

**MONTACHUSETT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION (MRPC)**

**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, 2022**

**7:00 PM**

**REMOTE MEETING**

**AGENDA**

- 7:00 PM**      **1.      Open Meeting, Introductions, and Announcements**
- 7:05 PM**      **2.      Approval of August 4, 2022, MRPC Minutes – Approval of Commissioners Requested**
- 7:10 PM**      **3.      Cash Schedule – August 2022 – Acceptance of Commissioners Requested**
- 7:15 PM**      **4.      Guest Announcements and Questions**
- 7:20 PM**      **5.      Administrative Matters**

**5.1      “How Can Small Businesses Win the War on Talent” Webinar, Employers Association of the Northeast (EANE), August 23<sup>rd</sup>**

Approximately two decades ago, when advertising open positions at the MRPC, it was common to receive one to three dozen job applications for each job. Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic that number was always in the single digits. Searching for employees during the pandemic has become increasingly difficult. MRPC received no interest in the ARPA Grants Director from late 2021 to early 2022. There are many talented people in the labor pool, but fewer of them.

MRPC needs to find enough candidates to interview for planning positions when they are available at the MRPC. Mr. Eaton attended this free session to learn more about the changes that have taken place in the pool of available labor and how to retain and acquire talented professionals in the future. Significant changes occurred during the pandemic.

The pandemic has not helped. During the resulting economic decline, we’ve witnessed the “great retirement,” “great resignation,” and the great reshuffle.” With the loss of the baby boomers due to the retirements of so many people, a brain drain has occurred in virtually every profession.

According to the presenter in this webinar, there were about 90 million people born into the “Baby Boomers Generation.” These numbers declined in successive generations.<sup>1</sup>

Some additional highlights of the webinar are, as follows:

- This is “The Perfect Storm”
- Average salaries have risen 5% since COVID (March 2020)
- CPI has gone up by about 8%
- Candidates are taking their time to find jobs and they have more bargaining power than in the past
- Opioid crises still going strong, and the COVID-19 pandemic headlines have overshadowed the opioid matter (especially prevalent in males, 24-54 in age) and alcohol abuse is still a problem
- Baby boomers that retired are “boomeranging” back in (but more may be needed)
- Exodus of inhabitants out of New England – moving south and west. People have been leaving the northeast, Illinois, Ohio, and Michigan due to the climate and the abundance of opportunities elsewhere.
- Employees are now looking for a “total employee experience.” When advertising positions in the future, the MRPC must consider the perception of the potential worker while working for MRPC.

Given all of the above, employers need to have a sharply defined “Employee Value Proposition!” when attracting new talent and retaining employees.

MRPC needs to employ some of the tactics that are implemented by larger employers such as providing “great employee experiences, developing good managers, and enabling innovation,” according to a nationally recognized expert in human resources management (Source, McLean and Company).

Information related to the above was distributed to subscribers of *Statista.com* on August 30<sup>th</sup>. *Statista’s* information has been provided, below.

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<sup>1</sup> Generation Names, according to <https://caregiversofamerica.com/2022-generation-names-explained/>, are Greatest Generation (b. 1901-1924), Silent Generation (b. 1925-1945), Baby Boomer Generation (b. 1946-1964), Generation X (b. 1965-1979), Millennials (b. 1980-1994), Generation Z (b. 1995-2012), and Gen Alpha (born 2013-2025).

# From Great Resignation to Great Regret?

## LABOR MARKET

by

[Felix Richter](#),

Aug 30, 2022

Following the pandemic shock to the labor market that saw millions of Americans lose their jobs in a matter of weeks, the balance of power has shifted in favor of workers as companies struggled to fill open positions in the swift recovery following the Covid shutdown. In what has become known as “[the Great Resignation](#)” or “the Great Reshuffle”, almost 50 million Americans quit their jobs in 2021, hoping for higher pay, more benefits or better career options elsewhere.

The grass isn't always greener on the other side, however, and a sizeable chunk of those who left their previous jobs are now feeling quitter's remorse. According to a recent survey from job search portal [Joblist](#), one in four workers who quit their previous job say that they regret the decision, citing a variety of reasons for their second thoughts. The most common reason for workers' regrets is that they quit without having a new job lined up and are now finding it harder than expected to find one. This comes as a surprise given the current labor market where open positions far exceed the number of unemployed workers. Other reasons for regretting the decision to quit include missing the people at their old company, disappointment in the new job and the realization that the old one wasn't half bad after all.

