WINDHAM REGIONAL COMMISSION

Executive Board Minutes
September 8, 2026

Location: Remote meeting via Zoom.
Members Present: Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair; Bonnie North, Ann Golob, Bill Dunkel, Steve Lembke, Gretchen Havreluk, Stephan Chait
Absent: Rick Cowan Jim Pinkerton Jr.
Staff present: Chris Campany, Executive Director, Matt Bachler, Senior Planner
Public/Guests: None
Presenter: None.
Call to Order: Commissioner Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m.
Additions/Changes to Agenda: None.

Administrative Reports:
Secretary's Report: On a motion by Commissioner Dunkel, seconded by Commissioner North, the August 11, 2026 minutes were **approved unanimously.**

Brownfields Putnam Block Loan Agreement Proposed Change of Terms
Associate Director and Brownfields Project Leader Susan Westa explained that the project owner has asked for a change in terms to reflect the economic realities of the property redevelopment. This was discussed at the latest meeting of the Brownfields Committee which voted to proposed the following terms to the Executive Board for approval:

- The owner will change from Bennington County Industrial Corporation to Putnam Block LLC.
- The interest rate will change to 2% from 3%.
- They will continue with interest only payments for 15 years (original term) with a balloon payment at end.

It was explained that while it is a goal of the Brownfields Revolving Loan Fund to recoup the funding lent plus modest interest, the primary goal of the program is to clean up sites, which has been accomplished. On a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner North, the Board voted unanimously in support of the Brownfields Committee's recommendations, contingent upon legal review by WRC counsel.

Regional Plan Update Status & Schedule
Senior Planner Matt Bachler provided an update on draft plan comments from the Land Use Review Board (LURB), staff review of and response to those comments, and the review and adoption schedule for the remainder of the calendar year. Discussion focused on the LURB's comments that ostensibly all prescriptive policy language in the plan should become more passive. The Board wanted to know if the LURB had any statutory basis for its suggestions, and if it took into account

case law which has pointed towards more prescriptive language in regional and town plans to have serious standing in Act 250 and Section 248. Chris noted that staff shared these concerns, and were frustrated that this new direction from the LURB is coming so late in the process when opportunity for major changes in policy approach are running up against the statutory deadline for plan adoption. He suggested the Board could submit comments to the LURB expressing its concerns while also moving the language proposed by staff to the Full Commission in the interest of moving the plan forward and meeting the statutory adoption deadline. The proposed staff language was amended to state that wetland protection requirements should be in compliance with state law and rules. Commissioner Golob made a motion that the Board go forward with the proposed staff language, including the amended wetland language, and that a letter on behalf of the Board be submitted to the LURB. This was seconded by Commissioner North. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

Absentee Commissioner Outreach Follow-Up
Chair Ciuffreda explained that an email and letter were sent to all commissioners who have a record of excessive absenteeism but she received no response. Commissioner Lembke made a motion that a copy of letter be sent to the respective selectboards explaining we've heard nothing back and ask that they address the situation as they see fit. This letter would be sent by the WRC under the signature of the Chair. This was seconded by Commissioner Golob and approved by a unanimous vote.

Executive Board Succession Planning
This item was deferred to the next meeting in the interest of time.

Committee Appointments
Chair Ciuffreda suggested that the Personnel Committee be composed of WRC officers as it has been in the past. A motion by Commissioner North endorsed this approach, which was seconded by Commissioner Golob. The motion passed by a unanimous vote.

End of Fiscal Year Salary Adjustments
Executive Director Campany asked that he and Finance Manager Inessa Muse be authorized to develop one-time salary adjustments to the last FY2026 payroll within the bounds of the approved FY2026 budget in the case there is a surplus that warrants the possibility of such. The Board felt this was appropriate and asked that such adjustments not exceed a total of $15,000. On a motion by Commissioner North, Seconded by Commissioner Golob, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the Executive Director and Finance Manager to develop one-time FY2026 salary adjustments not to exceed $15,000.

Executive Director's Report
Chris explained that while there was nothing the Commission or state could do about it, the prospect of $6 per gallon-plus heating oil was looking like a real probability and that this had the potential to hit Vermonters hard. He reviewed the Full Commission schedule for the rest of the calendar year, noting that the September meeting would focus on responses to the LURB regional plan review, the October meeting would be in-person with guest speaker Linda Dunlavy from the Franklin Regional Council of Governments, and the November meeting would be a vote to adopt the regional plan update. The December meeting would be held only if necessary to attempt a

second vote on regional plan adoption. He said he would have staff reach out to each commissioner individually to determine if they will be able to attend the November 10 meeting.

Committee Chair Reports
Chris noted that new Planner, Liana Rice, had staffed the Project Review Committee meeting for the first time and that she did a good job.

Public Comments: None.

Review of Action Items
The Board will take up succession planning at its next meeting and a letter will go out to selectboards regarding absentee commissioners.

Adjournment
On a motion by Commissioner Golob, seconded by Commissioner North, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:30 p.m.