

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Board of Commissioner Handbook

January 2020

Table of Contents

Getting Started 4

- Welcome to CVRPC
- What is CVRPC?
- Organizational Policies and Procedures
- Enabling Legislation
- RPC Funding 101

Getting to Know the Organization 7

- The Board of Commissioners
- Committees
- Staff

Roles and Responsibilities of Commissioners 14

- The Role of a Citizen Planner
- Commissioner Roles
 - Policy Setting
 - Stewardship
 - Advocacy
- Participating Responsibly
 - Commit the Time
 - Understand Your Role
 - Maintain the Integrity

Planning Basics 18

- Regional Planning
- Regional Planning Services

The Importance of Public Engagement 22

Appendices 23

- A - Commission Bylaws
- B - Code of Conduct & Conflict of Interest Policy
- C - Commissioner Contact Information
- D - Staff Contact Information
- E - State Statutes
 - RPC Duties

RPC Optional Duties and Power
Purposes of a Regional Plan
F - Resources
Abbreviations & Acronyms
Roberts Rules of Order
A Guide to Vermont Open Meeting Law

Getting Started

Welcome to the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Welcome to the Board of Commissioners! We appreciate your willingness to serve. CVRPC fills an important need in the region, and we believe that you will find serving on the Board a rich and rewarding experience. As a Commissioner, you and your fellow board members are responsible for overseeing the organization's operations while maintaining our commitment to CVRPC's mission. This involves establishing strategic direction, ensuring compliance with all applicable legal requirements, and keeping the organization financially healthy. This handbook will help you understand your rights and responsibilities as a Commissioner so that you can effectively carry out these duties. We encourage you to refer to it whenever you have questions about your service.

This Commissioner Handbook describes:

- ❖ What the Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) is;
- ❖ How it is organized;
- ❖ What activities CVRPC can and must do;
- ❖ The legislation and funding that makes our work possible;
- ❖ The powers and duties you have as a Commissioner;
- ❖ How you can be an effective Commissioner;
- ❖ Staff and their responsibilities; and
- ❖ The resources available to you.

The Handbook cannot possibly answer every question you will have. Your fellow Commissioners (especially members of the Executive Committee) and the Executive Director are resources you can use for guidance and assistance. They can supplement the Handbook's information by describing how the Commission may have addressed any concerns or opportunities previously.

Serving on the Commission calls upon you to think regionally and invest your best efforts to help CVRPC succeed on behalf of all of the communities and organizations it convenes. Your service requires a certain level of commitment and investment of time. The learning curve is fairly steep, but there are plenty of people and resources available to help and support you.

We want you to succeed as a Commissioner. To be successful, you should:

- ❖ Prepare thoroughly before each meeting by reading the meeting packet and related materials;
- ❖ Communicate the ideas and opinions of your community clearly;
- ❖ Communicate back to your community about the issues and decisions of the RPC;

- ❖ Listen fully to the ideas and opinions of others;
- ❖ Be flexible and diplomatic; and
- ❖ Be true to the organization's guiding principles and laws.

The more you invest in the organization, the more rewarding you will find your service.

What is CVRPC?

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission (CVRPC) is a compact of 23 municipalities. It was founded on in 1967. CVRPC is also a political subdivision of the State of Vermont. Representatives appointed by the Selectboard or City Council of each community govern CVRPC.

CVRPC brings communities together to address common issues and concerns. It does this by providing services and assistance that meet the needs of its member municipalities and the public, and helping to bridge opportunities and concerns that exist between municipalities and the State. Our work results in the development and implementation of plans that support sustainable development and improve the region's quality of life and environment.

Organizational Policies and Procedures

CVRPC has developed and adopted numerous policies and procedures, which dictate or guide the operations of the organization. These documents are available at <http://centralvtplanning.org/about/operating-policies/>.

Enabling Legislation

The legal basis and powers for Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission as the region's regional planning commission stem from Vermont laws as stipulated in 24 V.S.A. § 4301 et seq., as amended, 24 V.S.A. § 4345 et seq. CVRPC's activities are funded in part through the State of Vermont property transfer tax as outlined in 24 V.S.A. § 4306(a).

Funding

CVRPC receives funding from four main sources. Legislative funding and municipal dues provide the base of funding for CVRPC's work program activities. Other funding sources build on these two.

Municipal Dues

CVRPC depends upon dues from the 23 municipalities it serves. Municipal dues demonstrate support for CVRPC's services and leverage additional funds that support local and regional planning. The dues are per capita based, meaning the amount is based on the municipality's population. For FY20, municipalities contributed \$78,041 to the Commission, which was 5% of

its annual budget. In the same year, municipal dues leveraged \$1.4 million in services. Municipal dues are CVRPC’s most flexible funds.

State Allocation

The Vermont Legislature provides funding for all Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) through the Property Transfer Tax. The funding is dispersed to RPCs through the Agency of Commerce and Community Development using a four-part formula. The formula provides an equal share to all RPCs for operating expenses. It also provides a proportional share for number of municipalities served, number of residents served, and property transfer tax receipts from the RPC’s service area. The proportional share reflects anticipated needs.

Annual Contracts

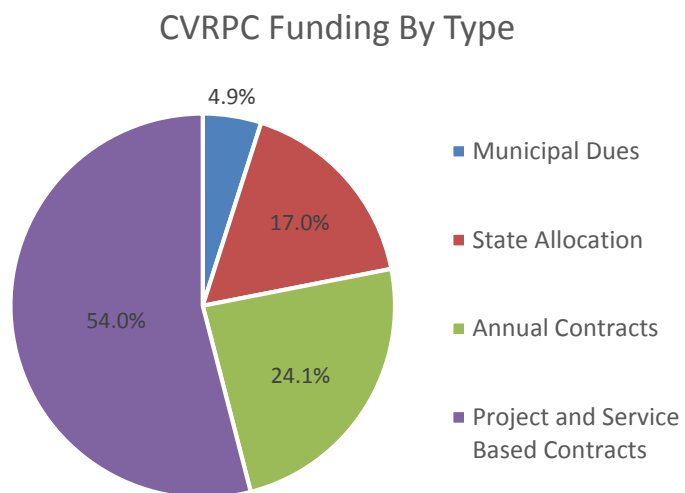
Three state agencies have consistently provided funds to RPCs through annual contracts. The Vermont Agencies of Transportation and Natural Resources and Vermont Emergency Management support local and regional planning. This consistent funding reflects appreciation of RPC success in bringing local and regional input to statewide policy and plan discussions and RPC ability to assist the State to manage implementation funds for municipalities.

Project and Service-Based Contracts

CVRPC uses project-based contracts to support local efforts or regional implementation priorities. These one-time grants and contracts further specific planning efforts or implement specific projects with communities.

