



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

MEETING MINUTES

1. PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Berner opened the public meeting for the Hubbardton Town Plan and Confirmation of Planning Process and the Fair Haven Town Plan and Confirmation of Planning Process at 7:00 PM. No public present. The public hearing closed at 7:01 PM.

2. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting called to order by Chair Berner at 7:01 pm. Introductions were made.

3. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 17th AGENDA

Motion to approve the September 17th agenda by Courcelle. Second by Doenges. Approved by voice vote.

4. APPROVAL OF JUNE 18th MINUTES

Motion to approve the June 18th minutes by Wilson. Second by Gibbs. Approved by voice vote.

5. OPEN TO PUBLIC

None present.

6. PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

Economic and Workforce Planner Greg Poelker-McKee presented the \$1.25 grant from Department of Labor Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC) Program. The grant will support career pathways through a bridge model and support workforce development for high school seniors, students seeking GEDs, and New Americans in the trades. The three-year program will create a coalition between the Rutland Region Workforce Investment Board, Stafford Technical Center, Vermont Dept. of Labor, and adult education to partner with local employers like Casella and Naylor & Breen to train, connect, temporarily employ, and interview program participants. The grant will start October 1, 2024 with a small cohort for year one as a pilot.

7. JUNE and JULY 2024 FINANCIALS

Mary Kay Skaza reviewed the June and July 2024 Financials. Report for informational purposes only.

8. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The RRPC was awarded a \$1.25 million grant from the Department of Labor – Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC) Program. Over the next three years, the grant will support job growth in critical sectors across the Region, focusing specifically on the fields of infrastructure, construction, and clean energy. The ‘bridge model’ program will create partnerships between schools, workforce groups, and businesses to build pathways to employment.



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The RRPC is launching Phase 2 of public engagement that will run from September-November. Phase 2, titled Report Back, will seek input from the public on how Phase 1, Learn and Assess, influenced the draft policies of the plan. The engagement will include 27 town presentations, 5 pop-up events, 2 hybrid feedback sessions, and a public survey. For the survey and a complete list of upcoming events, check out rutlandrpc.org/plan2026.

MERP implementation funding applications are now available. Funding will be available for high energy burdened towns, of which we have 9 towns, 1 village, and 1 fire district. The program was recently updated to allow for all towns with completed energy assessment to also apply for implementation funding.

RRPC is working on several town planning efforts: enhanced energy plans in Killington, Pittsford, Middletown Springs, and Tinmouth; town plans in Clarendon, Benson, Tinmouth, Middletown Springs, and Wells; zoning bylaws in Brandon, Pittsford, Mendon, and Poultney; forecasting subdivision regulations in Pittsford, Fair Haven, and Proctor; and forecasting neighborhood development areas in Brandon and Fair Haven.

VTrans Better Roads Category A grants are now available. The RRPC is planning to update road erosion inventories with half in FY25 and the other half in FY26.

RRPC is working on updates to four local hazard mitigation plans in Middletown Springs, Rutland Town, Rutland City, and Fair Haven. The RRPC is planning to bid on the LHMP for Benson as well.

Devon attended the VAPDA annual retreat in Lyndonville on September 12/13, after which he will officially transition to Chair of VAPDA.

Devon is working on a new RRPC Commissioners Handbook.

9. REGIONAL COMMITTEE REPORT

Committee Chair Minard provided the Regional Committee report. The committee reviewed three minor Act 250 applications. No action was taken. See Regional Committee minutes for more information.

10. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Community Committee reviewed Fair Haven and Hubbardton Town Plans. **Motion by Gibbs to approve Hubbardton Town Plan and Confirmation of Planning Process and the Fair Haven Town Plan and Confirmation of Planning Process.** Second by Courcelle. Approved by voice vote.



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11. EXECUTIVE/FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

FY25 BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING SCHEDULE

Motion by Rosenblum to accept the proposed FY25 RRPC Board of Commissioners Meeting Schedule. Second by Doenges. Approved by voice vote.

FY26 MEMBER DUES

Neary provided an overview of the proposed FY26 member dues that included a memorandum, statewide dues analysis, and draft dues policy. The memo lays out that the current “flat fee” model, \$1,000 per town, is inequitable for our small towns. In addition, the current model includes modest increases of only \$25 every few years, which no longer supports the budget and programmatic increases at the RRPC. Ideally, the member dues will contribute to 3% of the budget and the current dues only contribute to about 1% of the budget. The new proposal is a formula-based approach of \$1.00 per capita, which is still much lower than the rest of the state. The committee discussed the pros and cons of this change, with most concerned about the “sticker shock” by Towns seeing a substantial change from FY25 to FY26. Commissioners agreed the new model was more equitable and the funding increase justified but were worried about the reaction from towns. Commissioners recommended that more information was given to towns to explain the change, how the funding would increase services, and what value the RRPC is to the towns now. **Motion by Rosenblum to adopt the formula based, per capita rate structure with the rate of \$1.00 per resident, based on the 2020 census, for FY26. Second by Bushee. Approved by majority voice vote.** (Castleton, Pittsford, and Clarendon opposed)

BROWNFIELDS POLICY and ASSOCIATED BYLAW AMENDMENTS

Neary provided an overview of the proposed Brownfields Policy to formalize the RRPC project intake, bring transparency to the program, and to bring the program under the RRPC Board of Commissioners as a standing committee. **Motion by Pelkey to adopt the Brownfields Policy and RRPC Bylaw amendment as presented. Second by Spencer. Approved by voice vote.**

12. REGIONAL PARTNERS

No report.

13. EX-OFFICIO MEMBERS

No report.

14. COMMISSIONER ROUNDTABLE

No roundtable.



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15. ADJOURN

Motion to adjourn by Rosenblum. Second by Wilson. Adjourned at 8:48 PM.

Respectively submitted by Karen Hill

DRAFT