridal registry – or a wish list for what the Partnership would like to spend money on pending federal and state appropriations and other funding sources to be pursued. As of yet, creation of a revolving fund does not seem to be on the radar screen of the Forest Service or the Commonwealth, but having a more clearly defined outline of needs will likely help the MTWP to fundraise from a variety of sources, including private foundations, corporations and grass-roots donors, as well as government grants and appropriations.
4. After discussion about the best approach, Committee members reviewed a skeleton Chart of Accounts prepared by W. Sanford and worked together to review the format and organization of program areas and suggested line item amounts for this draft budget [totaling \$973,000, and with suggested revenue of \$500,000 coming from federal sources and \$350,000 from the Commonwealth]. H. Art wondered whether state funding through EOEEA, such as for the Agent and town and regional grants, should be considered a parallel funding source or if those programs should be incorporated. R. Chandler suggested a separate sub-budget that could be cross-referenced for the state grants, which totaled about \$1 million over three years of grants.

5. The Committee discussed the idea of sending a draft mock-up of expenditure line items with this ghost or conceptual budget out to the other Standing Committees to let them react to what the random allocations look like, suggest any categories not included, and ponder their aspirational budget numbers for their top priorities for 2022 before the next Board meeting, tentatively set for March 15. Some questions that remain include: should the MTWP budget match the state fiscal year of July 1 to June 30, or the federal fiscal year of Oct. 1 to Sept. 30; clarifying the MTWP's tax-exempt status (the organization is not a 501c3, but a public body). (H. Art suggested it should be the state FY)
6. The next Committee meeting was targeted for Jan. 19, 2022.
7. K. Ross asked members to review and offer edits to the draft Committee Mission/Goals that he shared at the Nov. Board meeting.
8. The meeting adjourned at 4:23 p.m.