CVRPC’s fee-for-service arrangements support intermunicipal efforts, such as the Wrightsville Beach Recreation District, and provide technical services to small non-profits that further local and regional goals. The majority of fee-for-service arrangements are for bookkeeping and administrative services.

CVRPC’s funding by type for FY20 is depicted in the right-hand graphic.



Getting to Know the Organization

The Board of Commissioners

CVRPC is governed by a Board of Commissioners and functions with a professional staff. Standing and special committees complement the work performed by the Board. An overview of how the Commission is formed and operates is provided below. Committee responsibilities and membership and a description of current staff are included on the Commission’s website at <http://www.centralvtplanning.org>. Contact information for Commissioners is included in Appendix C.

The Board of Commissioners

The Board of Commissioners is composed of one representative from each of the Commission’s 23 member municipalities. The municipality’s locally elected legislative body (Selectboard or City Council) may appoint a Commissioner and an Alternate Commissioner, who votes in the Commissioner’s absence. CVRPC requires annual certification of the appointment.

Alternate Commissioners provide a voice for the municipality when the appointed Commissioner is unable to participate in meetings. Commissioners can facilitate participation of Alternates by:

- encouraging alternates to attend Commission meetings;
- linking alternates to Commission committees and workgroups;
- regularly conveying updates;
- helping them understand their duties;
- ensuring they are provided with all information that a Commissioner receives; and
- briefing them when they will be the voting member at a Commission meeting.

CVRPC member municipalities include:

Barre City	East Montpelier	Northfield	Washington
Barre Town	Fayston	Orange	Waterbury
Berlin	Marshfield	Plainfield	Williamstown
Cabot	Middlesex	Roxbury	Woodbury
Calais	Montpelier	Waitsfield	Worcester
Duxbury	Moretown	Warren	

Annually, the Nominating Committee recommends to the Board of Commissioners a Chair, Vice-Chair, Secretary/Treasurer. Officers are elected by a majority vote and announced at the annual meeting. You can learn more about this in the Bylaws section in Appendix A.

Board Meetings

Meetings follow an established agenda. Vermont Open Meeting Law no longer allows for agenda items previously described as “Other Business”. To add an item to the agenda, contact either the Chair or the Executive Director at least ten (10) days prior to the meeting date. While meeting agendas may be amended at the start of any meeting, arranging time in advance of the meeting helps ensure adequate time is dedicated to discussion of each topic.

Meetings of the Board of Commissioners occur the second Tuesday of each month and begin at 6:30 pm. Committee meetings are scheduled individually. All meetings of the Commission, its committees, and any workgroups are open for public attendance. Meetings of the CVRPC Board of Commissioners and Committees established by the Commission - whether standing, advisory, or project related - are subject to Vermont’s Open Meeting Law. You can read more about the Open Meeting Law in Appendix F.

The Commission uses Roberts Rules of Order to guide discussion and decision making during its meetings. While the procedures associated with Roberts Rules can seem awkward initially, they are designed to ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and to share ideas.

When a motion has been made, seconded, and opened for discussion, no other business should be discussed until action has been taken on the motion before the Commissioners. All Commissioners are encouraged to add to the discussion of a motion. The Chair makes every effort to ensure that all members are given the opportunity to speak. Except when otherwise provided by CVRPC’s Bylaws, meetings and voting are conducted in accord with Vermont Open Meeting Law and *Roberts Rules of Order Newly Revised*. You can learn more about Roberts Rules, including commonly heard terms and motions, in Appendix F.

Committees

CVRPC has six standing committees: Executive, Nominating, Regional Plan, Project Review, Municipal Plan Review, and Transportation Advisory. It also may create special committees as needed to address specific tasks or to oversee or advise CVRPC projects or programs; e.g. Brownfields Advisory, and Clean Water Advisory. These special generally dissolve at the project’s conclusion. All committees are governed by Rules of Procedure adopted by the Board of Commissioners. CVRPC staff members assist the Committees in all functions as needed.

All CVRPC Commissioners and Alternates are encouraged to participate in at least one committee. Committee descriptions and member information is available on the Commission’s website.

Standing Committees

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee consists of the Commission's three officers and four other Commissioners elected by the Board of Commissioners at the June meeting. Vacancies on the Executive Committee are filled by the Board at its next meeting, except for the Chair and Vice Chair, which are reappointed within two meetings of the Board of Commissioners.

Key Duties

- ❖ Carry out all decisions and instructions of the Board.
- ❖ Recommend or take action on policy issues affecting the region and its municipalities.
- ❖ Act on behalf of the Board in the absence of a quorum of the Board.
- ❖ Keep the resources of the Commission in line with its work program and budget.
- ❖ Determine and approve Board meeting agendas.
- ❖ Execute other actions as outlined in a policy adopted by the Board.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee consists of at least three (3) members appointed by the Board. The appointments are on a rotating basis, and a Commissioner may not serve two successive terms.

Key Duties

- ❖ Nominate candidates for the Executive Committee for election by the Commission.

Regional Plan Committee

The Regional Plan Committee consists of five (5) members of the Board of Commissioners. Members serve two year terms and are appointed by the Board. The Chair is elected from the committee by its members.

Key Duties

- ❖ Develop and recommend updates to the Regional Plan.

Project Review Committee

The Project Review Committee consists shall consist of five (5) members plus one (1) committee alternate, each of whom shall be a Commissioner or an Alternate. Members serve three year staggered terms and are appointed by the Board. The Chair is elected from the committee by its members.

Key Duties

- ❖ Evaluate Act 250 (10 V.S.A. Chapter 151) and Section 248 (30 V.S.A. Chapter 5) projects and make a determination of project conformance with the Regional Plan.
- ❖ Provide input and recommendations for projects with Significant Regional Impact.
- ❖ Solicit input from other parties as needed to gather information and render a decision.

- ❖ Evaluate potential cumulative impacts for projects.
- ❖ Provide guidance on amendments or changes to Substantial Regional Impact criteria.

Municipal Plan Review Committee

The Municipal Plan Review Committee consists of five (5) members of the Board of Commissioners. Members serve one year terms and are appointed annually by the Board. The Chair is elected from the committee by its members.

Key Duties

- ❖ Review municipal plans for conformance to statutory requirements and recommend to the Board whether a plan should be approved.
- ❖ Review municipal plans for conformance to enhanced energy planning requirements and recommend to the Board whether a plan should receive a Certificate of Energy Compliance.
- ❖ Review each municipality's planning process and recommend to the Board whether it should be confirmed.
- ❖ Provide guidance to municipalities about future plan updates and ways to strengthen planning efforts.

Transportation Advisory Committee

The Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) consists of one representative from each of CVRPC's 23 member municipalities. Members are appointed by the local legislative body of the municipality. TAC members serve at the pleasure of the municipality. CVRPC requires annual certification of the municipality's appointment. The Chair is elected from the committee by its members.

