
Commissioners Participating via Conference Call: None.

Commissioners Absent: Robert McBride, Gretchen Havreluk, Laura Sibilia, Prudence MacKinney, Kathy Urffer, Lynn Barrett, Andy Toepfer, Sue Fillion, Guy Tanza, Kevin Stine, Sarah Shippee, Roger Turner, Andy Coyne, Joel Bluming, Bonnie North, Matthew Somerville, Rickey Harrington, Renee Mulkey, Will Bissonnette, Stephen Dotson, Kristine Sweeter, Michael Tuller, Bill Dunkel

Guest Speaker: None.

Guests: None.

Staff Present: Chris Campany, Executive Director, Inessa Muse, Finance Manager

Introductions: There was a quorum of 23 towns present.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Gabby Ciuffreda at approximately 6:05 p.m.

Everyone in attendance was asked to introduce themselves.

There were no changes to the agenda.

Administrative Items & Reports:

Approval of June 25, 2019 Meeting Minutes: On a motion by Commissioner Partridge, seconded by Commissioner Arsenault, the minutes were approved with 5 abstentions.

Approval of Treasurer’s Report: Treasurer Kilburn that the Treasurer’s report should be tabled as the focus of staff has been on responding to the FY2018 audit, managing payroll, invoicing grantors, and developing the FY2020 budget and work program. Executive Director Campany noted that this was the first Full Commission meeting held since the unexpected passing of Finance Manager Mike Shaughnessy in July. He then explained what steps and actions were taken in the immediate
aftermath of Mike’s passing, including the search for a new Finance Manager and hiring of Inessa Muse, the hiring of interim bookkeeping services, catching up with invoicing, and developing the FY2020 budget. The necessary focus of Inessa’s time has been on responses to the FY2018 audit which had been significantly delayed and which is a necessary condition of a number of the Commission’s grantors. He explained that it wasn’t possible at this time to develop an accurate end of FY2019 projection as there was much bookkeeping to be done, but that the Full Commission would be presented with the end of year accounting once it was completed. He thanked staff for their engagement and support throughout the process. Commissioner Lembke noted that staff had worked through an emotional and turbulent time, including staff turnover and leave, and still continued the work of the Commission. Commissioner Arsenault noted that the challenges began the prior October with the departure of long-serving Associate Director and the transportation planner.

**Annual Business Meeting**

**Approval of FY2020 Work Program and Budget:** Executive Director Campany reviewed the FY2020 Work Program, focusing on what elements were substantially different from last year. He noted that all regional planning commissions would receive funding from Efficiency Vermont to implement the energy efficiency elements of regional energy plans, and to support local energy efficiency efforts. He also explained that he anticipated the Clean Energy Development Fund support for the Windham Wood Heat and Windham County Renewable Energy Program would be extended for another two calendar years, and noted significant projects proposed in Brattleboro (town collaboration with Windham and Windsor Housing Trust and the Brattleboro Library on a project that would involve district heating), and an apartment project in Putney that would eliminate the annual consumption of approximately 26 tons of coal. He then went through the budget in detail, explaining the reasoning behind significant differences between FY2019 and FY2020 projected income and expenditures. He noted that staff and the Executive Board felt a conservative approach was most prudent. The staff fringe increase reflected actual expenditures in FY2019 and an anticipated 15 percent increase in health insurance costs. Vacation accrual is high due to the number of staff who had not used vacation time. Consultant fees and grants and loans were explained; they primarily relate to the Brownfields assessment and revolving loan fund programs and the Windham Wood Heat and renewable energy grant programs. The local match transfer references revenue obligated to match federal grant funds (emergency planning and transportation). The contingency (surplus) reflects a conservative estimate as to how much funding remains in reserve. Actual reserves will be determined once the aforementioned FY2019 end of year actual profit and loss statement is completed. Chris was asked how funding was allocated to work among towns, and he explained that it varies depending upon town requests for assistance and other grant-specific requirements. On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Goodwin, the FY2020 Work Program and Budget was approved by a unanimous vote.

**Report of the Nominating Committee:** Nominating Committee Chair Carolyn Partridge announced the following slate. She also noted that if any commissioner was interested in serving in any capacity that they were encouraged to talk to her, the Chair, or staff. She asked for nominations from the floor. There were none.
The following slate was prepared by the WRC Nominating Committee. Nominations will also be taken from the floor.

