

TRORC Board Meeting
March 22, 2023 – Board Meeting Minutes
Attendance:

Name	Town	9/28/22	12/14/22	3/22/23						
Jerry Fredrickson	Barnard	X	X	X						
Steve Cota	Barnard (Alt)									
Paul Vallee	Bethel	X								
Gene Kraus	Bethel			X						
Nancy Jones	Bradford	X	X	X						
Marcey Carver	Bradford (Alt)	X	X	X						
Marlys Eddy	Braintree									
Lynne Bertram	Bridgewater			X						
Gwynn Zakov	Brookfield		X							
Jon Binhammer	Brookfield (Alt.)									
Carl Pepperman	Chelsea	X		X						
Tim O'Dell	Corinth									
Peter Berger	Fairlee	X		X						
Mark Belisle	Granville		X	X						
Monica Collins	Hancock	X								
Lori Hirshfield	Hartford	X		X						
Bruce Riddle	Hartford (Alt)	X		X						
Charles Jeffries	Hartland	X	X							
David Ormiston	Hartland									
Frank Tegethoff	Newbury			X						
Larry Scott	Newbury (Alt.)									
Jeff Lubell	Norwich									
Jaci Allen	Norwich (Alt.)		X							
Sarah Gallagher	Pittsfield	X	X							
Anne Brown	Plymouth	X	X							
Jim Allen	Plymouth (Alt.)									
Bill Emmons	Pomfret		X	X						
Phil Dechert	Pomfret (Alt)		X							
Chris Sargent	Randolph		X							
Gary Dir	Randolph (Alt)		X							
Anni Mackay	Rochester		X							
Doon Hinderyckx	Rochester (Alt)		X	X						
David Brandau	Royalton	X		X						
Bushrod Powers	Royalton (Alt)		X							

Ira Clark	Sharon		X	X						
Sue Sellew	Sharon (Alt.)									
Kevin Travis	Stockbridge			X						
John Echeverria	Strafford	X								
Angela McCanna	Thetford		X	X						
Jim Masland	Thetford (Alt)									
Jim Clark	Topsham			X						
Michael Sacca	Tunbridge									
Kevin Rose	Tunbridge (Alt)									
Andrea Herrington	Vershire			X						
Nancy Malmquist	W. Fairlee		X	X						
Don Bourdon	Woodstock	X								
Brad Prescott	Woodstock (Alt)	X	X	X						
Meghan Butts	At-Large	X		X						
Jennifer Colby	At-Large	X	X							
Ken Alton	At-Large		X	X						
Dan Rudell	At-Large									
Andrew Winter	At-Large									
Meg Emmons	At-Large		X	X						

Staff: Peter Gregory, Kevin Geiger, Harry Falconer, Pete Fellows, Kyle Katz, Connor Rigney, Sydney Steinle, Sarah Wraight

Guests: John Moore, Pomfret

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

The meeting opened at 6:32 p.m. A quorum after roll call was declared. No changes to the agenda were made. There were no comments from the public.

2. Approval of TRORC Board Minutes from December 14, 2022

On a motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Malmquist, the December meeting minutes were approved.

3. Acceptance of the Unaudited TRORC Financial Reports for December 2022 and January, February 2023

A motion was made by Commissioner Emmons, and seconded by Commissioner Belisle, to approve the unaudited Financial Reports of December 2022 and January, February 2023.

Gregory stated that TRORC is in very good shape financially. We have received our third quarter payment from the Agency of Commerce and have also received the first major installment of funds for work on the Municipal Energy Resilience Program. Gregory also noted that TRORC has taken on some additional work for our Towns that were not in our original budget, the most recent of which is providing zoning administration services to the Town of Norwich.

Commissioner Carver asked how TRORC structures its fees and provides additional services to Towns. Gregory explained that fees are based on TRORC's fully loaded rates. Work is performed in person at the Town's offices. Gregory noted that TRORC is looking at the possibility of a different rate structure for shared services.

Recognizing the banking issues we've had recently in the US, Gregory commented on the solidity of the banks that TRORC uses. He noted that all of TRORC's funds are in banks with accounts that are fully insured.

Commissioner Prescott asked about TRORC's budget line-item for Workers Compensation insurance, noting that 100% of the expense had been incurred, when we are three-quarters of the way through FY23. Gregory replied that TRORC pays the full premium amount at the start of the coverage period – there will be no additional costs during FY23.

4. **Health Equity**

Sarah Wraight presented information on the concept of health equity and shared information on a current Department of Health grant that TRORC staff are working on. Slides from the presentation are attached to these minutes.

Follow-up discussion included finding financial support for the creation of community gardens, applicability of funds for sidewalk improvement projects, and the idea of requiring school students to wear uniforms to enhance equity.

5. **Draft Land Use Protocol**

Peter Gregory shared information on changes to TRORC's current adopted policy on Land Use Protocol. The Land Use Protocol document provides guidance to ensure that the TRORC Board, staff and the Towns in our region understand how to best align planning in the local region to State law. Much of the document reflects State Statutes as they are written, which is complicated language. Part of this update provides clarification on what those Statutes mean.

Commissioner Hirshfield suggested allowing the Commissioners more time to review the document before voting on its acceptance. Hirshfield noted that the State statutes are expected to change in the future, suggesting that the document will likely also need to change. She also commented that some Towns need to think creatively about how to get more housing built and suggested that the Land Use document needs to have flexibility so that it supports the Towns' goals of more housing.

Additional comments were received from Commissioners from several Towns:

Bethel – concerned about getting the housing market under control when so many people are moving to Vermont for its cooler climate.

Bradford – worried about losing Vermont's character with new housing.

Pomfret – concerned about short term rentals and absentee homeowners.

Commissioner Fredrickson noted that the document is a living document and will be changed when Statutes change.

On a motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Kraus, the changes to the Draft Land Use Protocol document were approved. The approval was not unanimous – one nay vote was received.

6. **Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP)**

Harry Falconer provided an overview of this new program and how Towns in our area can access it. Gregory will ensure Commissioners receive the slides that Falconer used during the presentation. The slides will also be on the TRORC.org website.

7. **Staff/Commissioner Updates**

Commissioner Updates:

- Sharon is holding a Planning Commission hearing on the Town's revamped Town Plan on March 28, 2023.
- Hartford shared information on the upcoming Home Creators Expo that will be held at the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center on May 6, 2023. Lots of information will be available on the developing/building housing in the area.
- Topsham's Selectboard has approved the draft language in the new version of its Town Plan.
- Vershire is interested in receiving updated Town maps for two of its municipal buildings. Gregory responded that requests for Town maps can come directly to him.

Shared Services:

Gregory reported that TRORC is following up with the Towns who expressed an interest in using a Shared Services model for some of their needs. TRORC is continuing the conversation – having met with Stockbridge, Plymouth, Rochester and Pittsfield earlier today – and will be speaking with Hancock and Granville as well.

Volunteer of the Year award: Nominations are now open. Nominations are due to TRORC by May 24, 2023.

Legislative Activities:

- Brownfield funding - \$1 million has been set aside in the FY23 budget adjustment for Brownfields work
- MPG funding – Grant funding was just announced. Four out of the six applications from Towns in the TRORC region were approved for funding.
- RPC funding – Vermont's Regional Planning Commissions are going to be asked to work on the Governor's new Rural Infrastructure Assistance Program. The funding is expected to come to TRORC and we will be subcontracting portions of the work to other state Regional Planning Commissions.

The next Board meeting will be on Wednesday, April 26, 2023.

The meeting adjourned at 8:00 p.m.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:
Connor Rigney and Lori Kay, March 28, 2023