Key Duties

- ❖ Recommend a Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) work program and budget to the Executive Committee.
- ❖ Prioritize transportation studies funded by the Commission's TPI program.
- ❖ Develop and recommend the Regional Plan transportation element.
- ❖ Prioritize state-funded transportation projects as requested by VTTrans.

Special Committees

CVRPC may also create special committees: e.g, Brownfields, Clean Water.

Brownfields Advisory Committee

The Brownfields Steering Committee consists of five (4) Commissioners plus one alternate, one representative each from the Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation and the VT Department of Health, and five (5) members representing housing, real estate, finance, at-risk populations, and the environment. Members serve two year staggered terms and are appointed by the Board. The Chair is elected from the committee by its members.

Key Duties

- ❖ Oversee CVRPC's Brownfields Program.
- ❖ Prioritize brownfield sites for assessment.
- ❖ Participate in hiring contractors.
- ❖ Recommend brownfield-related policy.
- ❖ Participate in public outreach.

Clean Water Advisory Committee

The Clean Water Advisory Committee consists of 13 members:

- 3 CVRPC Commissioners and 1 Alternate
- 5 Representatives of the region's municipalities
- 1 Representative of the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (ex-officio, non-voting)
- 1 Representative of the Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District
- 1 Representative of the Friends of the Winooski River
- 1 Representative of the Friends of the Mad River
- 1 Interested stakeholder

Members serve two year staggered terms and are appointed by the Board or by named organizations. The Chair is elected from the Committee by its members.

Key Duties

- ❖ Recommend the actions, policies, and direction CVRPC should take with regards to water quality, such as the Lake Champlain Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) Plan, Tactical Basin Plans, and the Regional Plan.

Staff

CVRPC maintains a permanent professional staff and may employ temporary staff with the approval of the Executive Committee. All Commission staff work to integrate CVRPC's planning and implementation programs. These programs currently include:

- ❖ land use,
- ❖ transportation,
- ❖ emergency preparedness and hazard mitigation,
- ❖ natural resources (water quality, agriculture, forest integrity, mineral resources), and
- ❖ community development (brownfields, housing, infrastructure, healthy communities, economic planning, energy, etc.).

Each position has a job description. Some positions have a major program focus in one or more areas. You can find a list of current CVRPC staff, their backgrounds, and current roles on the Commission's website. Staff contact information is included in Appendix D.

Executive Director

The Director most often works with municipal leadership and State and Federal agency leadership from department/division heads to Agency Secretaries. The Director is CVRPC's representative on statewide organizations and to the Legislature. Key duties include:

- ❖ Translate Board policy into programs, plans, and actions.
- ❖ Ensure that the CVRPC is responsive to its municipalities and other stakeholders.
- ❖ Responsible for overall management and long-range organizational planning.

Program Manager

Program Managers are senior planning staff with additional management responsibilities. In addition to the Senior Planner role, they may work with State and Federal agency leadership including department/division heads and Commissioners. They may represent CVRPC on boards or committees of other organizations. In addition to Senior Planner duties, key duties include:

- ❖ Supervise one or more staff.
- ❖ Manage and staff one or more program areas.
- ❖ Develop program budgets and work plans.

Senior Planner

Senior Planners carry out and manage major projects and coordinate core programs. They also conduct policy analysis and regional studies. Senior Planners most often work with municipal staff and volunteers, Commissioners, and State and Federal agency program staff. They may represent CVRPC or RPCs on state policy working groups. Key duties include:

- ❖ Carry out and manage complex planning studies.
- ❖ Review development proposals.
- ❖ Develop project budgets and work plans.
- ❖ Administer bidding processes and manage consultants and contracts.
- ❖ Supervise the project work of one or more staff.

Planner

Planners assist municipalities with planning activities and implement projects. Planners most often work with municipal staff and volunteer boards and support CVRPC committees. They may represent CVRPC on working groups for state projects. Key duties include:

- ❖ Assist municipalities and committees with local and regional projects and programs.
- ❖ Support more senior staff with project and program work.
- ❖ Coordinate planning studies.
- ❖ Develop less complex project budgets and work plans.
- ❖ Administer bidding processes and manage consultants and contracts with oversight.

Assistant Planner

Assistant Planners work with other planning staff to implement projects and programs of the Commission. Assistant Planners most often work with other CVRPC staff, municipal staff and volunteers, and staff at other regional organizations. Key duties include:

- ❖ Gather and maintain data and statistics.
- ❖ Participate in analysis and interpretation of data and trends.
- ❖ Compile information and make recommendations on special studies.
- ❖ Research and draft documents and prepare graphic displays for review by more senior staff.
- ❖ Assist with grant writing.

Planning Technician

Planning Technicians are interns who conduct field work or support other planning staff. Planning Technicians most often work with CVRPC staff and may work with municipal staff. Key duties include:

- ❖ Provide data collection, research, writing, and meeting support to CVRPC planners.
- ❖ Prepare maps and planning reports of limited or variable complexity.
- ❖ Produce sketches and renderings of limited or variable complexity.

Office Manager

The Office Manager is responsible for insuring the smooth operation of the Commission's office. The Office Manager works with CVRPC staff and service providers. Key duties include:

- ❖ Review and develop office operating procedures and policies.
- ❖ Maintain office insurance and worker's compensation records.
- ❖ Research and coordinate employee benefit packages.
- ❖ Complete ordering and purchasing.
- ❖ Carry out mailings and communications.
- ❖ Oversee the operation and maintenance of office equipment.

Finance Manager

The Commission currently contracts for accounting services.

Roles and Responsibilities of Commissioners

The Role of the Citizen Planner

As a citizen planner, you can look forward to a rich and challenging experience! Your role is important, and the public trust is invested in you.

Being an effective Commissioner requires you to get involved in your community, be informed, communicate with your Selectboard/City Council, and use common sense, fairness, and objectivity in all of the decisions that come before you. It is your responsibility to balance the public good with private rights and interests. Most of all, this Board makes decisions that impact an entire region, so it is important to be able to “think regionally” even though you are representing a municipality.

To understand what “regional planning” is, it helps first to understand that a “region” is a set of places that share common features or characteristics so that they relate to each other in one or more significant ways. These relationships may be defined by a specific geography (e.g., Washington County), a common natural resource (such as a watershed), a feature of the built-environment (such as a highway corridor), or a non-physical social, economic, or political feature (such as a housing market area).

Each place in a region is interrelated with the other places in the region. Consequently, it is challenging for any one place to successfully address a regional concern without considering what is happening in the region’s other places. By understanding what is happening in the entire region and coordinating local actions, a region’s places can address opportunities and problems more effectively and efficiently.