**Officers:**
- Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair
- Piet van Loon, Vice Chair
- Bobbi Kilburn, Secretary/Treasurer

**Executive Board:**
- Tim Arsenault, Vernon
- Karen Astley, Putney
- Jack Cunningham, Wardsboro
- Lise Fortin, Wardsboro
- Steve Lembke, Guilford
- Carolyn Partridge, Whitingham

**Citizen Interest Commissioners:**
- Agriculture – Lynette Hamilton
- Arts & Culture – Robert McBride
- Community Development – Gretchen Havreluk
- Conservation – Linda Hecker
- Economic Development – Laura Sibilia (Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation)
- Healthy Communities – Prudence MacKinney
- Housing – Elizabeth Bridgewater
- Natural Resources – Kathy Urffer
- Tourism – Lynn Barrett

On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Whitman to close nominations and move the slate of Officer nominees, the slate of officers was elected by a unanimous vote.

On a motion by Commissioner Hammond, seconded by Commissioner Burnell to close nominations and move the slate of Executive Board nominees, the slate was elected by a unanimous vote.

On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham to close nominations and move the slate of Citizen Interest Commissioner nominees, the slate was elected by a unanimous vote.

**Executive Directors’ Report:** Executive Director Campany explained that the Commission had hired Margo Ghia to replace Emily Davis as natural resource planner, as Emily had left to pursue a law
degree. He thanked staff for their patience, resilience and support during this period of great change. Chair Ciuffreda and Treasurer Kilburn explained that they had been interviewing staff as part of the Executive Director’s performance review, and that staff noted the emotional difficulty of the loss of a colleague but that they were managing the transition well. Campany then discussed the new statewide broadband initiative that focuses largely on the formation of communications union districts. He said that the WRC does not have in-house expertise to develop feasibility studies or business plans, but that he anticipated the Commission would provide town outreach support. This would be dependent in some part on the availability of funding to support staff time. He did express concern that the expectation by some that towns could adopt resolutions to approve of communications union districts in time for the development of town meeting warnings was unrealistic. Commissioners agreed that their last scheduled Full Commission meeting for the year would be Tuesday, October 29th. He had invited a guest speaker to discuss the Staying Connected Initiative, which is a network whose goal is to maintain and improve habitat connectivity in northern Appalachia from the Tug Hill Plateau to the Gaspe Peninsula.

**Chair’s Report:** Chair Ciuffreda noted that this would be the last Full Commission meeting for Commissioners Sorenson and Brown, who have both served the Commission some capacity for decades.

The following resolution was read in recognition of the service of Commissioner Sorenson:

WHEREAS Lew Sorenson served as Executive Director of the Windham Regional Commission from 1987 to 1999:
WHEREAS he has served as a Commissioner since 2007;
WHEREAS he has served on the Executive Board and as Treasurer;
WHEREAS he has chaired the Transportation and Finance Committees; and
THEREFORE, BE IT NOW RESOLVED, that the Windham Regional Commission expresses its appreciation and gratitude to Lew Sorenson for his decades of service to the Town of Dummerston and the Commission, and
FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Windham Regional Commission wishes Lew Sorenson good health and relaxation in his retirement.

On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Partridge, the resolution was approved by a unanimous vote.

The following resolution was read in recognition of the service of Commissioner Brown:
WHEREAS Greg Brown served as a member of the WRC staff from 1979 to 1985:
WHEREAS he has served as the Citizen Interest Commissioner for Housing since 2012;
WHEREAS he has served on the Executive Board and he chaired the Energy Committee during the drafting of the first Windham Region comprehensive energy plan;
WHEREAS he chaired Commission’s 50th Anniversary Committee and authored The Windham Regional Commission: Celebrating 50 Years 1965-2015; and
THEREFORE, BE IT NOW RESOLVED, that the Windham Regional Commission expresses its appreciation and gratitude to Greg Brown for his service to the Commission, and
FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Windham Regional Commission wishes Greg Brown good health and relaxation in his retirement.
On a motion by Commissioner Arsenault, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, the resolution was approved by a unanimous vote. Commissioners Sorenson and Brown thanked the Commission, and commented on the WRC’s long and continued history of service and excellence.

Public Comment: Chair Ciuffreda explained that per the recently-adopted Commission Operating Procedures, time was to be set aside for public comment, which includes comments on any non-agenda items or unfinished business. Executive Director Campany explained that the regional planning commissions had been asked to solicit input on the Northeast Transportation Climate Initiative, and how funding from that initiative could be used to support rural transportation projects that would reduce greenhouse gas emissions and dependence on carbon-based fuels. He noted that in a recent newsletter article he encouraged towns to “stress test” their plans to determine whether or not the stated policies and related bylaws would achieve the stated visions of the plans, including compact settlement patterns. He also suggested this should be a priority for the next regional plan update, and that the Commission should have a robust conversation about achieving compact settlement patterns. He suggested this should include anticipation of Vermont becoming a desirable destination for people who move by choice or necessity in response to the effects of climate change.

Adjournment: The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 p.m. on a motion by Commissioner Arsenault.

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins