



**Full Commission Meeting  
August 27, 2024**

**Commissioners Present:**

Ralph Meima	Brattleboro
Sarah Shippee	Dover
Todd Davidson	Dummerston
Cheryl Kaufman	Grafton
Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair	Guilford
Stephan Chait	Halifax
Edee Edwards	Halifax
Andy Coyne	Jamaica
George Mora	Londonderry
James Bressor	Newfane
Ann Golob	Newfane
Stephen Dotson	Putney
Rick Cowan	Rockingham
Bonnie North	Rockingham
Jessica Tobey	Searsburg
Andrew Snelling	Townshend
Jim Pinkerton, Jr.	Vernon
Jack Cunningham	Wardsboro
Paul Spector	Wardsboro
Kara Halpern	Weston
Peter Barus	Whitingham
Bob Bois	Wilmington
Ann Manwaring	Wilmington
Bill Dunkel	Windham
Cathy Fales	Windham
Cheryl Carr-Maleh	Winhall
Erik Moses	Winhall
Cory Ross	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Conservation
Laura Sibia	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Economic Development
Lynn Barrett	Citizen Interest Commissioner – Tourism

A **quorum** of 20 towns were present.

**Staff Present:** Chris Campany, Executive Director, Inessa Muse, Finance Manager

**Call to Order:** Chair Gabrielle Ciuffreda called the meeting to order at approximately 6:03 p.m.; Recording began.

**No amendments to agenda.**

**Approval of May 28, 2024 Minutes:** On a **motion** by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner North, the minutes were **approved** with four abstentions.

### **Annual Business Meeting Program**

**FY2025 Work Program & Budget:** Executive Director Chris Campany and Finance Manager Inessa Muse reviewed the FY2025 proposed Annual Work Program and Budget, highlighting the few substantial changes.

- Principal change was cut to Emergency Management Planning Grant (EMPG) funding through Vermont Emergency Management of 20 percent, which provides funding to support municipal and regional emergency preparedness and technical assistance. This was prompted by a 10 percent cut to the state program by FEMA. The impact on the budget is negligible as WRC received additional funding to support the development of town proposals to the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, but the Regional Planning Commissions (RPC's) will need to work with the legislature to restore EMPG funding.
- Executive Director Chris Campany also reviewed changes to the Act 250 legislation that will result in changes to both regional and municipal planning, as well as regional plan approval processes. Citizen Interest Commissioner Laura Sibia expressed the importance of RPC's in the review of Act 250 and other development applications, and asked that the Executive Board and staff explore how information about projects that come before the Project Review Committee (PRC) can be more robustly shared with the Full Commission. She commended the Chair for adding a PRC report as a standing item in this and future Full Commission agendas. PRC Chair Cunningham and Chair Ciuffreda appreciated Commissioner Sibia's interest and explained that while they were supportive of providing more information to the Commission about projects being reviewed, it would be important to do so within the context of the overall Act 250 process and the information provided in the dockets of the respective applications. Chris then reviewed the proposed FY2025 budget and highlighted items such as cost of living adjustments to salaries, an increase in the base ACCD grant and one-time funding to support engagement in the Act 250 reforms, and new revenue and expenditure categories to more explicitly highlight those categories.
- Commissioner Edwards noted a line item related to Halifax that she thought would change before the beginning of the new fiscal year and asked if small changes were acceptable and appropriate. Chris explained that they were; that small changes were expected and that major changes would come to the Executive Board and/or Full Commission. On a motion by Commissioner Shippee, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, the FY2025 Work Program and Budget were **approved** by a unanimous vote with 1 abstention.

**Election of Officers and Citizen Interest Commissioners:** Chair Ciuffreda explained that the Nominating Committee was in the process of being reconstituted due to the loss of long-serving members. For this reason, she presented the slate of nominees. A call for nominations from the floor

was also offered for Officers, Executive Board members, and Citizen Interest Commissioners but no further nominations were offered.

- **2024-2025 Election of Officers:** On a motion by Commissioner Shippee, seconded by Commissioner Mora, the following slate was **approved** by a unanimous vote.
  - Chair – Gabby Ciuffreda, Guilford
  - Vice Chair – Jack Cunningham, Wardsboro
  - Secretary/Treasurer – Ann Golob, Newfane
  
- **2024-2025 Election of Executive Board Members:** On a motion by Commissioner Mora, seconded by Commissioner Shippee, the following slate was **approved** by a unanimous vote. This slate results in one remaining vacancy on the Executive Board.
  - Tim Arsenault, Vernon
  - Stephan Chait, Halifax
  - Steve Lembke, Guilford
  - Bonnie North, Rockingham
  - Jim Pinkerton, Vernon
  
- **2024-2025 Election of Citizen Interest Commissioners:** On a motion by Commissioner Kaufman, seconded by Commissioner North, the following slate was **approved** by a unanimous vote.
  - Agriculture – Lynette Hamilton
  - Arts & Culture – Robert McBride
  - Community Development – Gretchen Havreluk
  - Conservation – Cory Ross
  - Economic Development – Laura Sibilica/BDCC
  - Healthy Communities – Stephen Dotson
  - Housing – Elizabeth Bridgewater
  - Natural Resources – Kathy Urffer
  - Tourism – Lynn Barrett

#### **Executive Director's Report:**

- Chris explained that he is representing the RPC's on the Stakeholder Technical Advisory Group of the legislative County and Regional Government Committee established by statute in the legislative session. He noted that the advisory group was made up of representatives of a diverse group of sectors including RPC's, regional development corporations, law enforcement, education, and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. Commissioner Manwaring noted the importance of consideration of municipal property tax in any discussion, and Chris explained that this had come up numerous times in the inaugural meeting of the Advisory Group. Commissioner Cowan asked how the Windham County Sheriff's regional law enforcement proposal might relate to this work. Chris explained that Windham County Sheriff Mark Anderson was representing Vermont Sheriffs on the Advisory Group and that at this point discussion had just begun about any possible alternative models to what exists at present.
- Chris explained that Anand Fedele had been hired as a full-time Assistant Planner. Anand came to the WRC as an intern from UMass-Amherst, primarily working on the WRC's joint electricity resilience project with Green Mountain Power. He will be supporting the work of WRC senior planners.

- He went on to describe the Four-Town Housing Community Engagement Charrette that will be conducted in late-September with Jamaica, Londonderry, Weston and Winhall. Both the Charrette and the attendance of multiple staff at October's meeting of the Northern New England Chapter of the American Planning Association conflict with the regular meeting times of the Full Commission, and Chris will work with the Executive Board on scheduling meetings at alternative days and times.

**Project Review Committee Report:** Chair Cunningham explained there's not much been much activity the last two years reflecting lack of major economic development projects in the region. He described the process by which the WRC decides if it will engage in an application through the Act 250 process. There are ostensibly three triggers or thresholds: a project is deemed to have regional significance, it is or could be precedent-setting, and/or host towns ask us for help. Most applications are too small or minor to warrant engagement. The Committee currently has two projects before it: the reclamation of a quarry in Grafton and an update of the Mt. Snow master plan. The latter is currently in recess until information requested by the District Environmental Commission has been provided by Mt. Snow.

**Chair's Report:** Chair Ciuffreda commended staff on the development of the work program and budget and organizing of the annual business meeting.

**Public Comment:** None was offered.

**Adjournment:** The meeting was adjourned at 7:11 p.m. by a unanimous vote on a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Pinkerton.

Respectfully Submitted,  
Chris Campany