

1 **BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS MEETING**  
2 **NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION**  
3 ***September 28, 2016 Draft Meeting Minutes***  
4

5 The meeting of the Board of Commissioners was held at the Franklin-Grand Isle Workforce  
6 Investment Board Training Facility.  
7

8 **ATTENDANCE:**

9 Commissioners: See attached. A quorum was present to conduct business.

10 Staff: C. Dimitruk, B. Remmers and T. Newton

11 Guest: Ken Robie and M. Boomhower (Agency of Transportation)  
12

13 Chair B. Buermann began the meeting at 7:04 p.m.  
14

15 **ADJUSTMENTS TO AGENDA:** The Committee added a report by the Plan Review Committee  
16 after Office updates to the agenda to review recommendations for regional approval and  
17 confirmation of the planning processes for the towns of Montgomery, Alburgh and Sheldon.  
18

19 **WELCOME, INTRODUCTIONS, OPENING REMARKS:** B. Buermann welcomed everyone to the  
20 meeting. B. Buermann explained that Dennis DeBevec away passed in September. He then  
21 asked for a moment of silence to honor Dennis.  
22

23 **OPPORTUNITY FOR PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.  
24

25 **MINUTES**

26 *A. Voegle motioned to approve minutes of the July Board Meeting. T. Tatro seconded. The*  
27 *motion passed.*  
28

29 **LAMOILLE and MISSISQUOI BASIN PLAN**

30 C. Dimitruk explained that a representative of the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) could not  
31 attend the meeting. She then summarized the work of the ANR on tactical basin plans in the  
32 region for the Missisquoi and Lamoille Rivers. C. Dimitruk stated that public meeting on each  
33 plan will occur within the next month or two. She stressed that the Board review and provide  
34 feedback on at the project priority list in each of the plan since the list will have an impact on  
35 funding projects through the State Clean Water Fund.  
36

37 **AGENCY OF TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS AND PRIORITIES**

38 M. Boomhower and K. Robie discussed their roles and the organizational structure of the  
39 Agency of Transportation (VTrans). Each discussed VTrans' commitment to safety and the  
40 reduction in major crashes in the state over the past five years. K. Robie discussed pavement  
41 conditions and bridge conditions on State roads. He noted that VTrans has a goal of having less

1 than 25% of pavement in the state in “very poor” condition. Data presented that Grand Isle  
2 and Franklin Counties have relatively good pavement conditions on state roads compared to  
3 other counties in the state. Data also showed that bridge conditions statewide have also  
4 improved considerably over the past 10 years. M. Boomhower discussed VTrans funding  
5 limitations and stated that since many longer term projects will be headed to construction soon  
6 (ex. Southern Connector) it may be a struggle to maintain conditions of current assets since  
7 funding is project to remain level. K. Robie explained that VTrans is starting to utilize a  
8 cost/benefit approach to balance prioritizing certain projects. K. Robie discussed progress on  
9 VTrans’s “On Road Biking Facility Plan” and M. Boomhower discussed VTrans’ role in providing  
10 assistance to municipalities through the Better Roads program. Both noted that VTrans will  
11 work with ANR on developing stormwater treatment practices for state assets (roads, airports,  
12 railyards, etc.) in the coming year. M. Boomhower also mentioned the VTrans’ efforts on the  
13 Vermont State Safety Standards for highways and the Long Range Transportation Plan.

14

15 K. Robie provided a demonstration of the VTransparency website and how to access  
16 information online pertaining to highways projects in the state. He noted that the information  
17 on the website is “live” and constantly updated.

18

19 W. Irwin asked about the VTrans workforce program and the efforts to recruit new staff. M.  
20 Boomhower said VTrans partners with several state colleges to develop the workforce. She  
21 stated that the organization needs engineers and drivers.

22

23 D. Borthwick-Leslie asked about the status of the Exit 17 project. B. Morris discussed issues  
24 pertaining to US Route 2 in South Hero. Y. Dandurand asked about the 20 year Overweight  
25 Program and what the result of the project have shown. M. Boomhower said that it is too soon  
26 to tell about the results, but that she would seek an update from the Department of Motor  
27 Vehicles.

28

29 A. Voegelé asked about the gasoline tax and the lack of highway funding due to more fuel  
30 efficient vehicles. H. Garrett asked funding for municipal roads. M. Boomhower noted that  
31 funding for municipal roads is statutorily dictated and she encouraged to members to speak to  
32 their legislators.

33

34 M. Boomhower noted that VTrans will be taking public comment on Grand Isle/North Hero  
35 Drawbridge replacement in early November. She also stated that she will return next month to  
36 discuss the Missisquoi Bay Causeway and its future.

37

38 **COMMISSION REPORTS**

1 Finance/Operations: H. Garrett reported that the profit and loss sheet and balance sheet was  
2 included in the board packet. He commented on the small amount of petty cash on hand. H.  
3 Garrett asked about the line item "Choice Care." C. Dimitruk noted that the line item was for  
4 employee and dependent health care accounts that had not yet been disbursed to employees.  
5 C. Dimitruk noted that the audit will be reviewed by Finance Committee next month and that  
6 there were no findings.