According to [Joblist](#), 42 percent of those who quit their job say that their new job hasn't lived up to expectations but returning to their old job is not really an option for most. When asked about a possible return to their old employer, 59 percent ruled out that option, while 17 percent said “yes” and 24 percent were at least open to the idea. Education and healthcare workers were apparently most fed up with their old jobs, with 67 percent of workers in the field saying they had no intentions of returning to their previous position.

Please see a related graphic on the following page.

# From Great Resignation to Great Regret?

Reasons why U.S. workers who quit their previous job regret their decision



628 job seekers in the U.S. who quit their previous job surveyed between Apr-Jun 2022

Source: Joblist



Source, <https://www.statista.com/chart/28120/why-americans-regret-quitting-their-jobs/>

**5.2 “Sexual Harassment & Discrimination Prevention Training” Webinar held by Employers Association of the Northeast (EANE) held on August 30, 2022, attended by Holly Ford, Administrative Manager and Mr. Eaton**

Topics covered included the following:

- Sexual Harassment Laws
- Types of Sexual Harassment
- Prevention
- Responsibilities

The biggest “take-aways” were:

- People are still uncomfortable reporting harassment
- Sexual harassment defined as an unwelcomed, unwanted, unsolicited sexual advances, requests for favors, verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when made as a term or condition of employment or has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual’s work performance or creating and intimidating, hostile, or offensive work environment.
- 60% of workplace misconduct goes unreported.
- As an organization, we can set the standard of behavior in our Policy & Procedures Handbook.
- Behaviors are open to perception and what is acceptable to one is not always welcomed or accepted by another.
- All complaints MUST be taken seriously.
- If possible, provide both male and female harassment complaint officers.
  - In MRPC’s case we’ll officially designate the Executive Director (male) and Administrative Manager (female) and notify all employees via email-memo within a few business days of this webinar.
- The employer, manager, and/or supervisor must ensure that the alleged behavior stops even if the complainant says that s/he/they do not want any disciplinary action against the offender
- Employers, managers, and supervisors may not retaliate against anyone that raises an informal concern, files a formal complaint and/or services or is a witness to an alleged action or behavior.
- An employer is liable for sexual harassment if the firm “knew or should have known” about the harassment and failed to take immediate and appropriate corrective action.
- Supervisors can be held personally liable for engaging in harassing acts.
- Supervisors can be held individually liable if they are aware of or should be aware of other conduct of others that is found to be harassing.

- None of us are above the law.

The total cost for both attendees was \$152.00.

### **5.3 Amendment to Budget – Line Item Entitled “56200 Conferences, Meetings, Training”**

#### **REPORT**

The MRPC recognizes the need to train its employees in a variety of areas not the least of which are procurement, human resources, and apps such as Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and possibly other areas.

- Procurement
  - Existing employees have had very little procurement training. The Executive Director recommends that many employees, especially our managers and newer hires, need training in this area. Bluntly, this type of training is not provided to college students. Also, we’ve identified at least one employee who will receive a significant amount of formal training from the MA Office of the Inspector General (IG) so that he may obtain his Procurement Certificate (or, MCPPO).
- Human resources
  - Mr. Eaton and Ms. Ford have been attending HR training webinars offered by the Employers Association of the Northeast (EANE). MRPC will require department heads to take HR trainings this fiscal.
- Microsoft Office Apps
  - Recently, Mr. Eaton and Ms. Kayla Kress, GIS & IT Analyst attended a Microsoft Excel Level 2 training session. Both are planning on attending Level 3 training (possibly in December). Additional employees may take training voluntarily or will be required to do so by management.

The original balance of the “Conferences, meetings, Trainings” line item (#56200) was \$2,000 (as of July 1, 2022) while the current balance is \$1,204.00. Boosting this line item will give management the flexibility to provide online, or in person, educational sessions.

#### **RESOLUTION**

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission hereby approves of the proposed amendment to reduce the “Equipment/Furniture Purchase” line item (#57002) from its original budget of \$11,000 to \$6,000 and

move \$5,000 into the “Conferences, meetings, Trainings” line item (#56200) which will increase the “Conferences, meetings, Trainings” line item from its original budget of \$2,000 to a new budget of \$7,000 (not including expenditures made since the beginning of FY23) to pay for a variety of employee training sessions as identified in the above report.

