Commissioners Present: Melinda Bussino, Brad Horn, Denis Pinkernell, Charlie Goodwin, Bill Murray, Elaine Beckwith, Edith Mas, Eric Stevens, Tom Buchanan, Jack Cunningham, Heath Boyer, Andy Toepfer, John Kristensen, Dora Bouboulis, Alan LaCombe, Roger Turner, Fred Bullock,

Citizen Interest Commissioners Present: Isaac Wagner, Lynette Hamilton

Guests Present: Bill Colvin – Town of Dover/Wilmington, Mary Boyer - Windham Selectboard, Zeke Goodband – Dummerston Selectboard

Staff Present: Chris Campany, John Bennett, Dinah Reed, Ashley Collins

Introductions: There was a quorum of 14 towns present.

Convened: 7:30pm

Administrative Items & Reports:

Secretary’s Report: On a motion by Fred Bullock, seconded by Charlie Goodwin the minutes from the November meeting were approved; with Dora Bouboulis abstaining.

Executive Board Reports: On a motion by Fred Bullock, seconded by Tom Buchanan the December and January minutes were approved.

Financial Report: On a motion by Fred Bullock, seconded by Jack Cunningham the finance report was approved.

Executive Director’s Report & Other Business:

- The Commission was informed of an online survey to be administered as part of an evaluation of each regional planning commission (RPC) individually, and all RPCs statewide, by the National Association of Development Organizations (NADO). The Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA) contracted with NADO to perform the evaluations as part of an outcome of the Challenges for Change process. Each RPC contributed funds to support the evaluation process. The survey in question is to be completed by each commissioner and staff member of all of the RPCs. Chris suggested that Commissioner participation might be facilitated by holding the next Full Commission meeting at a facility that had a computer lab so barriers related to
computer access or connectivity might be overcome. The Commissioners agreed that providing such an opportunity would be useful, but also asked that the link to the survey also be provided to Commissioners so they could complete it at their leisure. It was decided that an opportunity would be provided for Commissioners to complete the survey at a computer lab before the next meeting of the Full Commission, and that the link to the survey would be provided to the Commissioners that they could complete the survey at a time and place of their choosing. The deadline for completion of the survey is February 28th.

- **Senate Economic Development Committee Has Tentatively Scheduled a Public Hearing in the Region Concerning the Economic Impacts of the Eventual Closure of the Vermont Yankee Plant Scheduled for February:** Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation Executive Director Jeff Lewis was informed that the Senate Economic Development Committee would like to hold a hearing to examine the potential economic impacts of the eventual closure of the Vermont Yankee plant. Jeff has included the WRC Executive Director in conversations related to the planning of this proposed hearing. The hearing was originally planned for February 2nd or 3rd, and was then rescheduled for the 16th (it has since been tentatively scheduled to be held on February 23rd). The WRC Executive Director will likely testify at the hearing, presenting the WRC position related to the eventual decommissioning described in briefs filed in Docket 7600 of the Public Service Board.

- **Windham Region Regional Technology Planning Team:** Each Regional Planning Commission is in the process of forming a Regional Technology Planning Team to assist with broadband outreach and adoption. This effort is supported through a grant with the Vermont Center for Geographic Information and the Vermont Telecommunications Authority. Activities of the team include the following:
  
  - Each RPC will assemble a Regional Technology Team.
  - Guided by these teams, each RPC will develop a Regional Technology Plan.
  - The Technology Plans will identify the needs and opportunities for each region in regards to new technologies, provide strategies to drive adoption of broadband, identify key partnerships that will benefit from the coordinated use of information technology (such as government services, education, health care, business, etc.) and set targets for improvement among those key partnerships.
  - Hold public events/meetings/workshops about these Regional Technology Plans and statewide technology initiatives.

Assistant Planner Dinah Reed, who joined the WRC in September, will be staffing this effort. Dinah was in attendance and was introduced to the Commissioners in attendance.

- **Sovernet FiberConnect Project and What It Means For Municipalities:** Bill Colvin, the Bi-Town Economic Development Planner for Wilmington and Dover was present to
explain what municipalities have at stake in the Sovernet FiberConnect project. Gregg Noble with Sovernet was scheduled to attend the meeting to explain the project, but was unable to participate due to a change in the time of a legislative hearing before which he was appearing. FiberConnect is a public–private partnership and project between the Vermont Telecommunications Authority (VTA) and Sovernet Communications that will allow Sovernet to develop, own, maintain, and operate a fiber optic middle mile network in our region and beyond with connections to “community anchor institutions” such as K-12 schools, libraries, colleges, state government offices, and public safety communications networks. In some cases, if these institutions opt not to participate, it is possible fiber optic lines will not be run to those areas through this project. Bill used the example of Dover, where it was discovered that if the Dover School did not participate that the fiber optic line would not be run up Route 100 to Dover. The deadline for anchor institutions to opt in or out of participation in this project is as soon as March or April of this year in some instances. Bill and Chris emphasized that this fiber optic network project has major implications for regional and municipal communications infrastructure, and strongly encouraged Towns to engage in a conversation with Sovernet and their community anchor institutions about participation in this effort. Information about the FiberConnect project is available at http://www.vermontfiberconnect.com/.

• **Water Management Typing Proposal:** Senior Planner John Bennett of the WRC gave a presentation on the watershed typing proposal project. In 2010 the Legislature appropriated funds to the WRC to develop a Water Management Typing (WMT) proposal for Basin 11, the combined watersheds of the West, Williams, and Saxtons Rivers. The proposal, to be provided to the Water Resources Panel of the Natural Resources Board and to ANR, is to designate Class B waters as Water Management Types B1, B2, or B3. John explained that since the 1960s, Vermont has had a classification system for waters that establishes management goals describing the values and uses of surface waters that are to be protected, enhanced, or restored through appropriate management. The system includes two classes, A and B. Class A waters are divided into two subclasses: A(1), waters above 2,500 feet in elevation, and A(2) surface water public water supplies. All other surface waters in the state are currently class B. The VT Water Quality Standards (WQS) revisions of 2000 require that Class B waters are to be divided into three management types: B1, B2, and B3. This typing system for Class B waters is largely based upon a continuum of acceptable conditions of water quality criteria, such as aquatic biota, aquatic habitat, and recreational opportunities. The B(1), B(2), and B(3) designations can be characterized as allowing increasing levels of departure from unaltered natural conditions. Under the principle of the WQS Anti-degradation Policy, waters cannot be typed below their actual quality as shown by existing data. If data exist to indicate that current water quality is B1 (or B2 or B3), that is the lowest WMT level that can be assigned. The WRC proposes to type all class B waters as B(1) at their headwaters or, if beginning above 2,500 feet, at that contour, and continuing the B(1)
designation downstream until existing water quality data indicate that the stream is no longer high quality fish habitat. If aquatic habitat or other water quality data are lacking, the B(1) status will continue until the stream exits intact forest cover, broken by land uses such as road crossings, development, or agriculture. Once a water has entered a developed landscape (or if it starts in such an area), it will be typed as a B(2). Stream reaches will be typed as B(3) only if they are affected by flow alteration caused by a dam or water withdrawal.

On a motion by Charlie Goodwin, seconded by all present the meeting was adjourned. Meeting adjourned at 8:47pm

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins