

**TRORC Board Meeting  
July 24, 2024 Annual Meeting Board Minutes**



**Attendance:**

| Name                  | Town              | 10/25/23 | 12/13/23 | 3/27/24 | 4/24/24 | 5/22/24 | 6/26/24 | 7/24/24 |  |
|-----------------------|-------------------|----------|----------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|
| Steve Cota            | Barnard (Alt)     |          |          |         |         |         |         |         |  |
| Paul Vallee           | Bethel (Alt.)     | X        |          | X       |         |         |         |         |  |
| Gene Kraus            | Bethel            |          |          |         | X       | X       | X       |         |  |
| Nancy Jones           | Bradford          | X        | X        | X       | X       | X       | X       | X       |  |
| Marcey Carver         | Bradford (Alt)    |          | X        | X       | X       |         | X       | X       |  |
| Megan O'Toole         | Braintree (Alt)   |          |          |         |         |         |         |         |  |
| Sandy Vondrasek Cooch | Braintree         |          |          |         | X       | X       | X       | X       |  |
| Lynne Bertram         | Bridgewater       |          |          | X       | X       |         | X       |         |  |
| Gwynn Zakov           | Brookfield        |          | X        |         |         |         |         |         |  |
| Jon Binhammer         | Brookfield (Alt.) |          |          |         |         |         |         |         |  |
| Carl Pepperman        | Chelsea           |          |          |         | X       |         | X       | X       |  |
| Steve Devoto          | Corinth           |          |          |         | X       |         | X       | X       |  |
| Peter Berger          | Fairlee           |          | X        | X       | X       | X       |         |         |  |
| Mark Belisle          | Granville         |          | X        |         |         | X       | X       |         |  |
| Monica Collins        | Hancock           |          |          |         | X       |         |         | X       |  |
| Lori Hirshfield       | Hartford          | X        |          |         | X       |         | X       |         |  |
| Bruce Riddle          | Hartford (Alt)    | X        | X        | X       | X       | X       |         | X       |  |
| Charles Jeffries      | Hartland          | X        | X        | X       | X       |         | X       |         |  |
| Larry Scott           | Newbury (Alt.)    |          |          |         |         | X       |         |         |  |
| Brian Loeb            | Norwich           | X        |          |         |         | X       | X       | X       |  |
| Jaci Allen            | Norwich (Alt.)    |          |          | X       | X       |         |         |         |  |
| Herb Kuendig          | Pittsfield        |          |          |         |         | X       | X       |         |  |
| Anne Brown            | Plymouth          |          | X        |         | X       | X       |         | X       |  |
| Bill Emmons           | Pomfret           | X        | X        | X       | X       | X       | X       | X       |  |
| Regina Lawrence       | Pomfret (Alt)     |          |          |         |         |         | X       |         |  |
| Chris Sargent         | Randolph          | X        |          |         | X       |         | X       |         |  |
| Patricia Harvey       | Rochester         | X        |          | X       | X       |         | X       | X       |  |
| Doon Hinderyckx       | Rochester (Alt)   |          |          |         |         |         |         |         |  |
| Patrick Dakin         | Royalton          |          |          |         |         |         |         | X       |  |
| Bushrod Powers        | Royalton (Alt)    |          |          |         | X       | X       | X       | X       |  |

William B. Emmons, III, Chair ~ Peter G. Gregory, AICP, Executive Director  
128 King Farm Rd. Woodstock, VT 05091 ~ 802-457-3188 ~ [trorc.org](http://trorc.org)

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Hartland ~ Newbury ~ Norwich ~ Pittsfield ~ Plymouth ~ Pomfret ~ Randolph ~ Rochester ~ Royalton ~ Sharon ~ Stockbridge ~ Strafford  
Theftord ~ Topsham ~ Tunbridge ~ Vershire ~ West Fairlee ~ Woodstock

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

**Staff:** Kevin Geiger, Chief Planner; Geena Baber, Planner  
**Guests:** none

**1. Call to Order/ Approval of Agenda/Introductions**

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Commissioner Echeverria as Vice Chair in the absence of the Chair. Attendees were on Zoom with the exception of TRORC staff physically present at the TRORC Office as the meeting location. Introductions were made in person and virtually. Commissioner Echeverria asked for any needed changes to the agenda. None were made.

**2. Public Comment**

There were no comments from the public.

**3. Acceptance of unaudited Financial Reports for June 2024.**

Kevin Geiger stated that he could answer questions as best he could. Kevin stated that the numbers looked good, pointing out the net income line on the Balance sheet. Kevin also reviewed the actuals versus the budget figures and explained that the difference between budgeted amounts and actual income and expenses was largely due to the Municipal Technical Assistance line in Contractual, most of which is pass through funding where TRORC is the lead for all RPCs. RPCs have not billed as much as anticipated. Since those funds would be in and out, it does not affect our financial position. Commissioner Echeverria asked if that will just happen later, and Kevin responded yes as long as they bill. Kevin did note that TRORC is doing well billing its own work on this project. There was also a question raised by Commissioner Echeverria about why there was \$90,000 shown in interest income in June, and Kevin stated we will follow up at the next meeting and verify that amount and explain it. On a motion made by Commissioner Powers and seconded by Commissioner Dakin, the Financial Reports were accepted.