#### **5.4 “Lunch and Learn?”**

One of the MRPC’s sibling agencies, the Central MA Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC), provides a free “Lunch & Learn” virtual workshop series on Wednesdays at Noon. Experts are brought into the “virtual room” to discuss topics of importance to local officials. Recently, several planners and local officials in the Montachusett Region have asked the MRPC to consider replicating this program. A very brief survey to a variety of local officials will be created, issued, and the results will be analyzed prior to the MRPC’s implementation of this service (results will be shared with Commissioners no later than the next meeting to be held at 7:00 p.m., Thursday, October 7<sup>th</sup>).

Draft survey questions have been drafted and will be as follows:

*1. If the MRPC offered a “Lunch and Learn” series, would you be able to attend on which days of the month, from Noon through 1:00 p.m. (check off as many as you wish):*

- *First Tuesday of the month*
- *First Wednesday of the month*
- *First Thursday of the month*
- *First Thursday of the month*
- *Second Tuesday of the month*
- *Second Wednesday of the month*
- *Second Thursday of the month*
- *Second Thursday of the month*
- *Third Tuesday of the month*
- *Third Wednesday of the month*
- *Third Thursday of the month*
- *Third Thursday of the month*
- *Fourth Tuesday of the month*
- *Fourth Wednesday of the month*
- *Fourth Thursday of the month*
- *Fourth Thursday of the month*

*2. What topics would draw you and you and/or your fellow local officials into the virtual meeting room? (Check off as many as you wish.)*

- Updates on recently passed federal legislation, such as \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_
- Updates on recently passed state legislation, such as \_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_
- How to move a local road or bridge project through the regional Transportation Improvements Process (“TIP”)
- The importance of pavement management
- Geographic information system (GIS) use and benefits to communities
- State or local zoning issues such as \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_
- Sharing of national, state, and regional economic indicators and their meaning to Montachusett communities
- Collaborative workspaces and makerspaces and their importance in worker training, retraining, and economic development
- Updates to the MBTA communities program
- Comprehensive planning process
- Open space and recreation planning process
- All hazards mitigation planning process
- Government grants for communities and regional organizations
- Other topics \_\_\_\_\_

3. Would you be able to act as an expert on a topic?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure
- Other \_\_\_\_\_

4. If you answered “Yes” to question #3, what topic(s) would you like to present to your peers?

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Additional questions may be asked. However, the survey is intended to be very short to maximize the number of responses received.

7:30 PM

**6. Department Updates**

**6.1 Geographic Information Systems (GIS)**

**6.2 Planning & Development**

**6.2.1 Brownfields Update**



## 6.2.2 MBTA Communities Update

## 6.2.3 Community Compact Program Update

# 6.3 Transit & Transportation

## 6.3.1 Transportation

### REPORT:

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) establishes the new Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program that will provide \$5-6 billion in grants over the next 5 years. Funding supports regional, local, and Tribal initiatives through grants to prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The SS4A program supports the U.S. DOT's National Roadway Safety Strategy and a goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our nation's roadways.

The MRPC is looking to submit an application for the development of a Safety Action Plan for the region. The successful development of an Action Plan will allow various entities, including cities and towns, to apply for implementation grants in future years of the program. Approximately \$1 billion is available in this year's program. Staff has surveyed communities to determine who might be interested in being part of this application. To date we have received positive responses from 11 of our 22 communities. Staff will be putting the application together online as required in order to meet the September 15<sup>th</sup> deadline. The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is available on the MRPC website for download under Announcements.

### RESOLUTION:

**BE IT RESOLVED** that the Montachusett Regional Planning Commission (MRPC) supports the submittal of an application to the Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A) discretionary program for the development of a Regional Safety Action Plan. The MRPC supports the goal of zero deaths and serious injuries on our regional and national roadways and the development of this Safety Action Plan will be instrumental in achieving that goal. The MRPC also affirms its commitment to helping to meet the 20% local match requirement through funds and in-kind services.

8:00 PM

## 7. New Business

This time is being reserved for topics that the chair did not reasonably anticipate would be discussed.

8:15 PM

## 8. Adjournment

*This meeting will be recorded by the GoToMeeting app and will be made available for viewing on <https://www.youtube.com/user/MontachusettRegion/videos>.*

*This notice is subject to change with reasonable notice provided to all.*