Commissioner Roles

Commissioners have three main roles: policy setting, stewardship, and advocacy. Commissioners are legally responsible for the Commission and its actions.

Policy Setting

Establish Policy

- ❖ Define and oversee the vision and mission of the organization and keep it relevant to the needs of the region.
- ❖ Focus on the common good of the region, not just your individual community.
- ❖ Set policies that guide the board to run effectively, legally, and ethically.
- ❖ Recognize and define policy decisions as those that affect the region as a whole.
- ❖ Establish policy and governance frameworks that allow staff to implement the vision and priorities of the Board.

Nurture a Vision

- ❖ Establish a shared vision, sense of mission, and common goals at the board level and be able to articulate them to others.
- ❖ Take the long-term view with incremental performance measures to evaluate progress.
- ❖ Provide direction through strategic planning to establish long-term goals and objectives.

Stewardship

Establish a Partnership with the Executive Director

- ❖ Set guidelines for authority, responsibility, and accountability of the Executive Director.
- ❖ Provide support as necessary for management to succeed in advancing Board goals and policies.
- ❖ Understand that the Board and Commission are not the same as a local government.

Ensure the Financial Integrity of the Organization

- ❖ Develop a financial vocabulary.
- ❖ Have a firm understanding of the financial condition of the organization.
- ❖ Conduct an annual financial audit using a reliable outside firm.
- ❖ Monitor financial outcomes and performance.

Advocacy

Communicate Effectively

- ❖ Meet at least 1-2 times per year with your Selectboard/City Council and Planning Commission. (Staff can assist you with points of discussion and accompany you.)
 - Update them on the issues and decisions facing the region and seek input.
 - Learn about local challenges and successes and relay their comments and perspectives back to the Board.
- ❖ Don't limit your input and feedback to only Commissioners.
- ❖ Provide constructive and timely feedback.
- ❖ Respect the diversity of thoughts and opinions.
- ❖ Listen to the needs of your community and share them with the Commission.
- ❖ Speak for the Board and CVRPC only when authorized to do so.

Participating Responsibly

Commit the Time Necessary to Serve on the Board

- ❖ Prepare for all meetings thoroughly by reading the meeting packet.
- ❖ Attend each meeting of the board.
- ❖ Participate in Board retreats.
- ❖ Serve on at least one committee.
- ❖ Share ideas for CVRPC support to your municipality and for regional activities.
- ❖ Get to know and mentor new Commissioners.

Understand Your Role as a Leader of this Organization

- ❖ Know and help shape the organization's vision, mission, goals, products, and services.
- ❖ Participate in statewide and regional activities of the organization.
- ❖ Promote decisions and solutions in the best interest of the region and the organization.
- ❖ Ask informed, thoughtful questions.
- ❖ Respect the confidentiality of the Board's business.
- ❖ Think regionally even when you act locally.
- ❖ Evaluate performance at all levels including your own and the Board's.
- ❖ Be a goodwill ambassador for the organization at the local, regional, and state levels.
- ❖ Do not micromanage the day-to-day operations of the organization. Work at the Board level, not at the staff level.

Maintain the Integrity of the Board and Organization

- ❖ Hold the organization to a high, ethical standard and monitor its performance regularly.
- ❖ Keep local politics in perspective relative to regional needs and priorities.
- ❖ Follow the code of conduct and conflict of interest policy.
- ❖ Don't pursue special privileges.
- ❖ Develop trust.
- ❖ Listen carefully and considerately to others and maintain an open mind.
- ❖ Focus on solving problems and achieving positive results for the region.
- ❖ Be familiar with Vermont Open Meeting Law.

The learning curve can be steep. Take advantage of training sessions offered at Commission meetings, by CVRPC, by the State or other organizations to learn about general planning issues and technical topics which will be the underpinning of your decision making process.

During your term, you will become conversant in planning lingo: new terms, acronyms, and legal

citations such as Act 250, SRI, ACCD will be rolling off your tongue. There will be a virtual alphabet soup of just the acronyms. Never be afraid to ask for explanations of terms.

You will form new relationships with other boards and commissions; you will learn to write legally binding policies; and you will have the opportunity to influence decision making that may stand for decades.

There will be times when your decisions, in whole or in part, may not be popular. Some of these may be challenged in court or written up in the local paper.

Planning Basics

Planning can address just about any issue of local or regional concern. In Vermont, planning is performed collaboratively by the State, RPCs, and municipalities. Laws define how this collaboration is to work, specifying different responsibilities for each level of government. This means that the regional planning undertaken by each RPC is intended to be different from the planning undertaken by municipalities and the State.

The regional planning commission is the primary body responsible for planning for the region, with the culmination of that planning documented in the regional plan. The regional planning commission or other groups may also prepare plans on specific topics, for instance, Downstreet Housing and Community Development may develop a plan for housing or the Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District may develop a plan for solid waste.

Planning can be divided into three steps:

1. **Planning** where the visions and goals of the community or region are discussed and established and a means of achieving the goals are determined. 50% of CVRPC's work is planning.
2. **Project development** where the vision or ideas of a planning effort is further developed to insure they fit with on-the-ground conditions. Project development may include focused studies or plans that further refine a concept.
3. **Implementation** where the goals from the planning and project development stages are brought to reality through projects or regulations. CVRPC may assist local or state government with project implementation by being the funding applicant or project manager for a local or intermunicipal project or administering state implementation funding.

Regional Planning

Planning for an entire region is especially challenging. While we all agree that the Central Vermont Region should be a "great place to live, work, and play," there are myriad visions of exactly what this means and which actions we should undertake to achieve this goal. CVRPC is designated statutorily as the region's official forum for developing public consensus on the future of the Central Vermont.

Regional planning performed by RPCs is at an intermediate level between the local planning performed by municipalities and the general planning performed by the State. As a consequence, the regional planning responsibilities of RPCs are intended primarily to promote the coordination and collaboration of planning activities, both between member municipalities of RPCs and between

those municipalities and the State.

The Legislature calls upon each RPC to fulfill eighteen duties (Appendix E). The majority of an RPC's work usually is dedicated to six of these duties:

1. Promote cooperation,
2. Assist and advise municipalities,
3. Prepare a regional plan,
4. Review proposed State capital expenditures for compatibility with the regional plan,
5. Aid in Act 250 and Section 248 reviews of proposed developments and proposed utilities and telecommunications facilities, and
6. Confirm municipal planning programs and approve municipal plans.

To fulfill these responsibilities, the Legislature empowered each RPC to exercise certain powers (Appendix E) including but not limited to:

1. Prepare studies, plans, and recommendations on a broad set of issues,
2. Retain staff and consultant assistance, enter upon land with the prior approval of the owner to make examinations and surveys, hold public hearings, and require municipalities and the State to provide information,
3. Carry out, with the cooperation of member municipalities, programs for the appropriate development and use of the region's physical and human resources, and
4. Perform other acts or functions that the RPC deems to be necessary or appropriate.

The Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission carries out programs to affect these outcomes:

- ❖ Municipal permitting is predictable and effective.
- ❖ Vermont is prepared for local, regional or statewide emergencies.
- ❖ Transportation systems are planned effectively with local, regional, and state consideration of economic, environmental, and community impact.
- ❖ Brownfield sites are assessed and cleaned up, creating and preserving jobs and housing.
- ❖ Regions and the state have access to sufficient energy resources and plan for new generation, efficiency, and conservation to support community advancement.
- ❖ Infrastructure is planned and coordinated to meet the needs of the economy.
- ❖ Community and economic development are coordinated within and across regions to maximize public resources and ensure strong vibrant communities.
- ❖ Vermont's land use laws are implemented.
- ❖ Vermont's working landscape is used effectively for community and economic benefit.
- ❖ Water quality is improved.
- ❖ Natural systems are effectively sustained with consideration of community and health impact.

Regional Planning Services

The Central Vermont Region has a diverse mix of municipalities, with populations ranging from 706 to 8,659. Some municipalities have professional planning staff, and others do not. CVRPC provides professional assistance for all municipalities. Assistance comes in the form of services funded by CVRPC at the request of one or more municipalities, by a municipality hiring CVRPC as a consultant or service provider, through responsibilities delegated to RPCs by the Legislature or through services requested by State agencies.

CVRPC provides planning and implementation services, such as:

Municipal Plan and Bylaw Updates

CVRPC acts as a cost effective professional planning staff for municipalities. Current plans and bylaws are essential for smooth state and local permitting. CVRPC works with communities to adopt or update bylaws, including flood hazard regulations, form-based code, zoning, and subdivisions.

Geographic Information Services (GIS)

In addition to enhancing our own work, CVRPC provides its municipalities, state agencies, and regional groups with mapping and data analysis in support of their projects.

Transportation Planning and Project Development

CVRPC coordinates the Transportation Planning Initiative (TPI) in Central Vermont for the Vermont Agency of Transportation. The TPI is designed to meet federal requirements to ensure local involvement in transportation decision making, and provides local and regional services such as intersection studies, corridor plans, and traffic counts. CVRPC also completes transportation inventories and assists municipalities to build transportation capital budgets. Recently, RPCs began acting as administrators for state clean water funds aimed at municipal transportation infrastructure improvements.

Watershed Planning and Project Development

CVRPC works with the Agency of Natural Resources to complete river assessments, which result in better and safer growth management decisions, help municipalities identify areas prone to erosion and damage from floods, assist communities with erosion and stormwater management, and ensure river corridor projects are designed to be their most effective. Recently, RPCs began acting as administrators for state funds aimed at high priority, non-agricultural clean water construction projects.

Working Landscape Planning and Project Development

CVRPC works with municipalities, other regional organizations, and state agencies to complete forest, soil, and other assessments and projects aimed at using and maintaining Central Vermont's working landscape.

Emergency Response Planning

CVRPC works with Vermont Emergency Management, local emergency service responders, and municipalities to coordinate local and regional emergency response and hazard mitigation planning. CVRPC works with Local Emergency Planning Committee 5 to complete exercises and training to better prepare our state for disasters.

Brownfield Redevelopment

CVRPC has been awarded over \$800,000 for this community development initiative. Environmental site assessments allow properties to be sold, developed, or re-developed in ways that benefit the local and state economy, create or protect jobs, and increase housing opportunities.

Grant Writing and Management

CVRPC assists local and regional groups and state agencies with identifying appropriate grant sources, defining a project scope, writing grant applications, and managing grant-funded projects. Staff have experience in all types of grants from Community Block Grant (CDBG) applications to federal disaster mitigation grants and private foundations.

Regional Plans

CVRPC coordinates planning at the regional level through the development, adoption, and administration of a comprehensive regional plan and related studies. The Regional Plan guides investment decisions of the public and private sectors.

Special Projects

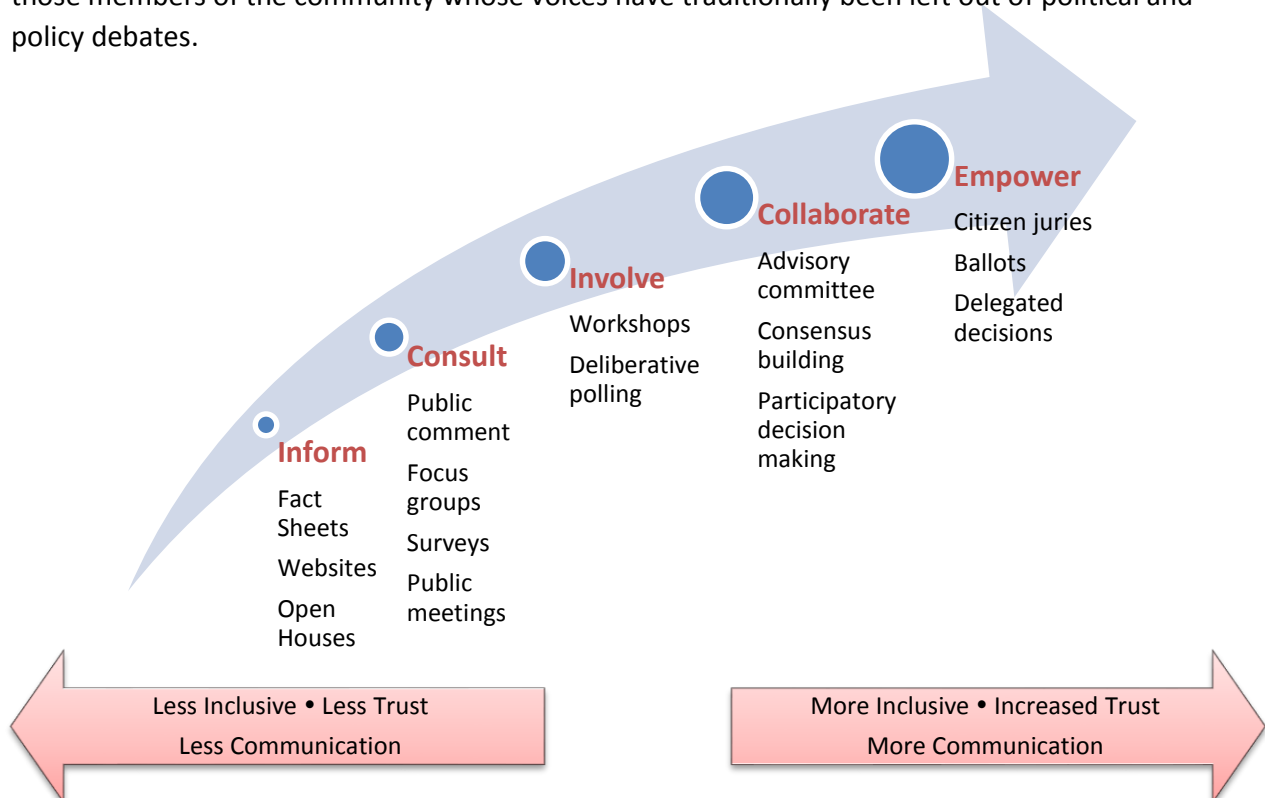
CVRPC also works on special projects such as downtown revitalization, recreation paths, farmland preservation, economic development, energy, capital planning, and affordable housing projects.

