



Full Commission Meeting Minutes
August 25, 2026

Commissioners Present:

Ralph Meima	Brattleboro
Sarah Shippee	Dover
Michelle Simpson	Dummerston
Suzanne Welch	Grafton
Eric Stevens	Grafton
Steve Lembke	Guilford
Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair	Guilford
Stephan Chait	Halifax
Peter Silverberg	Halifax
Emmett Dunbar	Londonderry
Gary Kleiman	Londonderry
Ann Golob	Newfane
Dan Toomey	Putney
Rick Cowan	Rockingham
Bonnie North	Rockingham
Andrew Snelling	Townshend
Paul Spector	Wardsboro
Peter Barus	Whitingham
Ann Manwaring	Wilmington
Bill Dunkel	Windham
Cathy Fales	Windham
Cheryl Carr-Maleh	Winhall
Lynette Hamilton	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Agriculture
Laura Sibia	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Economic Development
Kathy Urffer	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Natural Resources

There was a **quorum** with 16 towns present.

Staff Present: Chris Campany, Executive Director; Matt Bachler, Senior Planner, Liana Rice, Planner

Guest Participants: None.

Call to Order: Chair Ciuffreda called the meeting to order at approximately 6:03 p.m. once quorum was present.

Amendments to agenda: Introduction of new staff was added. Liana Rice introduced herself as a new WRC planner who will take on emergency planning and staffing the Project Review Committee.

Administrative Items & Reports:

April 28, 2026 Minutes: On a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Snelling, the minutes were approved with one abstention.

Quarterly Treasurer's Report: It was noted that this was reviewed by both the Finance Committee and the Executive Board. No action was taken.

FY2025 Audit: It was noted that this was reviewed by both the Finance Committee and the Executive Board, which accepted it at its July meeting.

Annual Business Meeting Program:

Approval of the FY2027 Work Program and Budget at Recommendation of the WRC Executive Board and Finance Committee: Chris reviewed the work program, noting that it seems resumption of work under the Emergency Management Performance Grant would begin soon. He explained that the primary changes from FY2026 was the conclusion of the Municipal Energy Resilience Program and the use of all funds in the Brownfields Revolving Loan program. For the budget he reviewed the highlights provided to Commissioners ahead of the meeting. There were no questions. On a motion by Commissioner Welch, seconded by Commissioner Lembke, the FY2027 Work Program and Budget was adopted by a unanimous vote.

Nominating Committee Nominations – Nominating Committee Chair Lembke prepared candidate slates which he noted he shared ahead of the meeting. All officers, Executive Board members, and Citizen Interest Commissioners agreed to serve again and constitute the slates. Each of the following were moved as a slate.

- 2026-2027 Election of Citizen Interest Commissioners; The slate was moved by Commissioner Lembke and seconded by Commissioner Toomey. There were no nominations from floor. The slate was adopted with 2 abstentions. Citizen Interest Commissioner Dotson mentioned that those interested in birthing centers should contact him as he was organizing a working group.
 - Agriculture – Lynette Hamilton
 - Arts & Culture – Robert McBride
 - Community Development – Gretchen Havreluk
 - Conservation – Cory Ross
 - Economic Development – Laura Sibilia/BDCC
 - Healthy Communities – Stephen Dotson
 - Housing – Elizabeth Bridgewater
 - Natural Resources – Kathy Urffer
 - Tourism – Lynn Barrett
- 2026-2027 Election of Executive Board Members; The slate was moved by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Kleiman. There were no nominations from floor. The slate was adopted by a unanimous vote.
 - Stephen Chait, Halifax
 - Rick Cowan, Rockingham
 - Bill Dunkel, Windham
 - Steve Lembke, Guilford
 - Jim Pinkerton, Jr., Vernon
 - Gretchen Havreluk, Citizen Interest Commissioner – Community Development
- 2026-2027 Election of Officers; The slate was moved by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Snelling. There were no nominations from floor. The slate was adopted by a unanimous vote.
 - Chair – Gabrielle Ciuffreda, Guilford
 - Vice Chair – Bonnie North, Rockingham
 - Secretary/Treasurer – Ann Golob, Newfane

Executive Director's Report: Chris asked Senior Planner Matt Bachler to summarize the regional plan update process going forward now that comments on the regional plan update draft had been received from the Land Use Review Board (LURB). Matt noted that the comments were available on both the WRC and LURB websites. He briefly summarized the LURB comments, explaining staff would address them and bring them to the September Full Commission meeting for consideration. Most of the changes related to mapping details and few substantive policy comments. Commissioner Stevens explained he would like for the Natural Resources Committee to be reestablished and that Grafton had questions about its towns land use categories that other towns might have as well. summarized LURB comments. Commissioner Cowan asked if S.325 that repealed parts of Act 181 impact regional plan? Matt and Chris explained they do not through it will make amendment of the plan to adjust maps much less onerous. Chris noted that WRC would partner with the Town of Brattleboro and the Windham County United Way in discussions about birthing center options given conversations about the possible closure of the center at Brattleboro Memorial Hospital. He reminded commissioners that a 2/3rds majority of all town appointed commissioners must be present in order to have a vote on regional plan adoption and urged commissioners to commit to being present on November 10th, and keep their calendars open for a Full Commission meeting on December 8th, if necessary.

Project Review Committee Report: Project summaries are available in the agendas and the committee's deliberations and actions are summarized in the minutes, both of which are found on the [WRC Committee page](#). Questions related to the Project Review Committee can be directed to Planner, Liana Rice.

Chair's Report: Chair Ciuffreda reminded commissioners of the importance of the November and possible December Full Commission meetings in order to adopt an Act 181-compliant regional plan by the statutory deadline, and noted that a New Commissioner orientation was held which Commissioner Lembke also attended. It is recorded and online.

Public Comment: Commissioner Cowan mentioned existence of a group called Rural VT Rising.

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

Respectfully Submitted,
Chris Company