Call to Order
Chair Hill-Eubanks called the meeting to order at 6:30 pm. Quorum was present to conduct business.

Adjustments to the Agenda
None

Public Comments
None

Regional Planning
Hill-Eubanks advised that the Regional Plan Committee (RPC) is looking for input as it pursues amendments to the current Regional Plan. Rock advised that this is a brainstorming session to share ideas so the RPC can document and address during the amendment process.

a) Municipal Needs, Challenges, and Successes Roundtable
Board members shared experiences they are seeing in their municipalities. Examples of success:

   Duxbury - Grant to look at erosion projects throughout the town which was narrowed to most pertinent.
East Montpelier - Putting in place a capital plan and budget process.

Waterbury - 3 affordable housing projects as well as new section 8 housing. Protection of wildlife corridor (also a challenge)

Berlin - Town Center designation grant awarded. Water system improvements.

Roxbury - School merger has worked well for residents and is encouraging growth in the schools.

Woodbury - Proactive with MRGP in the past which has resulted in having roads in good shape.

Alleviation of some of the flooding issues in village.

Waitsfield - well organized with MRVPD to help with their issues

Moretown - village sidewalks are to be installed this year - were able to leverage stormwater funding due to infrastructure needs for the sidewalks

Repaving of village and bridge replacement also planned for this summer

Large tracts of forested land going on the market at the same time which creates opportunities for utilization with regard to conservation – land donation was made to the town

Vitality in recreation committees and trail planning

Plainfield - dedicated grant writer that’s gotten sidewalks, kiosks, etc.

Willingness for volunteer service

Williamstown - renewable energy and solar farm growth

LHMP process with RPC which opened up emergency services conversations in the town

Grant for EAB (WNRC) mitigation (inventory and management plan)

Montpelier - downtown development zone and new growth

Involvement of Montpelier Alive

Orange - Brook Road and Reservoir Road to be reclassified to be a connector between 302 and 2 (along with Plainfield)

Barre City - does a good job with small staff – budget just passed

Worcester - recent survey showed they are on target in reserving natural aspects of the town – very few houses and jobs added, but that is how community wants it

Example of challenges:

Duxbury: storm events, volunteer service and leadership; infrastructure – community wastewater, broadband

East Montpelier - Inadequate village water supply and no village wastewater system; affordable housing; affordable employee health insurance; financial impact of maintaining ambulance service

Washington – no wastewater system; affordable housing; old dam that needs removal; need to maintain the rural characteristics of the town

Barre Town – Town Plan Goals were reiterated – including, growth is likely and desirable and should be managed so as not to burden capacity of public resources; town should encourage economic development, growth and development should be planned and managed to respect natural resources, growth and development should be balanced among residential, industrial and commercial uses, valued resources and their preservation should be balanced with other considerations, flash flooding is a primary concern.

Waterbury – more reliability on renewable energy; traffic congestion off exit 10; effectively addressing drug and alcohol use in community; affordable housing to serve their employment center
Northfield – cost of roads and bridges; cost of police services; finances – lots of non-profits and large university that impact tax base

Berlin – Housing impacts getting medical professionals into area; volunteers for town committees, fire department; Master Plan needed for New Town Center designation

Roxbury – volunteers for boards, fire department; keeping up with state mandates – i.e. stormwater requirements; municipal road upkeep – more funding necessary (perhaps block grants)

Woodbury – service that helps community be connected to modern digital world (poor cell service, mediocre internet service); substandard housing throughout town (old camps); policing issues; public transportation (very limited due to location); village limited for development due to flooding issues

Waitsfield – health and safety and need for companies to have health and safety officers; housing impacts getting medical professionals into area

Moretown – MRV schools and towns under unified board are trying to figure out how to use and optimize the current buildings to accommodate needs; costs of emergency services (pay four different providers currently); economic development

Marshfield – affordable housing; lack of volunteers for town services; trouble balancing business and conservation (conserved land) with regard to the impact on tax base

Cabot – age in place and keep you here; squeezing out of small farms and homesteads; affordability (fix what is holding towns back in the regional plan)

Barre Town – decommissioning (i.e. solar panels)

Plainfield – old housing stock in the village; development in the village vs. other areas in town; volume and impact of vehicular traffic on Route 2

Williamstown – Downtown business development; increased ATV traffic and using town roads to connect trails to enhance business development; since no zoning working to use ordinances to address some downtown issues; infrastructure – lots of stormwater runoff that needs maintenance – working on stormwater master plan grant moving forward; youth engagement and volunteer services

Montpelier – housing stock to house those who work in Montpelier

Orange – small tax base – lots of conserved land; volunteers are almost non-existent; cell and internet service issues; implementation of tactical basin plans and administration is likely to be a challenge (insuring headwaters are protected) due to town size. Suggests a Regional Basin Commission vs. town administration.