The Importance of Public Engagement

Community planning and regional planning enable people with different outlooks and awareness to learn about important and sometimes controversial matters, to agree on common objectives, and to collaborate on undertaking coordinated agendas of actions. Planning by public bodies strives to engage people not only because our laws and democratic traditions require it, but also because public engagement makes planning better. Planning that engages affected people, communities, and organizations promotes:

- ❖ Greater understanding of key facts,
- ❖ Deeper and more widespread appreciation of divergent views,
- ❖ Increased consensus on important goals and objectives, and
- ❖ Improved collaboration in undertaking complicated sequences of interrelated actions.

Public engagement entails more than hosting public hearings/meetings. Engagement includes listening to, developing an understanding of, and interacting with people who are not commonly considered “stakeholders”. Effective public engagement invites average citizens to get involved in deliberation, dialogue and action on public issues that they care about. And, it helps leaders and decision makers better understand the perspectives, opinions, and concerns of citizens and stakeholders. When done well, public engagement goes far beyond the “usual suspects” to include those members of the community whose voices have traditionally been left out of political and policy debates.



Appendix A: Bylaws

Printed version of this Handbook includes current bylaws. The web version provides it as a separate document.

[CVRPC Bylaws](#)

Appendix B: Code of Conduct & Conflict of Interest Policy

Printed version of this Handbook includes current Policy. The web version provides it as a separate document.

[Code of Conduct & Conflict of Interest Policy](#)

Appendix C: Commissioner Contact Information

Municipality	Commissioner Name	Telephone	Email Address
Barre City	Janet Shatney	(802) 476-0245	ppadirector@barrecity.org
Barre Town	Byron Atwood	(802) 479-1088	byron@eamesoffice.com
	George Clain	(802) 479-5502	ghiclain@gmail.com
Berlin	Robert Wernecke	(802) 485-8793	rwernecke@hotmail.com
	Karla Nuissl, Alt.	(802) 828-2963	karla.nuissl@vermont.gov
Cabot	Amy Hornblas	(802) 246-3083	amyhornblas@gmail.com
	Vacant, Alt.		
Calais	John Brabant	(802) 229-9870	calaisbjohn@gmail.com
	Janice Ohlsson, Alt.	(802) 456-8730	jgohlsson@gmail.com
Duxbury	Alan Quackenbush	(802) 244-7512	aqbogs@myfairpoint.net
	Vacant, Alt.		
E. Montpelier	Julie Potter	(802) 262-6119	julianapotter@yahoo.com
	John Pauly, Alt.	(802) 223-7539	jpauly@aol.com
Fayston	Carol Chamberlin	(802) 496-4611	carolc@gmavt.net
	Vacant, Alt.		
Marshfield	Robin Schunk	(802) 426-3566	newdiscoveryfarm@gmail.com
	Vacant, Alt.		
Middlesex	Ronald Krauth	(802) 229-5496	rakrauth@gmavt.net
	Vacant, Alt.		
Montpelier	Marcella Dent	(907) 301-8247	marcellamdent@gmail.com
	Mike Miller, Alt.	(802) 223-9506	mmiller@montpelier-vt.org
Moretown	Dara Torre	(802) 496-9786	daratorre@gmail.com
	Joyce Manchester, Alt.		
Northfield	Laura Hill-Eubanks	(802) 485-6277	lhilleub@mindspring.com
	Vacant, Alt.		
Orange	Lee Cattaneo	(802) 454-8435	cattaneo241@msn.com
	Vacant, Alt.		
Plainfield	Bram Towbin	(802) 476-5789	hihoau@gmail.com
	Paula Emery, Alt.		pemery@pshift.com
Roxbury	Gerry D'Amico	(802) 485-5590	jerrydamico@tds.net
	Vacant, Alt.		
Waitsfield	Don La Haye	(802) 583-2902	donlahaye@madriver.com
	Harrison Snapp, Alt.	(802) 496-2280	3ursus@accessvt.com
Warren	Alison Duckworth	(802) 496-6651	alisonhduckworth@gmail.com
	J. Michael Bridgewater, Alt.		btoonierandco@gmavt.net
Washington	Peter Carbee	(802) 279-8457	accuratecounts.vt@gmail.com
	Vacant, Alt.		
Waterbury	Steven Lotspeich	(802) 244-1012	slotspeich@waterburyvt.com

Municipality	Commissioner Name	Telephone	Email Address
	Vacant, Alt		
Williamstown	Richard Turner	(802) 461-3800	rdt914@yahoo.com
	Jacqueline Higgins, Alt.	(802) 433-6671	twnmgr@williamstownvt.org
Woodbury	Michael Gray	(802) 456-1983	grhayes1956@comcast.net
	Vacant, Alt.		
Worcester	Bill Arrand	(802) 223-9014	arrand@myfairpoint.net
	Vacant, Alt.		

Appendix D: Staff Contact Information

Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Address: 29 Main Street, Suite 4, Montpelier, VT 05602

Phone Number: (802) 229-0389

Fax Number: (802) 223-1977

General email: cvrpc@cvregion.com

Website: www.centralvtplanning.org

Position	Staff Member	Primary Program Area	Email
Executive Director	Bonnie Waninger		waninger@cvregion.com
Office Manager	Nancy Chartrand		chartrand@cvregion.com
Program Manager	Vacant	Transportation	
Senior Planner	Pam DeAndrea	GIS & Natural Resources	deandrea@cregion.com
Senior Planner	Clare Rock	Land Use & Brownfields	rock@cvregion.com
Planner	Ashley Andrews	GIS & Transportation	andrews@cvregion.com
Planner	Grace Vinson	Land Use & Emergency Management	vinson@cvregion.com
Assistant Planner	Zachary Maia	Land Use & Energy	maia@cvregion.com
Planning Technician	Vacant	Transportation	planningtechnician@cvregion.com

CVRPC currently contracts for accounting services. It also adds staff capacity using AmeriCorps VISTA members.