7  
8 Personnel: C. Dimitruk noted that A. Holland had a baby last week and is now on leave. She  
9 also noted that E. Robertson, the AmeriCorps VISTA in the office has chosen to leave the NRPC.

10  
11 Executive: No report.

12  
13 Policy/Project Review Committee – W. Irwin noted that there were 3 projects reviewed by the  
14 Committee in late August. A 500 kW net-metering solar facility was found to be in compliance  
15 with the Regional Plan and to not have a substantial regional impact.

16  
17 W. Irwin stated that the Committee found that two other projects were not in compliance with  
18 the Regional Plan as currently proposed due to lack of sidewalks. The projects are the Handy  
19 Dealership at the corner of US 7 and VT 207 in St. Albans Town and storage units owned by  
20 Peter Morse on Franklin Park West in St. Albans Town. W. Irwin noted that staff is working  
21 with the applicants to resolve the issue.

22  
23 Transportation Advisory Committee: No report.

24  
25 Energy Committee: No report.

26  
27 Brownfields: No report.

28  
29 VAPDA: C. Dimitruk noted organization met and discussed primarily organizational matters.

30  
31 Regional Plan Committee: L. Douglas reported that the Regional Plan Implementation Report  
32 was reviewed by the Committee and that additional revisions will occur before the report is  
33 released to the Board.

34  
35 VEPC: A. Voegelé stated that the organization met and discussed issues related to situations  
36 where in-state companies relocate out-of-state after taking grant funding from the State of  
37 Vermont.

38

1 Downtown Development Board – A. Voegelé reported that the committee met but that there  
2 were no new applications from our region.

3

4 GMT – B. Buermann and C. Dimitruk noted that the organization received \$3.9 million for new  
5 buses and that there will be a grand opening for the new bus depot in Burlington on October  
6 13<sup>th</sup>.

7

8 Clean Water Committee- No report.

9

10 Office – C. Dimitruk noted that NRPC will continue to do outreach related to implementation of  
11 the Clean Water Act. She also mentioned that his year’s audit was completed and that there  
12 were no findings. She noted that staff is busy writing ecosystem restoration grants and  
13 municipal planning grants. NRPC and other RPCs are working ANR and the State Treasurer on  
14 their legislative study to determine how to fund implementation of the new TMDL. C. Dimitruk  
15 noted that some staff participated in the 3-day Vigilant Guard exercise in the summer and that  
16 it was great experience for staff. Lastly, she noted that NRPC is working with several regional  
17 partners to do a Lt. Governor and Franklin County Senate race debate in October.

18

19 B. Remmers stated that she will be working to complete road erosion inventories until mid-  
20 November. She stated that five communities will be done by the end of this field season and  
21 that eleven communities will be completed by the end of next field season. She stated that the  
22 VTrans Transportation Alternatives grants is due on October 20<sup>th</sup>. B. Remmers continued by  
23 stating that the first Regional Road Foreman meeting was held earlier in the day and that she  
24 had hoped that it would become a regularly held event.

25

26 T. Newton noted that he is working on several municipal planning grant applications and bylaw  
27 projects in Bakersfield and Enosburg Falls. He also noted that he continues to work on the  
28 Regional Energy Plan and has begun work on the Franklin Municipal Plan. He noted that  
29 Policy/Project Review Committee will be meeting in October with a relatively full docket of  
30 projects and that he worked with Plan Review Committee in September to ensure review of  
31 three municipal plans seeking regional approval.

32

### 33 **Plan Review Committee**

34 R. Brown stated that the Committee met twice in September to review the municipal plans in  
35 Alburgh, Sheldon and Montgomery. She stated that the Committee recommended that the  
36 Board provide regional approval to the municipal plans of Alburgh, Sheldon, and Montgomery  
37 and that the planning process for each community be confirmed.

38

1 *G. Carton motioned to regionally approve the municipal plans for Alburgh, Sheldon and*  
2 *Montgomery. A. Voegele seconded. All in favor.*

3

4 *H. Garrett motioned to confirm the planning processes for Alburgh, Sheldon, and Montgomery.*  
5 *R. Noel seconded. All in favor.*

6

7 **Energy Planning and Act 174 Update**

8 T. Newton noted that NRPC will be releasing a draft of the Regional Energy Plan within the next  
9 two weeks for public comment. He then provided tentative dates for public input meetings on  
10 the Regional Energy plan schedule in late October and early November. C. Dimitruk stated that  
11 NRPC will administer the funding distributed to regional planning commission in the state  
12 related to the implementation of Act 174 (the energy siting bill) and discussed the integration  
13 of Regional Energy Plan into the Regional Plan. She noted that NRPC will have to conduct  
14 training on the requirements of Act 174 this winter and provide data to municipalities for their  
15 energy planning work. She lastly noted that NRPC will be required to provide direct technical  
16 assistance to 3 to 6 municipalities for energy planning by the end of the fiscal year.

17

18 **ADJOURN**

19 *P. Rico motioned to adjourn. A. Voegele seconded. Motion carried.*

20

21 Meeting adjourned at 7:48 p.m.