Barre City – aging infrastructure; transportation opportunities – Route 302 through City but doesn’t get people to stop and take advantage of the city; affordable housing – lots of housing stock but not lots of great quality; lot of homelessness and poverty needs appropriate measures; flood resiliency and the rules and regulations related to that; changes to housing board of review; no grocery store in the downtown; climate change and dependency on fossil fuels and impact on reaching 2050 goal

Worcester – climate change; no zoning; important to protect unfragmented forest blocks; preserving agricultural land for agriculture; finalizing Town Plan and alternative energy plan

George Clain of Barre Town suggested opening up another chapter in the Regional Plan addressing substance abuse and prevention to help with addressing the project regionwide. He shared some statistics of the economic impact of the issue, both national and statewide. He requested the Executive
Director try and get a seat at the table to have a say on where marijuana tax is going to be distributed statewide.

Waninger noted municipal finance issues and substance use issues were not on the table for Regional Plan in the past, but now are coming forward.

b) New Regional Plan Development Process and Draft Vision
Rock directed the Board to information in the packet and provided additional details regarding the Plan Development and Planning Process Guide. Current Regional Plan was written in 2003 and has gone through amendments and re-adoptions – with last amendment in 2016. It expires in 2024. Staff recommends creating a new plan. Plan Central Vermont was initiated a few years ago. Good work was done, but the process did not come to completion. Information from that process will be used in the development of a new Regional Plan.

Floor opened to questions on the guide. Public participation levels were clarified. Rock confirmed that the Board is responsible for plan adoption.

Workforce was brought up to be addressed as a region to encourage, attract, develop and retain a workforce. Also noted was a need for a statewide economic platform with a pro-business attitude. Comment was made that schools need to stop communicating to students that out of state is where they will succeed. Trades schools need to be better utilized.

As a second exercise, members were asked to “vote” with dots on the outlined aspirations as part of the Vision & Aspirations process. Staff will take the information and organize it at the RPC meeting upcoming next week.

M. Gray commented that the exercise was good to show that municipalities share common themes.

Meeting Minutes
R. Wernecke moved to approve the minutes of February 11, 2020; D. La Haye seconded. Motion carried.

Reports
There were no questions or comments.

Adjournment
D. La Haye moved to adjourn at 8:17 pm; A. Quackenbush seconded. Motion carried.

ADDENDUM: Results of voting in second exercise are as follows:

1. Steward a strong culture of cooperative planning with residents working together to find solutions to sustaining the vitality of local communities and high quality of life enjoyed in our Region. 3 votes

2. Foster a prosperous, equitable, and adaptable economy that will provide full employment in a
1. Provide a broad range of occupations at a livable wage. 11 votes

2. Preserve an economically viable working landscape of farms and forests, with increased local food production and access to healthy food. 10 votes

3. Protect ecologically functioning natural systems and sustainably manage natural resources including wildlife, habitat and water resources. 13 votes

4. Minimize contribution to a changing climate and be prepared to mitigate impacts from increased natural hazards. 7 votes

5. Ensure a range of housing choices that are high quality, safe and attractive, and provide affordable options for all residents. 7 votes

6. Accommodate the availability of reliable and affordable energy supplies, increased energy efficiency, and diverse renewable energy resources and facilities. 9 votes

7. Preserve the rural character and unique historic settlements with thriving downtown and village centers serving as cultural and economic hubs. 9 votes

8. Guide construction and maintenance of cost-effective infrastructure that supports desired growth patterns, public health and environmental sustainability. 8 votes

9. Stimulate a healthy, active and connected population in communities that work for all residents. 7 votes

10. Provide an integrated, regional transportation system that encourages various modes of travel. 6 votes

Respectfully submitted,

Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager