

Project Management: Project Kickoff Meetings – February 24, 2023

What is the momentous occasion that follows securing your project's necessary funding commitments? The **project kickoff meeting**! The project kickoff meeting brings key participants in the project together, helps them get to know each other and build a mutual understanding of the project. The kickoff meeting's agenda will include building a common understanding of the project's background, purpose, activities (a.k.a. scope of work), deliverables, and schedule. The project kickoff meeting is typically run by the project manager. This is either a consultant who is hired to serve as the project manager [PM] or a municipal person (staff or official) or local person who will fill the role. As with anything in life, preparation is the key to success, so holding an internal pre-kickoff meeting is highly recommended. This meeting will include the "internal" (municipal) project team - those in town government or the community who will be involved in and/or responsible for project and grant administration, like signing agreements, managing money, procurement of goods and/or services, compliance and reporting, etc. This internal pre-kickoff meeting helps your team understand the goals of the project, and the role that each teammate plays in achieving these goals. It often results in adjustments to the scope of work or schedule based on team needs (ex. vacation schedules, holidays, regular Selectboard meeting dates). In both meetings, be sure to ask about potential stumbling blocks that could hinder the project as well as activities that will help it succeed. If you want to help ensure successful outcomes for your project, make sure to offer stakeholders at both meetings opportunities to *ask questions*. **Project pre-kickoff and kickoff meetings reduce the odds of misunderstandings** as projects progress by aligning project expectations, setting the overall tone, creating momentum, and establishing big-picture goals.