

1 **NRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting**
2 **March 26, 2025, at 6:30 PM**
3 **Hybrid Meeting (Zoom and NRPC Office)**
4 **Northwest Regional Planning Commission**
5 **75 Fairfield Street, St. Albans, VT 05478**
6

7 Attendance: *See attached.* A quorum was present to conduct business.

8 Staff: Catherine Dimitruk, Bethany Remmers, Shaun Coleman, Dean Pierce, Kathy Lavoie, Cliff
9 Jenkins.

10 Other Attendees: Tim Smith (FCIDC), Damon Broderick, Michael Lafleur

11 **Welcome, Introductions, Opening Remarks**

12 Chair P. Zamore called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

13 **Adjustments to Agenda**

14 None.

15 **Opportunity for Public Comment**

16 None.

17 **Minutes of the February 2025 Meeting**

18 K. Waite asked that the minutes clarify that the Finance Committee would continuing to work
19 on a final draft of the FY24 audit to present at the March meeting.

20 *A. McCracken motioned to accept the minutes of the February 2025 meeting with corrections.*

21 *A. Alling seconded. The motion carried with one abstention.*

22 **Franklin County Economic Update**

23 T. Smith of Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation provided an overview of FCIDC's
24 list of priority projects for the year. T. Smith explained that a list of economic development
25 projects is annually submitted in November or December, with staff prioritizing the top ten by
26 May. These projects are ranked by purpose and benefit, project principal experience, regional
27 need, costs and financial gaps, and job creation potential. Projects which are placed on the list
28 receive additional points for Northern Borders or Vermont Economic Development Authority
29 funding applications.

30
31 T. Smith presented the list of projects, in descending order of priority, as follows:
32

- 33 1. St. Albans Town industrial park,
- 34 2. Montgomery Village water and septic,
- 35 3. Fairfax water and wastewater
- 36 4. Village of Enosburgh solar project

- 37 5. Highgate Village Core
- 38 6. Swanton Hotel Riviere redevelopment
- 39 7. Brigham Academy in Bakersfield
- 40 8. Common School in East Fairfield
- 41 9. Swanton redevelopment at 120 and 124 First Street
- 42 10. St. Albans Bay Village District water and sewer improvements

43
44
45 S. Jensen asked FCIDC to provide an example of successful projects in small towns and expressed
46 concern that funding would default to higher population areas. E. Nance responded that many
47 projects had been funded in small communities, noting that Highgate, Montgomery, Alburgh,
48 and Grand Isle have all received NBRC awards. B. Buermann noted that a partnership between
49 Lake Champlain Economic Development Corporation and FCIDC funded a water line project
50 which directly led to economic growth in the Town of South Hero. There was discussion about
51 the announced Perrigo plant closure in Georgia and the potential impacts to the region.

52
53
54 **Commission Reports:**

55
56 Finance/Operations- No additions.

57
58 Personnel-No additions

59
60 Executive Committee- P. Zamore reported that the executive committee reviewed the recent
61 analysis of Regional Planning Commissions conducted by the National Association of
62 Development. The study was conducted at the request of the Vermont legislature. The analysis
63 concluded that RPCs are performing their duties well. There was some discussion of the
64 possibility of introducing Councils of Governments, wherein RPCs would work more closely with
65 municipalities in providing services. C. Dimitruk noted that the Council of Government option
66 would be discussed further.

67
68 Project Review-B. Buermann reported that the committee will need a new chair and a new
69 member. Three projects were reviewed at the last meeting, but none had regional impacts. No
70 action needed.

71
72 Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC)- No additions

73
74 Brownfields Committee- No additions

75
76 Regional Plan and Policy Committee- L. Ruple stated that the Committee was moving forward
77 with the plan update process and that there were two municipal plans ready for regional
78 approval.

Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC)- B. Murphy stated that there was a meeting with minutes shared to the Commission. There was another meeting scheduled for Thursday 3/28 during which the annual TIF report would be discussed. This large report was compiled from regional TIF reports. S. Jensen expressed concern that TIF funding was taking money otherwise distributed to schools through the education tax. C. Sawyer noted that TIFs typically increase money going to the education fund, and that no money would be removed from funds already directed towards schools. B. Murphy stated that she would share a TIF presentation with C. Dimitruk, who would then share it with the Board.

Green Mountain Transit- B. Buermann stated that the FY24 audit was reviewed at the last GMT board meeting. Additional service cuts for the coming year were also discussed.

Healthy Roots Advisory Committee- No additions. C. Dimitruk noted that she had invited Healthy Roots staff to deliver an update at the April Board Meeting.

Northwest Vermont Regional Foundation- No additions.

Office- No additions.

FY24 Audit

K. Waite stated that the draft audit from RHR Smith & Co., as well as a summary explanation prepared by B. Remmers, was available for the Board to review. The highlights were as follows:

- There were no identified deficiencies in internal control that might be material weaknesses.
- The NRPC has a fund balance of \$780,921, making the statement that NRPC is in a strong position to meet current and future financial needs.
- Net position year-over-year increased by \$318,351 for total net position of about \$1.5 m
- Suggestions made in a management letter were minor and are currently being reviewed by staff and the finance committee.

K Waite noted there were numerous issues with the audit, including:

- The audit was late and required a much higher level of review than in previous years.
- There were errors in the first draft from RHR Smith & Co. that took significant staff time to both understand and correct.
- The magnitude of RHR Smith's errors would have resulted in about \$400k of value being taken from NRPC's net position.

