

TRORC Board Meeting

February 26, 2025 – Board Meeting Minutes



Attendance:

Name	Town	9/25/24	10/30/24	12/11/24	2/26/25			
Steve Cota	Barnard (Alt)							
Paul Vallee	Bethel (Alt.)		X					
Gene Kraus	Bethel			X				
Nancy Jones	Bradford		X	X	X			
Sandy Vondrasek Cooch	Braintree	X	X	X	X			
Megan O'Toole	Braintree (Alt)							
Lynne Bertram	Bridgewater			X	X			
Gwynn Zakov	Brookfield		X	X	X			
Jon Binhammer	Brookfield (Alt.)							
Carl Pepperman	Chelsea			X	X			
Stephen Devoto	Corinth	X	X	X	X			
Peter Berger	Fairlee		X	X	X			
Mark Belisle	Granville			X	X			
Monica Collins	Hancock				X			
Lori Hirshfield	Hartford	X		X	X			
Bruce Riddle	Hartford (Alt)		X	X	X			
Stephen Cone	Hartland			X	X			
Tony O'Meara	Newbury	X	X	X				
Larry Scott	Newbury (Alt.)				X			
Brian Loeb	Norwich	X			X			
Herb Kuendig	Pittsfield							
Anne Brown	Plymouth	X	X	X	X			
Bill Emmons	Pomfret	X	X	X	X			
Chris Sargent	Randolph				X			
Patricia Harvey	Rochester			X	X			
Doon Hinderyckx	Rochester (Alt)			X				
Patrick Dakin	Royalton	X	X	X	X			
Bushrod Powers	Royalton (Alt)	X			X			
Ira Clark	Sharon	X	X	X	X			
Kevin Travis	Stockbridge							
John Echeverria	Strafford	X	X	X				
Jim Masland	Thetford (Alt)							
Jim Clark	Topsham							
Michael Sacca	Tunbridge							
Kevin Rose	Tunbridge (Alt)							
Andrea Herrington	Vershire			X	X			
Nancy Malmquist	W. Fairlee	X	X	X	X			
Don Bourdon	Woodstock		X	X				
Brad Prescott	Woodstock (Alt)	X			X			
Meghan Butts	At-Large		X		X			
Ken Alton	At-Large	X		X	X			
Dan Rudell	At-Large							
Andrew Winter	At-Large		X	X				
Meg Emmons	At-Large	X	X					
Caroline Sherman-Gordon	Youth At-Large		X	X				

Staff: Peter Gregory, Kevin Geiger, Pete Fellows, Kyra Wood, Kyle Hansen, Bryan Kovalick, Geena Baber

Guests: Tim Taylor, Thetford

1. Call to Order/Approval of Agenda/Introductions/Public Comment on items not on the agenda.

Chair Bill Emmons called the meeting to order at 6:31pm and began with introductions of attendees. There was public attendance and no public comments received. A quorum was present, and the agenda was approved.

2. Public Hearings. Public Comments on Town Plan Approval Actions for the Chelsea Town Plan and Confirmation Action for the planning efforts per 24 VSA, Section 4350.

Bill Emmons opened the Hearing for public comments. No public comments received. Emmons closed the Public Hearing.

3. Action on Chelsea Town Plan Approval and Confirmation.

Bryan Kovalick, TRORC Planner, provided an overview of the Chelsea Plan. The Town of Chelsea adopted their amended Plan in December 2024, reflecting updated information to become compatible with TRORC's Regional Plan and State statute. Namely, a mixed-use area allowed for principal retail, which was not in conformance and removed. TRORC staff recommended Board approval of the Plan and confirmation of their planning efforts per 24 V.S.A. §4350.

On a motion made by Nancy Jones and seconded by Peter Berger, the Town of Chelsea's Town Plan was approved unanimously and confirmation granted.

4. Public Hearing. Public comments will be received on the request from Chelsea for a Determination of Energy Compliance.

Bill Emmons opened the Hearing for public comments. No public comments received. Emmons closed the Public Hearing.

5. Action on the Determinations of Energy Compliance for the Chelsea Town Plan.

Bryan Kovalick, shared the Determination of Energy Compliance is completed by reviewing the Town Plan using a checklist provided by the Department of Public Service. This allows for a higher standing in Section 248 proceedings, such as with the installation of solar panels.

On a motion made by Mark Belisle and seconded by Peter Berger, the Town of Chelsea's Determination of Energy Compliance was approved unanimously.

6. Approval of the TRORC Board Minutes from December 11, 2024.

On a motion made by Peter Berger and seconded by Nancy Jones, the Board meeting minutes of December 11, 2024, were approved unanimously.

7. Acceptance of unaudited Financial Reports from December 2024 and January 2025.

On a motion made by Brad Prescott and seconded by Stephen Devoto, the unaudited Financial Reports from both December 2024 and January 2025 were approved unanimously.

Peter Gregory provided an overview of the reports, sharing that TRORC was on track with its financials. The Accounts Receivable displays a large amount, more than half of which has been received in February 2025. Gregory noted that some agencies were slow to pay, but this is not related to changes in the federal administration. Only one project, related to climate resilience, has been paused for TRORC's work. Several others have received additional guidance in navigating their work, such as the US EPA Brownfields program. In other cases, TRORC is requesting advanced funds upon receipt of invoices/expenditures. Gregory reassured the Board that TRORC is in a good position to navigate any changes that may occur, and we have good reserves to assist if necessary.

8. Action on Adoption of the proposed 2025 TRORC Regional Plan.

Kevin Geiger provided an overview of the changes made to TRORC's Regional Plan, explaining that approximately 110 pages were removed and many sections were updated to link to online materials. A disclaimer is included for the Housing and Future Land Use chapters, which will be updated in the next year. The revision process followed all procedures, including public input meetings where TRORC implemented changes and/or responded to public comments.

On a motion made by Brad Prescott and seconded by Andrea Herrington, the 2025 TRORC Regional Plan was adopted unanimously.

The 2025 Regional Plan is effective immediately, and final materials will be available on TRORC's website. TRORC will send the final plan to the Department of Public Service for a determination of energy compliance.

9. Staff/Commissioner Updates

TRORC has begun work on updating the Housing and Future Land Use chapters. A first draft of the Future Land Use maps has been created. In 2025, staff will meet with each town's Planning Commission and other interested parties to review the changes. Many of the map updates will coincide with the Housing chapter updates, including the state's housing target.

Peter reminded everyone that interim Act 250 regulations are effective until the Regional Plans are adopted with the updated Future Land Use maps and are approved by the new Land Use Review Board (LURB). All RPCs must submit their changes to the LURB by December 2026.

a. Commissioner Items

None.

b. Legislative and NADO Updates

Peter will be attending the NADO conference in March, where federal agencies may provide additional guidance to navigate ongoing changes.

The Vermont Legislature is placing a strong focus on education finance and healthcare. Appropriations for regional planning commissions remain strong, emphasizing the recognition of RPCs for their work with communities, particularly in areas such as emergency management, Act 250, natural resources, and flood mitigation.

TRORC has been the administrator for the State-funded Municipal Technical Assistance Program (MTAP) for RPCs in Vermont. The proposed budget would add an additional \$3 million in funding for the program, with the potential for an additional \$1.4 million for RPCs.

c. Other

Peter provided an update on TRORC's Shared Services program, an effort being rolled out to provide a shared position across multiple municipalities. TRORC is currently focused on providing an administrative assistant. There is some disconnect between the Town's timeline and TRORC's, but we are working to provide services as soon as possible.

10. Adjournment.

The meeting adjourned at 7:24pm.

Meeting minutes prepared by:
Kyra Wood, Grants Manager
March 4, 2025