



Full Commission Meeting Minutes
August 26, 2025

Commissioners Present:

Sue Fillion	Brattleboro
Ralph Meima	Brattleboro
Stanley Noga, Jr.	Brookline
Sarah Shippee	Dover
Cheryl Kaufman	Grafton
Eric Stevens	Grafton
Steve Lembke	Guilford
Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair	Guilford
Stephan Chait	Halifax
Peter Silverberg	Halifax
Patti Smith	Marlboro
Dan Toomey	Putney
Rick Cowan	Rockingham
Bonnie North	Rockingham
Jim Pinkerton, Jr.	Vernon
Paul Spector	Wardsboro
Peter Barus	Whitingham
Ann Manwaring	Wilmington
Bill Dunkel	Windham
Cathy Fales	Windham
Erik Moses	Winhall
Lynette Hamilton	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Agriculture
Gretchen Havreluk	Citizen Interest Commissioner - Community Development
Lynn Barrett	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Tourism

There was a **quorum** with 15 towns present.

Staff Present: Chris Company, Executive Director; Inessa Muse, Finance Manager; Matt Bachler, Senior Planner

Guest Participants: None.

Call to Order: Chair Ciuffreda called the meeting to order at approximately 6:01 p.m.

Amendments to agenda: None.

July 29, 2025 Minutes: On a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Cowan, the minutes were approved with two abstentions.

Quarterly Financial Report: Finance Manager Inessa Muse reviewed the most recent financial reports. No action was taken.

Annual Business Meeting Program:

- Chris and Inessa reviewed the FY2026 work program and budget. They explained that thus far the federal policy and funding situation has had few direct or indirect impacts. The biggest impact has been uncertainty. Chris noted that effects may be felt in future fiscal years as federal policies impact the general fiscal standing of the state and the state budget. The work program itself is little changed from FY2025, though the Municipal Energy Resilience Program will be winding down over the coming year. Regarding the budget, they explained that revenue estimates are purposefully conservative, and based on known funding streams. In prior years a soft revenue allowance was made based upon historic experience with municipal and regional projects emerging during the fiscal year. This soft revenue allowance was not included in the FY2026 budget. Similarly, cost estimates intentionally lean towards the high side to accommodate overall uncertainty. The budget proposes an across-the-board salary increase of 1%. On a motion by Commissioner North, seconded by Commissioner Shippee, the FY2026 Work Program and Budget were **approved** by a unanimous vote.
- Nominating Committee Chair Steven Lembke presented a slate of officers, Executive Board Members, and Citizen Interest Commissioners. He noted that he had conversations with the nominees and that all were honored, pleased, and willing to be asked to serve in their respective positions. The slate was moved by Commissioner Chait, and seconded by Commissioner Toomey. Chairperson Lembke asked if there were any nominations from the floor and there were none. The slate of nominees was elected to their respective positions by a unanimous vote.

In Memoriam Resolution for Lew Sorenson: Chris read aloud the resolution recognizing the service of Lew Sorenson to the Commissioner as both former Executive Director and as a Commissioner for Dummerston. He noted he was fortunate to have Lew available when he became Executive Director 15 years ago. On a motion by Commissioner North, seconded by Commissioner Shippee, the **resolution was passed** by a unanimous vote.

Long-time Service Recognition Resolution for Jack Cunningham: Chris read aloud the resolution recognizing the service of Jack Cunningham as Commissioner for Wardsboro. Chris noted the commitment of Jack to the WRC's role in Act 250, Section 248, and other permitting processes in which the WRC has engaged, and Jack's pride in serving on the Aesthetic Advisory Committee for the award winning I-91 bridge over Route 30 and the West River. Commissioner Lembke noted that Jack enjoyed taking new commissioners on a tour of Act 250 projects in the region. On a motion by Commissioner Chait, seconded by Commissioner Shippee, the **resolution was approved** by a unanimous vote.

Project Review Committee Report: Chairperson Jim Pinkerton noted that the next meeting of the Project Review Committee will be September 2nd, during which a short-term rental development proposal in Jamaica will be reviewed. He noted this will be the first day that he knew regional plan will be in effect. He also explained that there haven't been many projects to review, and that the most recent activity was around a Section 248 proposal for a solar installation in Vernon.

Executive Director's Report: Chris explained that the next and last Full Commission meeting for the 2025 calendar year would be held fully in-person on Tuesday, October 28th, likely in the center of the region in Newfane or Townshend. Food would be served as last year, and the purpose of the meeting would be for Commissioners to better get to know one another and WRC staff. He noted the newly-adopted regional plan would take effect on September 2nd, and that soon after the Commission would

begin another plan update to bring its future land use maps into compliance with Act 181. The intermunicipal flood adaptation charrette and scenario planning process would begin the 3rd week of September and will involve the towns of Dover, Wilmington, Readsboro and Whitingham. A UVM civil engineering capstone class will engage with projects in the towns of Rockingham and Jamaica. The website will be redesigned by the end of September on a new platform as the current platform will no longer be supported. Finally, Chris explained that after uncertainty as to whether FEMA would provide Emergency Management Performance Grants to the states, and by extension in Vermont, the RPCs, applications were opened a couple of weeks ago. RPCs will be level-funded.

Chair's Report: Chair Ciuffreda explained that there had been follow-up conversations with and within the Town of Westminster in the wake of their commissioner's motion at the last meeting to table plan approval at the request of the town. The town's Planning Commission Chair expressed no concerns with the contents of the regional plan. She also thanked Commissioner Lembke for his work organizing a strong slate of nominees.

Public Comment: None was offered.

Adjournment: On a motion by Commissioner Pinkerton, seconded by Commissioner Shippee, the meeting was adjourned by a unanimous vote at 6:56 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Company