

APRIL 2022 NEWSLETTER

Good afternoon all,

I hope this email finds you well. We are excited to start a new monthly newsletter where you can expect to find project updates from MCOG as well as information regarding upcoming grants, workshops, etc. Our goal is to aid and serve our communities, and we hope this monthly newsletter will do just that. Any suggestions for improvements would be greatly appreciated.

- MCOG is excited to receive \$900,000 for our Law Enforcement Purchasing Program. Max Johnstone, Senior Planning Consultant, stated "This funding allows our communities, regardless of their size to have access to federal funding so their police departments can be properly equipped and reallocate capital funds to other high priority uses."
- We are also thrilled to welcome Mathew Eddy to MCOG as our new Executive Director. Mat has over 40 years of experience in local, regional, and state planning and development, most recently as the Planning and Development Director in Biddeford. He has experience in land use planning, economic and community development, housing program delivery, land trusts and environmental planning, transportation planning, and grant development and programming. He will be a great asset to the MCOG region.
 - It goes without saying, but we would also like to give a huge thanks to Deputy Director Brian Dancause for "holding down the fort" as Interim Executive Director. During that time, and in the months preceding, we accomplished a number of things:
- Comprehensive Plan work with Appleton, Rockport and West Bath continues.
- MCOG provided CDBG administrative services for Topsham and Waldoboro to grow businesses and create more jobs in the communities.
- Staff held Affordable Housing Workshops throughout the Midcoast to discuss community planning and land use ordinance solutions, heard presentations by affordable housing developers, the Maine Affordable Housing TIF program, and alternative housing options. These meetings have led to further discussions with developers aiming to break ground in 2023. Several of these meetings were recorded and are available for viewing on our website.
- Staff assisted Vinalhaven with their Downtown EDA project.
- MCOG continues its cooperative purchasing program with GPCOG, saving municipalities thousands of dollars on infrastructure maintenance items.
- MCOG successfully delivered two business assistant grant programs, designed to give financial aid to businesses due to COVID-19. Through the additional Maine Tourism, Hospitality and Retail Recovery Grant Program, MCOG administered 191 grant awards, totaling \$2.8 million. Through the Maine Jobs and Small Business Grant Program, we administered 49 grant awards, totaling \$660,000.
- MCOG hosted a webinar and will work with communities interested in LED streetlight conversions.
- MCOG added GIS services through the ArcGIS system as an available service. This service allows the MCOG office to create maps for Comprehensive Planning, create maps to find the most suitable development location, as well as resilience planning maps, to name a few.
- Successfully closed out the \$820,000 EPA Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund award, including drawing down \$7,765 to reimburse the City of Rockland for junkyard cleanup expenses.

- Submitted a nonbinding letter of intent to FAME to participate in American Rescue Plan Act and State Small Business Credit Initiative business financing programs. MCOG plans to use these funds to provide gap financing for larger projects. Using ARPA and SSBCI funds will recapitalize MCOG's revolving loan funds, as revolved funds (e.g., borrower payments for SSBCI-funded loans) will be MCOG funds to relend.
 - MCOG now serves as the regional planning agency for the Merry Meeting Trail Blazers. The group is a sector of the Capital to Coast trail (Augusta to Bath) that hugs the Kennebunk River. MCOG's role is to aid in support and provide our services to assist the completion of this project. This trail will serve as another means of transportation for those that want to commute to work via bicycle, in a manner that is safe from cars. The group meets monthly.

Best,

The MCOG Team

Mathew Eddy, Brian Dancause, Max Johnstone, Orion Thomas, Mary Jane West and Hannah Sisk