Appendix E: Vermont Statutes

The legal basis and powers for Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission as the region's regional planning commission stem from Vermont laws as stipulated in the Vermont Planning and Development Act (24 V.S.A. § 4301 et seq., as amended, 24 V.S.A. § 4345 et seq.).

The Vermont Statutes Online is an unofficial copy of the Vermont Statutes Annotated. Available at <https://legislature.vermont.gov/statutes/>, it provides a quick reference to aspects of statute relating to regional planning commission.

Title 24: Municipal and County Government

Chapter 117: MUNICIPAL AND REGIONAL PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT

Sub-Chapter 3: Regional Planning Commissions

- [§ 4341 Creation of regional planning commissions](#)
- [§ 4341a Performance grants for regional planning service](#)
- [§ 4342 Regional planning commissions; membership](#)
- [§ 4343 Appointment, term and vacancy; rules](#)
- [§ 4344 Repealed. 2009, No. 146 \(Adj. Sess.\), § G5.](#)
- [§ 4345 Optional powers and duties of regional planning commissions](#)
- [§ 4345a Duties of regional planning commissions](#)
- [§ 4345b Intermunicipal service agreements](#)
- [§ 4346 Appropriations](#)
- [§ 4347 Purposes of regional plan](#)
- [§ 4348 Adoption and amendment of regional plan](#)
- [§ 4348a Elements of a regional plan](#)
- [§ 4348b Re-adoption of regional plans](#)
- [§ 4349 Regional plan; adoption by municipality](#)
- [§ 4350 Review and consultation regarding municipal planning effort](#)
- [§ 4351 Review by Commissioner of Housing and Community Development](#)
- [§ 4352 Optional determination of energy compliance; enhanced energy planning](#)

Printed version of this Handbook includes §4345, §4345a, and §4347 in their entirety.

Appendix F: Resources

There are a number of resources available to help you become acquainted with CVRPC.

- ❖ Veteran Commissioners are an invaluable resource for new recruits.
- ❖ Talk with your predecessor, other Commissioners, and staff of CVRPC.
- ❖ Staff can help you connect with other Commissioners who share similar interests and concerns, as well as provide administrative and technical support to the organization in order to fulfill the mission and vision. Get to know staff and other Commissioners and partner with them as you fulfill your duties on the board. Carpooling to meetings with other Commissioners, speaking with locally elected officials, and joining Committees give additional opportunities for preparation and review. Contact information for staff and Commissioners are listed in Appendices C and D.
- ❖ Reading through the Regional Plan, as well as local municipal plans, will help familiarize you with the goals and policies of each community as well as the direction CVRPC sets for the region. Copies of local plans and the regional plan are available on our website, www.centralvtplanning.org. Printed copies are available upon request.
- ❖ Staying tuned in to current events in your community, neighboring communities, and across the state will help strengthen your understanding of the context in which local and regional planning occurs.
- ❖ The following pages include additional resources to help you succeed in your role as a Regional Commissioner:
 - Abbreviations & Acronyms
 - Roberts Rules of Order
 - Commonly Heard Terms
 - Roberts Rules Cheat Sheet
 - A Guide to Open Meetings

Abbreviations & Acronyms

Acronym	Explanation
604b	A grant program established under Section 604b of the federal Clean Water Act
AAP	Accepted Agricultural Practices
ACCD	Agency of Commerce and Community Development
ACRPC	Addison County Regional Planning Commission
AHS	Agency of Human Services
AMP	Accepted Management Practices (for silviculture)
ANR	Agency of Natural Resources (sometimes referred to as VANR or VT ANR)
AO	Administrative Officer
AOT	Agency of Transportation (also referred to as VTrans)
APA	American Planning Association
BAC	Brownfields Advisory Committee
BADC	Barre Area Development Corporation
BBL	Brown Bag Lunch
BCRC	Bennington County Regional Commission
BEOP	Basic Emergency Operations Plan (also referred to as LEOP)
BGS	Buildings and General Services (State of Vermont)
BMP	Best Management Practices
BOA	Board of Adjustment
BR	Better Roads Program
CCRPC	Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission
CCTA	Chittenden County Transit Authority (operates as GMT)
CDBG	Community Development Block Grant
CERT	Community Emergency Response Team
COOP	Continuity of Operations Plan
CRS	Community Rating System (for National Flood Insurance Program - NFIP)
CVCC	Central Vermont Chamber of Commerce
CVEDC	Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation
CVRPC	Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission
CVMC	Central Vermont Medical Center
CVSWMD	Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District
CVTA	Cross Vermont Trail Association
CWA	Vermont Clean Water Act
CWBG	Clean Water Block Grant
CWI	Clean Water Initiative
DAIL	Department of Disabilities, Aging & Independent Living
DEC	Department of Environmental Conservation
DFPR	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (also referred to as FPR)
DFW	Department of Fish and Wildlife (also referred to as F&W)
DHCD	Department of Housing and Community Development

Acronym	Explanation
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOL	Department of Labor
DPS	Vermont Department of Public Safety
DRB	Development Review Board
EC	Executive Committee
EDA	Economic Development Administration (US)
EDC	Economic Development Corporation
EMC	Emergency Management Coordinator
EMD	Emergency Management Director
EMPG	Emergency Management Performance Grant
EOP	Emergency Operations Plan
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ERP	Ecosystem Restoration Program
F&W	Department of Fish and Wildlife (also referred to as DFW)
FEMA	Federal Emergency Management Agency
FMR	Friends of the Mad River
FPF	Front Porch Forum
FPR	Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation (also referred to as DFPR)
FWR	Friends of the Winooski River
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
GIA	Grants in Aid (also referred to as MGIA)
GIS	Geographic Information Systems
GMT	Green Mountain Transit
GPD	Gallons Per Day
HCA	Vermont Health Care Authority
HMEP	Hazard Mitigation Emergency Planning
HMGP	Hazard Mitigation Grant Program
HSU	Homeland Security Unit
HUD	Housing and Urban Development
INS	Immigration and Naturalization Services
IPP	Independent Power Producer
KSA	Knapp State Airport
Kw	Kilowatt
LCBP	Lake Champlain Basin Program
LCPC	Lamoille County Planning Commission
LEC	Local Exchange Carrier
LEOP	Local Emergency Operations Plan (aka Basic Emergency Operations Plan)
LEMP	Local Emergency Management Plan (replaced LEOPs in 2019)
LEPC	Local Emergency Planning Committee
LESA	Land Evaluation and Site Assessment
LHMP	Local Hazard Mitigation Plan

Acronym	Explanation
MGD	Million Gallons per Day
MGIA	Municipal Grants in Aid (also referred to as GIA)
MOMS	Municipal Officers Management Seminar
MPG	Municipal Planning Grant
MRRMA	Mad River Resource Management Alliance
MRV	Mad River Valley
MRVPD	Mad River Valley Planning District
Mw	Megawatts
NADO	National Association of Development Organizations
NEARC	New England Association of Regional Commissions
NFIP	National Flood Insurance Program
NFLC	Northern Forest Land Council
NFLS	Northern Forest Land Study
NRCS	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NRPC	Northwest Regional Planning Commission
NVDA	Northeastern Vermont Development Association
NWI	National Wetlands Inventory
PC	Planning Commission
PCS	Personal Communications Services
PDM	Pre-Disaster Mitigation
PL	Public Law
Ppm	parts per million (equal to milligrams/liter)
PRC	Project Review Committee
PSB	Vermont Public Service Board (now known as the Public Utilities Commission)
PSD	Vermont Public Service Department
PSD	Public Safety District
PUC	Public Utilities Commission (formerly known as the Public Service Board)
RAP	Required Agricultural Practices
RCT	Rural Community Transportation
RDC	Regional Development Corporation
REC	Regional Energy Credit
RMO	Regional Marketing Organization
RPC	Regional Planning Commission
RRPC	Rutland Regional Planning Commission
RSMS	Road Surface Management Systems
RTP	Long-Range Regional Transportation Plan (also known as LRTP)
SB	Selectboard
SEP	Supplemental Environmental Program or Simplified Employee Pension
SERC	State Emergency Response Committee
SHMO	State Hazard Mitigation Officer (acronym pronounced "SHH-MOE")
SHPO	State Historic Preservation Officer (acronym pronounced "SHIP-POE")

Acronym	Explanation
SPA	Source Protection Areas
SWCRPC	Southern Windsor County Regional Planning Commission
TAC	Transportation Advisory Committee
TIP	Transportation Improvement Program
TMDL	Total Maximum Daily Load
TNC	The Nature Conservancy
TOEC	Town Officers Education Conference
TPI	Transportation Planning Initiative
TRORC	Two Rivers-Ottawaquechee Regional Commission
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
USFS	United States Forest Service
VAL	Vermont Adult Learning
VANR	Vermont Agency of Natural Resources (also referred to as ANR)
VAOT	Vermont Agency of Transportation (also referred to as VTrans)
VAPDA	Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies
VCDP	Vermont Community Development Program
VCEP	Vermont Comprehensive Energy Plan
VCGI	Vermont Center for Geographic Information
VCIC	Vermont Criminal Information Center
VCIL	Vermont Center for Independent Living
VCRD	Vermont Council on Rural Development
VDH	Vermont Department of Health
VDPS	Vermont Department of Public Safety
VEDA	Vermont Economic Development Authority
VEM	Vermont Emergency Management
VEPC	Vermont Economic Progress Council
VHCB	Vermont Housing and Conservation Board
VLCT	Vermont League of Cities and Towns
VLT	Vermont Land Trust
VMT	Vehicle Miles Traveled
VNRC	Vermont Natural Resources Council
VPA	Vermont Planners Association
VPSD	Vermont Public Service Department
VRC	Vermont River Conservancy
VSA	Vermont Statutes Annotated
VTP	Vermont Telecommunications Plan
VWA	Vermont Woodlands Association
VTrans	Vermont Agency of Transportation (also referred to as VAOT or AOT)
WBRD	Wrightsville Beach Recreation District
WHPA	Wellhead Protection Area
WHPP	Wellhead Protection Program

Acronym	Explanation
WMZ	Waste Management Zone
WNRCD	Winooski Natural Resource Conservation District
WRC	Windham Regional Commission
ZA	Zoning Administrator
ZBA	Zoning Board of Adjustment

Roberts Rules of Order

Roberts Rules of Order is a guidebook aimed at creating fair and orderly meetings and conventions. It provides common rules and procedures for deliberation and debate to place everyone on the same footing and speaking the same language.

Under Roberts Rules, the conduct of all business is controlled by the general will of everyone in the room - the right of the deliberate majority to decide. Complementary is the right of at least a strong minority to require the majority to be deliberate - to act according to its considered judgment AFTER a full and fair "working through" of the issues involved. Roberts Rules provides for constructive and democratic meetings, to help, not hinder, the business of the assembly. The use of Roberts Rules should never be allowed to intimidate participants or limit full participation.

Commonly Heard Terms

- ❖ **Point of Privilege:** Pertains to noise, personal comfort, etc.
- ❖ **Point of Information:** Used to interrupt a speaker to ask the speaker (or group if the question is related to the speaker's point) a question
- ❖ **Point of Order:** Infraction of the rules, or improper decorum in speaking. Must be raised immediately after the error is made
- ❖ **Divide the Question:** Divides a motion into two or more separate motions (must be able to stand on their own)
- ❖ **Amend:** Inserting or striking out words or paragraphs, or substituting whole paragraphs or resolutions
- ❖ **Withdraw/Modify Motion:** Applies only after question is stated; mover can accept an amendment without obtaining the floor
- ❖ **Refer to Committee:** Send a question or action to a committee for work
- ❖ **Limit Debate:** Closing debate at a certain time, or limiting to a certain period of time
- ❖ **Postpone to a Certain Time:** State the time the motion or agenda item will be resumed
- ❖ **Object:** Objection must be stated before discussion or another motion is stated
- ❖ **Lay on the Table:** Temporarily suspends further consideration/action on pending question; may be made after motion to close debate has carried or is pending
- ❖ **Reconsider:** Can be made only by one on the prevailing side who has changed position or view

- ❖ **Postpone Indefinitely:** Kills the question/resolution for this session - exception: the motion to reconsider can be made this session
- ❖ **Committee of the Whole:** Informal debate as if in committee; this committee may limit number or length of speeches or close debate by other means by a 2/3 vote. All votes are formal.
- ❖ **Suspend the Rules:** Allows a violation of the assembly's own rules (except Constitution); the object of the suspension must be specified

Roberts Rules Cheat Sheet

Printed version of this Handbook includes the 5-page cheat sheet. The web version provides it as a separate document. The Cheat Sheet was developed by the University of North Carolina.

A Guide to Open Meetings

Printed version of this Handbook includes the publication. The most recent edition can be found on the Vermont Secretary of State's website at <https://www.sec.state.vt.us/municipal/handbooks-guides/open-government-ethics.aspx>.

Table of Contents

- ❖ Why do we have an open meeting law?
- ❖ To whom does the open meeting law apply?
- ❖ When does the open meeting law apply?
- ❖ Notice
- ❖ Agendas
- ❖ Minutes
- ❖ Private meetings; deliberative and executive sessions
- ❖ Participation in meetings through electronic means
- ❖ Use of electronic communications and social media
- ❖ Rights of members of the public
- ❖ Penalties
- ❖ Enforcement
- ❖ Resources; contact information for the Secretary of State