**4. Discussion on final review of the draft Goals, Policies and Recommendations on chapters of the Regional Plan.**

Commissioner Emmons had joined the meeting as Chair and Vice Chair Echeverria turned the meeting over to him. A brief discussion was held on the relation of the Regional Plan and the new Act 250 exemptions before moving on to the draft Regional Plan. Kevin explained to the Board the adoption process of the Regional Plan and the proposed timeline (proposed adoption January 2025). This included clarifying why certain chapters (Land Use and Housing) will not be reviewed in the current revision process due to recent legislative changes and awaiting new data and guidance. Commissioner Loeb raised a question about how Town Plans that are on the path of approval/adoption can follow new housing goals set by the legislature and requested the creation of some guidance. Kevin stated there's a "statutory blackhole" where Regional Planning Commissions and consequently towns do not have new housing data from the state that the law requires them and TRORC to use. TRORC does have the new required energy data (but that cannot be used by towns until we have it in our amended Regional Plan). Vice Chair Echeverria requested guidance that Towns can follow with ease explaining the new Act 250 implications and the new housing statute, and Kevin said we will draft those.

Geena Baber demonstrated where all of the draft Regional Plan materials can be found on the TRORC website and Kevin explained the three levels of documents. Kevin noted that all chapters except 14 have gone through either the Executive Committee or the full Board. Kevin stated the plan was to have the Implementation chapter (formerly known as Chapter 14) be reviewed at the August Executive Committee meeting, specifically the revised Substantial Regional Impact definition, and that one definition in the Definitions chapter was being revised - Resource-based Commercial - as its interpretation in Act 250 in the Sunnymede case was not what we had meant.

Kevin began the comprehensive Regional Plan goals/policies/recommendation discussion with comments from Commissioner Riddle (received via email) and acknowledged that some of Commissioner Riddle's feedback were going to be incorporated in the current revision of the chapters. These include:

- Addition of a recommendation in the Emergency chapter on staffing for emergency services by increasing retention/sharing services.
- Lines 822-826 from the narrative in the markup version in the Economic Development chapter will be reinserted as a new recommendation, "It is imperative that we as a Region support and retain Vermont University, Vermont Law and Graduate School, Gifford Medical Center, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, and similar anchor institutions for the sake of our continued economic vitality. Efforts should be made to engage and assist these institutions with community dialogue."

Kevin noted that the aim was to focus on the goals/policies/recommendations since that is the most important part of chapters. Discussion surrounding water testing ensued (prominent voices including Commissioners Devoto, Emmons, Riddle, and Echeverria).

Discussion and action for Natural Resources:

- Clean drinking water is very important.
- A recommendation and more background text will be added about testing private water supplies.
- Page 34 (clean version, lines 707-9) Policy #2 "Wood burning as a method of disposal should be reduced. As a source of heat, wood burning should be continued, but efforts should be made to update wood stoves." was discussed, with potential changes to discourage wood for non-residential use. There was not consensus on discouraging wood for non-residential use. The policy will be broken into two parts. "As a source of heat, wood burning should be continued, but efforts should be made to update wood stoves." and "Wood burning as a method of disposal should be reduced."
- More background information on tree migration due to climate will be added.
- Page 22 (clean version, line 447) Policy #1 "50 to 100 feet" seems too vague and will need clarification.
- Page 12 (clean version, lines 23-242) Policy #6 "vegetated buffer strips" needs to be clarified.
- Page 10 (clean version, line 195) Can there be metrics for water quality? Goal is not specific. Kevin clarified that goals in plans like this are overarching and there are many metrics in place for different chemicals or aspects of water quality.
- It was noted that land-grant universities students might be able to do water testing.

Discussion and action for Economic Development chapter:

- Commissioner Riddle commented that the chapter needs a good edit. Kevin noted the chapter will be reviewed for readability.

Discussion and action for Utilities chapter:

- A policy will be added that town schools should be supported.

#### **5. Staff and Commissioner Updates: Open Meeting law changes, Act 250, Other**

Kevin noted new open meeting law changes. Kevin noted the loss of our Act 250 appeal on Sunnymede. Kevin explained how to keep submitting comments.

Kevin requested a motion to continue work on the Regional Plan as discussed tonight for a draft to be ready for discussion and authorization to go to hearing in September. The motion made by Commissioner Devoto and seconded by Commissioner Jones passed with Commissioner Kraus abstaining. Chair Emmons raised a concern regarding how one knows a motion passes during virtual meetings. Kevin answered that roll call is unnecessary, and that a voice vote is perfectly fine, but in closer cases where the vote count is needed people can use the ‘raise hand’ function or literally raise their hands for counting.

#### **6. Adjournment**

On a motion made by Commissioner Jones and seconded by Commissioner Loeb, the meeting was adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Geena Baber  
July 25, 2024