

**TRORC Board Meeting – Zoom Meeting  
February 24, 2021 – Board Meeting Minutes**

**Attendance:**

Name	Town	2/24/21							
Jerry Fredrickson	Barnard	X							
Steve Cota	Barnard (Alt)								
Paul Vallee	Bethel	X							
Carl Russell	Bethel (Alt)								
Nancy Jones	Bradford	X							
Marcey Carver	Bradford (Alt)								
Vacant	Braintree								
Lynne Bertram	Bridgewater								
Gwynn Zakov	Brookfield								
Jon Binhammer	Brookfield (Alt.)	X							
Carl Pepperman	Chelsea	X							
Tim O'Dell	Corinth	X							
Peter Berger	Fairlee	X							
Mark Belisle	Granville								
Monica Collins	Hancock	X							
Lori Hirshfield	Hartford								
Bruce Riddle	Hartford (Alt)	X							
Charles Jeffries	Hartland								
David Ormiston	Hartland								
Frank Tegethoff	Newbury	X							
Larry Scott	Newbury (Alt.)								
Rod Francis	Norwich	X							
Jeff Lubell	Norwich								
Sarah Gallagher	Pittsfield	X							
Anne Brown	Plymouth								
Jim Allen	Plymouth (Alt.)								
Bill Emmons	Pomfret	X							
Phil Dechert	Pomfret (Alt)								
Ramsey Papp	Randolph	X							
Gary Dir	Randolph (Alt)	X							
Anni Mackay	Rochester	X							
Doon Hinderyckx	Rochester (Alt)	X							
David Brandau	Royalton	X							

Bushrod Powers	Royalton (Alt)	X							
Ira Clark	Sharon	X							
Deborah Jones	Sharon (Alt.)								
Bill Edgerton	Stockbridge								
John Echeverria	Strafford								
Jesse Anderson	Thetford	X							
Jim Masland	Thetford (Alt)								
Jim Clark	Topsham								
Michael Sacca	Tunbridge								
Kevin Rose	Tunbridge (Alt)								
Bill Baylis	Vershire								
Nancy Malmquist	W. Fairlee	X							
Don Bourdon	Woodstock	X							
Brad Prescott	Woodstock (Alt)								
Meghan Butts	At-Large	X							
Jennifer Colby	At-Large								
Ken Alton	At-Large								
Vacant - Conservation	At-Large								
Beth Long	At-Large	X							
Meg Emmons	At-Large	X							

**Staff:** Peter Gregory, Pete Fellows, Kevin Geiger, Lori Kay, Geoff Martin, Jake Palant, Sarah Wraight

**1. Call to Order, Approval of the Agenda, Roll Call, and Public Comments:**

The virtual meeting opened at 6:31 p.m. A quorum after roll call was declared. No changes to the agenda were made. There were no comments from the public.

**2. Acceptance of Minutes from December 9, 2020 Meeting**

On a motion made by Commissioner Vallee and seconded by Commissioner Nancy Jones, the December Meeting Minutes were accepted unanimously.

**3. Acceptance of the Unaudited December 2020 and January 2021 TRORC Financial Reports**

On a motion made by Commissioner Nancy Jones, and seconded by Commissioner Bill Emmons, the unaudited December 2020 and January 2021 Financial Reports were approved unanimously.

Gregory noted that overall, the budget is in good shape. TRORC has exceeded its planned budget amounts for income and expenses. As noted in the December report, the HUD Buyout program is at its end. Final reporting is pending but it is virtually completed. The January report shows \$51,000 in municipal funds being received, exceeding the amount originally budgeted. Most of these funds are

related to the Regional Energy Coordinator position that was not included in the original fiscal year budget. Accounts Receivable Aging report – most of those invoices have been paid during the month of February.

Gregory noted that as requested at the December meeting, an additional financial report was included in the February Board meeting packet. This financial report provides a year-to-year comparison of TRORC's net assets.

#### **4. Acceptance of the FY20 TRORC Audit**

On a motion made by Commissioner Bourdon, and seconded by Commissioner Francis, the FY20 Audit report and management letter were accepted unanimously.

Gregory reported that TRORC had a clean audit with no material weaknesses, findings or comments - a reflection on Finance Manager Lori Kay's attention to financial details and adherence to TRORC's policies. Net assets were reduced in FY20 due to a recategorization of uncompensated time off. The Auditors performed a cursory review of TROR Foundation's FY20 financials. Most of the Foundation's FY20 financial activity was related to funding for the Housing Project.

