



RUTLAND REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

RRPC BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15, 2026, 7:00 PM

MEETING DETAILS

Virtual: [Teams Meeting](#), ID:224634587902, Pass: dBEdSy I Call: 1-8024401368, ID: 641278173#

In-Person: 16 Evelyn Street, Second Floor, Rutland, VT 05701

MEETING ATTENDANCE

(x = in person) (v = virtual) (p = phone)

TOWN	NAME	
Benson	Cheryl Murray	
Brandon	Jack Schneider	v
Castleton	Frank Johnson	
Chittenden	Abigail Bradish	v
Clarendon	Daniel Pinkowski	x
Danby	Andrea Stoddard	x
Fair Haven	Bob Richards	x
Hubbardton	Robert Gibbs	x
Ira	Bob Kirbach	x
Killington	Don Gaunt	v
Mendon	Larry Courcelle	x
Middletown Springs	Steven Harrington	
Mount Holly	Jessica Metcalfe	v
Mount Tabor		
Pawlet	Vacant	
Pittsford	Ann Reed	x
Poultney	Paul Donaldson	
Proctor	Richard Horner	x

TOWN	NAME	
Rutland City	David Allaire	
Rutland Town	Jim Marsh	
Shrewsbury	Laura Black	x
Sudbury	Barbara Somson	v
Tinmouth	Judy Gilmore	v
Wallingford	Erika Berner	v
Wells	Francis Gilman	
West Haven	Kerry Ellis	
West Rutland	Leona Minard	
ACI-Natural Resources	Hilary Solomon	
Ex-Officio- CEDRR	Sarah Pelkey	
Ex-Officio- CEDRR		
Ex-Officio- TAC		
Ex-Officio- RRWIB		

Staff: Devon Neary, Karen Hill

Guests:



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MEETING MINUTES

1. PUBLIC HEARING

Chair Black opened the public meeting for the Benson and Wallingford Town Plans and Confirmation of Planning Process at 7:02 PM. No public present. The public hearing closed at 7:03 PM.

2. CALL TO ORDER & INTRODUCTIONS

Meeting was called to order by Chair Black at 7:04 PM.

3. APPROVAL OF SEPTEMBER 15th AGENDA

Motion to approve the September 15th Agenda by Reed. Seconded by Gibbs. Approved by voice vote.

4. APPROVAL OF JUNE 16TH MINUTES

Motion to approve the June 16th Minutes by Reed. Seconded by Gibbs. Approved by voice vote.

5. OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

No public comment.

6. 2026 FINANCIALS

Neary shared the RRPC is in the process of closing the FY26 books and expects to end in the black. The RRPC issued an RFP for a new auditing firm and retained a new firm, CBIZ, that works with other RPCs in Vermont. Neary reported that July and August 2026 financials will be presented at the October board meeting.

7. EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

- A. 2026 Rutland Regional Plan Receives State Approval - The RRPC is pleased to report that the 2026 Rutland Regional Plan received a positive determination from the Vermont Public Service Department on July 20 and from the Land Use Review Board on July 30. With these determinations, the Region now has a state-approved Regional Plan and Enhanced Energy Plan. In addition, Brandon, Fair Haven, Killington, Mendon, Poultney, Proctor, and West Rutland received Tier 1B status, providing Act 250 exemptions for qualifying housing and mixed-use development of 50 units or fewer on 10 acres or less. This represents a major milestone following more than two years of regional and municipal planning and implementation of Act 181.



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- B. Regional Plan Showcase and Implementation - With adoption and state approval of the 2026 Rutland Regional Plan complete, the RRPC has shifted its focus to showcasing and implementing the Plan. The RRPC will undertake a comprehensive overhaul of the Regional Planning section of our website to provide easy access to Plan chapters, interactive maps, implementation resources, and other materials, while also promoting the new Plan throughout the Region in print and digital formats. On implementation, staff are developing a strategy to turn the Plan's goals, policies, and actions into measurable work. The first step is updating how the Board of Commissioners applies the Plan's new Act 250 and Section 248 review criteria, including a new digital project review form developed by staff to support consistent and efficient review by the Regional Committee.
- C. RRPC Strategic Plan - The RRPC solicited proposals for a new organizational Strategic Plan and received 34 proposals through a highly competitive process. Strategy Matters of Boston, Massachusetts, was selected to lead the initiative. The RRPC's last Strategic Plan dates to 2012, and with the adoption and approval of the 2026 Rutland Regional Plan, this is an ideal time to align our organizational priorities, programs, and resources with the Region's new long-term vision. The project will kick off in October and continue through spring 2027, with additional updates and opportunities for Board participation throughout the process.
- D. \$4 Million Workforce Development Grant Application - The RRPC applied to the U.S. Department of Labor for a \$4 million continuation grant through the Workforce Opportunities for Rural Communities (WORC) program. If awarded, the funding would expand job training opportunities in construction and healthcare for hundreds of Rutland Region residents, building upon the RRPC's existing Workforce in Motion Academy and partnerships with training providers and employers throughout the Region.
- E. Act 181 at the VLCT Planning & Zoning Forum - The RRPC will present on implementation of Act 181 at the Vermont League of Cities and Towns Planning & Zoning Forum on September 16 in Montpelier. Joined by municipal partners from Brandon, the RRPC will share our regional planning process, lessons learned through implementation, and new opportunities created by Act 181, with Brandon providing a municipal perspective on the process and its local impacts.
- F. Road Foreman Meeting – Municipal Mutual Aid The RRPC will host another regional Road Foreman Meeting on September 17 at the Pittsford Town Garage. This meeting will focus on opportunities to strengthen municipal public works mutual aid and improve coordination among communities during



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emergencies, major projects, and periods of limited staffing or equipment capacity.

- G. Welcome Emily Friedman - The RRPC is excited to welcome Emily Friedman as our new Natural Resources Planner. Emily will lead the RRPC's water quality program area, including supporting implementation of the South Lake Champlain Clean Water Service Provider (CWSP) program and other regional natural resource initiatives. Please help us welcome Emily to the RRPC!
- H. Municipal Energy Resilience Program - The RRPC continues to provide technical and implementation support for Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP) grants in Benson, Brandon, Chittenden, Fair Haven, Mount Tabor, Pawlet, Poultney, and West Haven. We hope you can join us on September 18 at 4:00 PM for a groundbreaking ceremony for the Pawlet geothermal project funded through MERP, which will mark one of Vermont's first municipal geothermal systems.
- I. Municipal Planning Grants – FY27 The FY27 Municipal Planning Grant program has been announced, with applications scheduled to open October 1 and due December 2 at 6:00 PM. The RRPC is particularly encouraging municipalities to consider Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) projects this year. Municipal Planning Grants can also support town plan updates, land use regulation updates, and planning or feasibility studies related to villages, housing, infrastructure, and community resilience. The RRPC is available to help municipalities identify projects, develop scopes, and prepare competitive applications.
- J. Emergency Management Planning Grant - Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) recently announced that FEMA has given RPCs notice to proceed with EMPG. The RRPC has operated the core functions of the program without funding for nearly a year, relying on state funds to close the gap.

8. EXECUTIVE /FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Chair Black delivered the Executive Finance Committee report, which met on September 8th to discuss draft financials, review the Executive Director's report, the Strategic Planning Initiative, and review the proposed AI Policy. The committee passed a unanimous motion to recommend the full board adopt the AI Policy as presented.

9. ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE POLICY

Neary provided an overview of the draft AI Policy, reviewing the current state of AI at the RRPC, the purpose, and the policy provisions. The policy was reviewed by the RRPC attorney, and the Executive Committee recommends to the full board adoption of the new policy. **Motion by Reed to adopt the AI Policy as presented. Second, by Courcelle. Approved by voice vote.**



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11. COMMUNITY COMMITTEE REPORT

The Community Committee reviewed both the Benson and Wallingford Town Plans and Confirmation of Planning Process. **Motion by Gibbs to regionally approve both the Benson and Wallingford Town Plans and Confirmation of Planning Processes. Second by Reed. Approved by voice vote.**

12. COMMISSIONERS ROUNDTABLE

Pittsford, Killington, Proctor and Chittenden shared their active projects and upcoming town happenings.

13. ADJOURN

Chair Black adjourned the meeting at 7:44 PM.

Respectively submitted by Karen Hill

A recording of this meeting can be found at:

www.rutlandrpc.org/board-and-committees-meeting-materials/.