K. Waite thanked the finance committee members, A. Adams and B. Remmers for their work on completing the audit and stated that acceptance of the audit was an action item for the March Board meeting

123
124 *K. Waite moved that the NRPC Board of Commissioners accept the draft FY24 Audit and*
125 *Management Letter. B. Murphy seconded. The motion carried.*

126
127 C. Dimitruk commended K. Waite's role as Finance Committee Chair during the process. B.
128 Murphy noted that HR Smith and Co. had been hired for a term "up-to three years", but that
129 this did not bind the Commission to retaining them for the full three years. K. Waite confirmed
130 and stated that the Commission intends to put out bids for a new auditor.

131 132 133 **Plan Approvals**

134
135 M. Sherlund stated that the findings from the regional approval and confirmation included in
136 the Board's packet in considering any comments received at the duly warned public meeting
137 held March 26th, 2025. The Plan and Policy Committee recommended the board grant regional
138 approval to Grand Isle Town Plan 2025 – 2033 and Alburgh Town Plan 2025 – 2033 and confirm
139 the planning process for the Town of Grand Isle and the Town of Alburgh in accordance with
140 24VSA section 34 50.

141
142 *M. Sherlund motioned to regionally approve both plans and both planning processes. B. Morris*
143 *seconded. B. Buermann made a point of order stating that plans and planning process could not*
144 *be approved in the same motion. C. Dimitruk stated that approving the plans and planning*
145 *process simultaneously was possible. The motion carried.*

146
147 *M. Sherlund motioned to grant the determination of energy compliance to the Town of Grand*
148 *Isle. B. Morris seconded. The motion carried.*

149 150 **Commissioner Announcements**

151 C. Dimitruk noted that NRPC is requesting volunteers for municipal spotlights at upcoming
152 board meetings.

153
154 C. Dimitruk provided a brief legislative including an update on the proposed FY26 state budget
155 and other bills pertaining to NRPC's work. C. Dimitruk explained a stormwater bill which would
156 delay the Three-Acre permit implementation date by a couple of years and develop a set-aside
157 in the Clean Water fund to pay the improvements to the projects once a municipality takes on
158 the stormwater permit responsibilities. The RPCs will be providing testimony.

159 160 **Adjournment**

161 *B. Murphy motioned to adjourn. C. Sawyer seconded. The meeting adjourned at 7:28 PM.*

FY25 NPRC Board of Commissioners- Meeting Attendance													
Municipality	Board Member	Jul	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June
		7/31/24	No Meeting	9/25/24	10/30/24	No Meeting	12/11/24	1/29/25	2/26/25	3/26/25	4/30/25	5/28/24	6/25/25
Frkln Cty Youth	Vacant												
Gl Cty Youth	Vacant												
Alburg Town	Alex McCracken	X		X			X	X	X	X			
Alburg Town	Danielle Choiniere									X			
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Alburg Village	Vacant												
Bakersfield	William Irwin	X			E		X	E	X				
Bakersfield	Linda McCall	X		X	X		X	X	X	X			
Berkshire	Josh Grims						X	X	E	X			
Berkshire	Claude Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Leonard Charron												
Enosburg Falls	Vacant												
Enosburgh Town	Jesse Woods												
Enosburgh Town	Vacant												
Fairfax	Barbara Murphy	X		X	X		X	X	E	X			
Fairfax	Sarah Hadd 1/25	E		X	X		X						
Fairfax	Nicholas Nadeau							X					
Fairfield	Julia Callan	X		X	X		E	X	X	E			
Fairfield	Chuck Verderber	X		X	X		X	X					
Fletcher	Michelle Frennier									E			
Fletcher	Lori Ruple	X			X		X	X	X	X			
Franklin	Yvon Dandurand	X		X	X		X	E	X				
Franklin	Wesley Kempton												
Georgia	Carl Rosenquist	X		X	X		X	E		X			
Georgia	Kirk Waite	X		X	X		X	X	X	X			
Grand Isle	Barclay Morris	X			X		X	X	E	X			
Grand Isle	Howard Demars	X		X	X		X	X	X	X			
Highgate	Jack Pelkey	X			X		X	X	X	X			
Highgate	vacant	X		X									
Isle La Motte	Sylvia Jensen	X			X			X	E	X			
Isle La Motte	Mary-Catherine Graziano												
Montgomery	Leanne Barnard												
Montgomery	Mark Brouillette												
North Hero	Andy Alling	X		X	X		X	X	X	X			
North Hero	Mike Curtis	X		X	X			X		X			
Richford	Marissa Tessier												
Richford	Vacant												
Sheldon	Vacant												
Sheldon	Jeff Kane												
South Hero	Peter Zamore	X		X	X		X	X	X	X			
South Hero	Bob Buermann	E		X	X		X	X	X	X			
St. Albans City	Elisabeth Nance	X		X	E		X	X	X	X			
St. Albans City	Chip Sawyer			X	E		X	X	X	X			
St. Albans Town	Marietta Scholten			X	E		X	X		X			
St. Albans Town	Megan Sherlund	X			X		X	X	E	X			
Swanton Town	Harold Garrett	X		X	E		X	X	X				
Swanton Town	Nicole Draper			X	X		X	X	X	X			
Swanton Village	Heidi Britch-Valenta	X		X	X		X		E	X			
Swanton Village	Neal Speer				X								
	# Municipalities	16	0	14	14	0	16	15	12	15	0	0	0

QUORUM = 12

E= Excused ; X=Present