

# GPCOG Executive Committee

## MINUTES October 18, 2022

### In Attendance:

Name	Affiliation
Jerre Bryant	Westbrook
Nat Tupper	Yarmouth
Sue Witonis	Cumberland County
Krista Chappell	Gray
Matt Sturgis	Cape Elizabeth
Carmen Lone	Bridgton
John Hawley	Naples
Kate Lewis	South Portland
Kristina Egan, Chris Hall, Tony Plante, Belinda Ray, Tom Bell, Julia Breul, Paul Johnson, Matt Panfil, Sara Mills-Knapp	GPCOG Staff

### Welcome

John Hawley opened the in-person retreat. Kristina reviewed the goals for the annual retreat. People paired together, and then each person introduced their partner.

### 2-Year Goals

The group reviewed the agency's goals for FY23 and FY24, then broke into three small groups. Below are key takeaways that each group reported back to the larger group:

- Tools and supports for attracting resources: A regional grantwriter or service could support smaller municipalities in applying for federal funds. One suggestion was for GPCOG to do a 'roadshow' to share grant opportunities. Some communities also need data to support their own grants development.
- Expanding housing choices through technical assistance to cities and towns: Members noted that LD 2003 ignores municipalities that want to do the right thing and are interested in providing affordable housing but do not have, or at least have not yet

found, the means to get projects built. There's a different context for affordable housing in different parts of the Greater Portland area, and short term rentals are reducing housing availability. Two suggestions are to hold sub-regional events and/or create a "rural coalition" within GPCOG.

- Connecting GPCOG members to the larger network of decisionmakers and stakeholders: GPCOG is confident in its ability to leverage connections, but communities may not know that staff can help with this. A suggestion was to promote GPCOG's ability to give members access to state and federal officials.

The larger group supplemented these reports with additional observations:

- Our region needs to better understand that we have problems together, and that there are opportunities to pursue funding and share best practices together.
- People are drowning in data, information, and emails. What we lack are opportunities for relationship building. Subregional meetings are a great mechanism to help members know each other and work together. Of course, everyone is busier than ever, so it's hard to make time to be part of a group. But, if we don't, we'll continue to be isolated from one another.
- GPCOG staff can help convene regional meetings with electeds and staff. The agenda will need to have substance, of course, but there should also be time to share information about what's happening in the communities and for people to get to know one another.