Full Commission Meeting  
March 29, 2011  
Westminster Volunteer Fire Department, Westminster, VT

**Commissioners Present:** Elaine Beckwith, Jodi French, Piet van Loon, Charlie Goodwin, Eric Stevens, Bill Murray, Brad Horn, Tom Buchanan, John Whitman, Alan LaCombe, Fred Bullock, John Kristensen, Lew Sorenson, Roger Turner, Emily Kunreuther, Dora Bouboulis, Edie Mas  

**Citizen Interest Commissioners Present:** Lynn Barrett, Corky Elwell  

**Guests Present:** Pat Moulton-Powden, Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Community Development  

**Staff Present:** Chris Campany, Susan McMahon, Ashley Collins  

**Introductions:** With only 12 towns present, there was a **not a quorum**.  

**Convened:** 7:33pm  

**Administrative Items & Reports:**  

**Secretary’s Report:** On a **motion** by Charlie Goodwin, seconded by Piet van Loon the minutes from the February meeting were **approved**.  

**Executive Board Report:** On a **motion** by Charlie Goodwin, seconded by Fred Bullock the March Draft Minutes were **accepted**.  

**Financial Report:** On a **motion** by Corky Elwell, seconded by Fred Bullock the finance report was **approved**.  

**Vermont’s Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Community Development, Pat Moulton-Powden** Representative Moulten-Powden was present to discuss the role of regional planning commissions in economic development. She gave a brief overview of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development and the executive staff members that have been appointed by the Governor. The Deputy Secretary discussed the strategic overview of all the programs they administer, including a short term economic development plan, an action plan, and an implementation plan. The short term plan looks ahead to the next twelve to eighteen months while the agency also develops a long range economic development plan for the state. She explained that retention and expansion of existing business, of all sizes, is a top priority, as is working with new entrepreneurs, and recruiting new businesses into the state.
The Agency will work closely with its regional partners – the regional planning commissions (RPC) and the regional development corporations (RDC) - in all of these efforts. She stated that the administration is very optimistic about future growth of business and employment in the state.

Concerning Challenges for Change, the Deputy Secretary stated that the Agency is not expecting RPCs and RDCs to consolidate, but to work together whenever possible and to continue to explore the sharing of resources. She felt the relationship between the Windham Regional Commission (WRC) and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) was a model for the state. She hopes regional and municipal plans will have stronger economic development components, and that the WRC and BDCC will work together on those components. She felt the WRC and BDCC have different but complementary strengths, and that together those strengths could improve economic development in the region. The performance-based contracts presently in place will be continued, and she highlighted the importance of the work we have underway including transportation, broadband, and brownfields assessment work.

The Deputy Secretary acknowledged the budget is tight, but the need in communities for help with planning, zoning, community development block grants, and other technical assistance are still there. Knowing one’s communities, and maintaining strong relationships with those communities, is a huge factor in success, and she commended the WRC for doing a great job with continued efforts to keep relationships strong with each of the towns.

A discussion with the Commissioners in attendance ensued. Topics raised included: making sure schools and other public institutions know about the broadband expansion efforts; concern about the impacts of decreased funding from the Federal government on state economic development programs; recruitment of businesses to Vermont from other states, improving opportunities for value added processing, especially in the livestock sector; better promotion of the state’s forest products industry, including the promotion of wood and other biofuels for heat; and the improvement of the tax code for employers hiring new workers, especially the long-term unemployed, including an initial exemption to some taxes to reduce the initial up-front impact of hiring workers by small companies.

**Rockingham Town Plan Approval:** The panel reviewed the town plan and reported their findings back to the Planning Coordination Committee (PCC). The PCC recommended approval of the plan, and confirmation of the town plan and process. A **motion** to approve the plan as presented, was **moved** by Charlie Goodwin, and seconded by Tom Buchanan. The motion was unanimously **approved** subject to ratification, as there was not a quorum present. On the confirmation of the town plan and process, a **motion** was made by Lew Sorenson, and seconded by John Whitman. The motion was **approved** subject to ratification as there was
not a quorum present. The PCC will bring these items to the next meeting to be held at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday, April 26th at the Wilmington Town Hall.

**Executive Director’s Report & Other Business:**

- Chris mentioned that the WRC is leading the other RPC’s in the NADO survey responses, and offered his thanks to the Commissioners for their interest and participation.
- The Commissioners were brought up to date on the WRC’s collaboration with Youth Services on an effort to improve the coordination of services between school bus service providers and transit providers. The WRC is collaborating with Youth Services on coordinating transit services for youth within the region. Chris noted that the WRC will not get involved in contract negotiations between the school districts and their school bus service providers. The first meeting among supervisory unions, school bus providers, and transit providers was a success, and the participants agreed to follow-up meetings to identify transportation coordination opportunities for the upcoming school year. The Jeffords Center is currently awaiting a grant proposal from the WRC to explore the coordination of services among the full range of transportation providers to improve mobility for all of the region’s residents.
- The agenda is set for the April Full Commission meeting, which will take place in Wilmington. There will be two guest speakers: Gregg Noble from Sovernet will discuss the FiberConnect project, and representatives from the Healthy Communities Coalition will discuss how they might work with municipalities and the WRC to develop policies to support a more active lifestyle, and improve access to fresh food.

On a **motion** by Fred Bullock, seconded by all present the meeting was **adjourned**.

**Meeting adjourned at 9:03pm**

Respectfully submitted,
Ashley Collins