

March 25, 2026

6:30 PM Regular Meeting

Remote SRPEDD Commission Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86925418353?pwd=mEnbgc2YEQZqbWNRFe2BA0vKDIrJrw.1>

AGENDA

1. Call to Order, Introductions, and Welcome
2. Approval of Minutes – February 25, 2026* (*Vote requested*)
3. Reports
 - a. Chair
 - b. Executive Director
4. Consent Agenda
 - a. Contracts (*Vote to receive report and place on file*)
5. Committee Reports
 - a. Finance and Personnel Committee (*Vote to receive report and place on file*)
 - b. Joint Transportation Planning Group/MPO (*Vote receive and place on file*)
 - c. Environmental Committee (inclusive of MEPA report) (*Vote place on file*)
6. Programs and Project Updates
 - a. [SRPEDD Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness \(MVP\) Planning](#) Update
7. Old Business
 - a. [Technical Assistance](#) (*Vote to receive and place on file*)
 - b. 2026-2027 Commissioner (Re-)Appointment Forms- Due *May 19, 2025*: Mayor/Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, At-Large
8. New Business
 - a. Proposal Regarding the Establishment of a Mission-Aligned 501(c)3 Non-Profit Under the Direction of the SRPEDD Commission
9. Roundtable: Opportunity for Commissioners to provide updates on local topics, projects or matters of regional interest
10. Adjourn

Per MGL c. 30A § 18-25, all meetings posted at: <https://srpedd.org/about-srpedd/meetings/>

FUTURE MEETINGS: Apr. 22, 2026; May 27, 2026; June 24, 2026;
July 22, 2026; No Aug. mtg.

NOTE: An Exec. Cmte Meeting will be convened in the absence of a Commission quorum.

AGENDA ITEM: Minutes, # 2

SRPEDD Commission Meeting – Draft Minutes
Feb. 25, 2026
Remote Meeting via Zoom

Present:**Commissioners:**

J. Carvalho, Dighton	J. Fidalgo, Fairhaven	N. Mello, Fairhaven	D. Aguiar, Fall River
N. Durfee, Freetown	L. Carboni, Lakeville	N. Hills, Marion	J. Robbins, Mattap.
M. Clarner, No. Attleb.	D. Luciano, Norton	S. Warchal, Norton	T. Torres, Plainville
P. Menconi, Raynham	L. Ferreira, Rehoboth	S. Cadime, Seekonk	R. Peirce, Somerset
C. Parayno, Swansea	B. Fitzgerald, Taunton	J. Pateakos, Taunton	J. Faherty, Wareham
J. Whitin, Westport	G. Saddler, F.R. A/L	A. Slavin, N.B. A/L	

Guests/Staff:

A. Horowitz, SRPEDD	G. King, SRPEDD	L. Estrela-Pedro, SRPEDD	K. Porter, SRPEDD
S. Royer, SRPEDD	M. Sylvia, MA State Rep.	M. Tinger, SRPEDD	J. Walker, SRPEDD
R. Freedom-Gurspan, FFIO			

Absent:

D. Wojnar, Acushnet	V. Alfaro, Acushnet	G. Ayrassian, Attleboro	S. Elliott, Attleboro
S. Leary, Berkley	K. Robinson, Carver	C. Haddad, Dartmouth	K. Estes, Dartmouth
D. Pettey, Freetown	D. Lodge, Lakeville	B. Roche, Mansfield	R. Burke, Marion
L. Bradley, Middleboro	W. Pike, Middleboro	J. Ponte, New Bedford	M. Borg, No. Attleboro
C. Desprez, Plainv.	C. Sullivan, Raynham	M. Shoemaker, Roch.	S. Smith, Seekonk
W. Raposa, Somerset	J. Hansen, Swansea	J. Moran, Wareham	M. Soares, Westport
C. McDermott, Attl. A/L	A. Eaton, N.B. A/L	T. Lobo, Taunton A/L	

- 1. Call to Order:** The meeting was called to order at 6:34 P.M by Chairwoman Clarner.
- 2. Presentation: Honorable Mark D. Sylvia, Representative- 10th Bristol (Acushnet, Fairhaven, New Bedford; Marion, Mattapoisett and Rochester):** Rep. Mark Sylvia provided an update on his legislative priorities and current initiatives at the state level. His remarks focused on environmental policy, wastewater financing, and transportation improvements affecting municipalities in the region.

Rep. Sylvia discussed the challenges municipalities are facing in updating local bylaws to comply with new renewable energy siting regulations. Several communities have expressed concern about the limited time and resources available to complete these updates. He acknowledged these concerns and indicated he would follow up with the Department of Energy Resources (DOER) to explore whether additional flexibility or extended timelines may be available. He also highlighted the Energy Affordability Bill, which aims to reduce utility costs and provide relief to ratepayers. He stated that legislation represents a compromise among stakeholders while maintaining the goal of lowering energy costs for residents and businesses.

Another topic discussed was the Wastewater Financing Commission, which focuses on addressing coastal wastewater infrastructure challenges in communities around Buzzards Bay. Rep. Sylvia noted

the importance of developing funding mechanisms to assist municipalities facing significant wastewater infrastructure needs.

Lastly, Rep. Sylvia also provided updates on transportation and infrastructure projects, including improvements along the Route 6 Corridor, and emphasized the need for stronger coordination between state agencies and local governments. Rep. Sylvia entertained questions from the Commissioners.

3. Approval of Minutes – Jan. 28, 2026: A motion was made and seconded to approve the Jan. 28, 2026 minutes. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

4. Reports:

- a. **Chair:** Chairwoman Clarner mentioned that she appreciated all of the questions for Rep. Sylvia. She mentioned that she and Mr. Walker have been in discussion about reaching out to other members of our state delegation in order to enable Commissioners to secure further such helpful answers to questions of importance to area communities.
- b. **Executive Director:** Mr. Walker echoed the same as Chairwoman Clarner and mentioned the discussion with Rep. Sylvia was particularly timely and helpful. He thanked the Representative for his time and expertise sharing the Commission looked forward to working with him.

5. Consent Agenda:

- a. **Contracts:** Chairwoman Clarner referred Commissioners to the contracts listed in the packet and read each contract for approval.

Be it resolved that the SRPEDD Commission authorizes the Chairman, Treasurer, Officers, and Executive Director, as appropriate, to negotiate and execute the following contracts:

- 1. With the town of Westport to review and update the Town’s zoning to enable village-style neighborhood development in key areas for an amount not to exceed \$92,000.00.
- 2. With the town of Mattapoisett to review and revise the Planning Board’s Rules and Regulations in a manner consistent with M.G.L. c. 40, c.40A, and all applicable legislation and case law for an amount not to exceed \$67,000.00.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the contracts listed above and dispense with the reading. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

6. Committee Reports:

- a. **Finance Committee:** Mr. Hills reported the Finance Committee met on February 18, 2026, at SRPEDD’s office (88 Broadway, Taunton) and via Zoom. The January 21, 2026, Finance Committee meeting minutes were approved; the Treasurer’s Report for January 2026 was received and accepted; and the voucher warrant for expenses in the amount of \$22,463.87 (paper checks plus employee expense reports paid via ACH) was approved.

In addition, the Finance Committee received and accepted the January 2026 month-end general journal entries and reviewed the OPEB trust account statement from Charles Schwab for January 1-31, 2026.

Finally, the Finance Committee recommended that the Commission adopt a FY2027 annual community assessment rate of \$0.0054 per capita, a 2.5% increase over the previous fiscal year.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Finance Committee report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

- **FY'27 Annual Assessment Rate:** Mr. Walker referred the Commissioners to page 9 and discussed the FY'27 Annual Assessment rates. He entertained questions.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the FY'27 Annual Assessment Rate. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

b. Joint Transportation Planning Group: Ms. Estrela-Pedro referred to the meeting minutes on page 10 from the January 14th JTPG and the January 20th SMMPO meetings. She mentioned at those meetings there were project presentations from consultants that were either programmed in the current TIP or being considered for programming in the development of the FY27 to FY31 TIP. She also highlighted that on page 18, there were numerous amendments to the existing TIP with the statewide funding which affected the communities of New Bedford, Taunton, Somerset and Freetown. Ms. Estrela-Pedro mentioned if anyone needed additional information or had transportation issues to please contact her.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Transportation report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

c. Environmental Subcommittee: Ms. Tinger provided updates on several environmental and planning initiatives, including Renewable Energy Siting guidelines and regulatory updates. She also discussed the MVP project database and the Rural Policy Plan update along with Eco One Stop grant opportunities. Ms. Tinger also discussed ongoing efforts to support municipalities as they work to comply with renewable energy regulations and zoning updates. She mentioned if any Members had questions to contact her.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Environmental report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

7. Old Business:

a. Technical Assistance: Mr. King referred Commissioners to the monthly update on projects contained in the packet on page 22. He mentioned that he and fellow staff are available to discuss projects as needed via email or by calling the office.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the Technical Assistance report. VOTED UNANIMOUSLY.

8. New Business:

a. MA Federal Funds & Infrastructure Office (FFIO) Municipal Technical Assistance Program- Raffi Freedman-Gurspan: Ms. Freedman-Gurspan, Associate Director of the Federal Funds and Infrastructure Office (FFIO), presented an overview of the office and new technical assistance programs available to municipalities and regional planning agencies. She mentioned the FFIO operates within the Executive Office for Administration and Finance and coordinates statewide efforts to identify and pursue federal funding opportunities. She reported that the office facilitates interagency collaboration through bi-weekly advisory council meetings and hosts monthly partnership calls to keep regional partners informed of federal funding opportunities.

Ms. Friedman-Gurspan introduced the Municipal and Tribal Technical Assistance Program (MTTA), a competitive program designed to help municipalities develop and secure federal funding for local projects. The program provides services such as grant writing and application support, project scoping and planning, financial analysis, and post-award grant management. The program has \$2.5 million in funding over two years, with the first round of project awards recently announced. She also introduced the Technical Assistance Grants for Regional Planning Agencies (TARPA) program. This program provides formula-based funding to the 13 Regional Planning Agencies in Massachusetts to support project development, financial analysis, and feasibility studies. The program has allocated \$2 million statewide, with \$165,671.59 allocated to SRPEDD. Ms. Freedman-Gurspan entertained questions from the Members. Commissioners asked questions about the process for identifying federal grant opportunities for specific projects. Ms. Freedman-Gurspan confirmed that the office can assist municipalities and regional partners in researching and pursuing appropriate federal funding opportunities. She also provided an example of FFIO assistance supporting a wastewater infrastructure project in Fall River. The member also briefly discussed the potential development of a regional sewer authority to address wastewater infrastructure needs across multiple communities.

b. MA Ocean (OAC) Report: Ms. Robbins reported that she serves as SRPEDD’s representative to the Ocean Advisory Commission, which met jointly with the Science Advisory Council in early February. The meeting was part of the mandatory five-year review and update of the Ocean Management Plan. She indicated a slide presentation from the meeting was included in the meeting packet. Ms. Robbins noted that she would not review the slides in detail but described the meeting as informative and comprehensive. Staff from the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management Office provided an overview of the Ocean Management Plan and the upcoming update process, demonstrating a strong level of expertise on the topic. Ms. Robbins mentioned that the slides provide extensive information about the Ocean Management Plan and the goals for its update. She explained that the update process will take approximately two years and is just beginning. She also noted that the Science Advisory Council includes technical experts who work closely with Coastal Zone Management staff on the detailed scientific and technical aspects of the plan.

Ms. Robbins described the update as an ambitious and worthwhile effort. The presentation included information about the various resources and uses identified within state ocean waters beginning approximately 0.3 nautical miles from shore. The update will also examine emerging issues, and new ocean uses to ensure that ocean resources continue to be managed appropriately. Ms. Robbins entertained questions.

9. Roundtable: Opportunity for Commissioners to provide updates on local topics, projects or matters of regional interest: None

10. Adjourn: The meeting was adjourned at 8:25 P.M. The next Commission meeting will be held on March 25, 2026 at 6:30 PM on Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 3/25/2026

Gloria Saddler, Secretary