#### **5. TRORC Investments**

As reported earlier, TRORC has retained Mascoma Wealth Management as financial advisor. TRORC deposited \$164,000 into the investment account in December/January. Another \$50,000 was transmitted for deposit in mid-February. The stock market is doing well right now and TRORC's investment account has already seen a \$6,000 gain. Quarterly reports will be shared with the full board. Next report is expected in April 2021.

#### **6. Updated Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest Policy**

TRORC's Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest Policy has been updated following a discussion by the Executive Committee. Previously, TRORC's policy was to obtain a signed and completed form on an annual basis. Starting this year, TRORC's policy will be to require a signed and completed form whenever a new Commissioner or employee is brought on board or whenever there is a change in the Commissioner's/Employee's circumstances related to a potential conflict of interest.

TRORC will continue to provide the Code of Conduct/Conflict of Interest Policy form to each Commissioner and Employee annually. If there have been no changes in the last year, the form does not need to be returned to TRORC.

#### **7. Staff Project Presentations**

##### Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator (IREC)

Geoff Martin reported on the work completed to date for the six participating towns.

- Each of the six towns received baseline data on their energy use. This data was also provided to the EPA database. Greenhouse gas emissions inventories are in progress.

- Five of the six towns participated in an RFP for an energy services company to conduct energy audits, install improvements and measure savings. Barnard chose not to participate in this activity. Martin conducted a walk-through energy audit for Barnard.

The IREC project will continue into FY21. Five of the current towns are likely to continue – Fairlee has opted not to continue due to funding constraints. Possible new towns joining the effort are Bradford and Norwich. More will be known after Town Meeting Day.

Martin also shared that each Town’s cost to participate in the project is based on the Town’s Grand List. Future IREC services may include helping Towns transition their vehicle fleets to electric vehicle technology and instituting the use of community solar power use.

#### Sole Proprietor Federal Grant Program, funded by the CARES Act HUD funds

Kevin Geiger provided an overview of the grant program.

- Round One of the grants began in Summer 2020. All grants have been made – funds paid out.
- Round Two will start in April 2021. Changes in Round Two include the ability to make smaller grants – funding range is now \$1,500 to \$10,000 per grantee. Grantees must be of low/moderate income to qualify for funding. Grantees with businesses in Burlington VT are now eligible.

### **8. Executive Director Updates**

Gregory reported that he has been very busy with the Vermont Legislature.

Housing – Gregory testified on a housing bill which includes a grant program for municipalities to modernize bylaws, as well as the issue of providing tax credits to for-profit building in towns and designated villages.

Brownfields - The Administration proposed \$25 million in State funds for Brownfields assessments and clean-ups. This one-time funding intended to jumpstart cleanups. The Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee region could benefit from obtaining some of these funds if the Legislature agrees to sub-grant.

Weatherization - Additional funding is expected over the next few years for Weatherization. It is not clear whether the money is for new programs or existing programs. Regardless, RPCs can be available to assist.

Transportation – Additional funds are available now for municipal projects like repair of bridges and roads. The Federal recovery bill will likely include local support for transportation projects. The current draft of the recovery bill includes municipal and county funding. Revised language is being proposed that will allow States without counties, such as Vermont, to still qualify for the county funding.

Shared Services – The State is watching and is interested in TRORC’s shared services model for the Intermunicipal Regional Energy Coordinator. There may be opportunity for TRORC and other RPCs to provide additional shared services to Towns.

Sole Proprietor grant – This has been a bright spot for staff. While labor intensive, it has been rewarding to help others by delivering grant funds to Vermont’s smaller businesses.

Group discussion included Vermont's energy grid planning and water in storage following the difficulties residents of Texas and Tennessee faced recently with their lack of electricity and drinkable water. Vermont obtains most of its power from outside the State. Green Mountain Power maintains its power delivery by ensuring trees do not take down lines. Vermont's many dams can go back online to fill energy needs. A plan is already in place for rolling blackouts should that step be necessary.

New TRORC regional planner Jake Palant was introduced to the Commissioners. Jake is busy on several projects including energy scorecard evaluations, flood education, and a GIS project on roadway modeling.

The next Board meeting will be held on March 24, 2021.

The meeting adjourned at 7:28 p.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:  
Lori Kay, Finance Manager, March 1, 2021