

**CENTRAL VERMONT REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MINUTES
October 12, 2021**

Commissioners:

<input type="checkbox"/> Barre City	Janet Shatney, Sec/Treas	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Moretown	Dara Torre
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacant, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Joyce Manchester, Alt
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<input type="checkbox"/>	George Clain, Alt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Orange	Lee Cattaneo
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Berlin	Robert Wernecke	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Plainfield	Paula Emery
<input type="checkbox"/>	Karla Nuissl, Alt.	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bob Atchinson, Alt.
<input type="checkbox"/> Cabot	Amy Hornblas	<input type="checkbox"/> Roxbury	Gerry D'Amico, Vice-Chair
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<input type="checkbox"/> E. Montpelier	Clarice Cutler (Interim)	<input type="checkbox"/>	J. Michael Bridgewater, Alt.
<input type="checkbox"/>	Vacant, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Washington	Peter Carbee
<input type="checkbox"/> Fayston	Russ Bowen	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Waterbury	Steve Lotspeich, Chair
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Marshfield	Robin Schunk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Williamstown	Richard Turner
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Middlesex	Ron Krauth	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jacqueline Higgins, Alt.
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Montpelier	Marcella Dent	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Woodbury	Michael Gray
<input type="checkbox"/>	Mike Miller, Alt.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Worcester	Bill Arrand

Staff: Bonnie Waninger, Nancy Chartrand, Clare Rock

Guests: Jamie Stewart, Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation; Trey Martin, Let's Grow Kids

Call to Order

Chair Lotspeich called the meeting to order at 6:33 pm. Quorum was present to conduct business.

Adjustments to the Agenda

None

Public Comments

None

Central Vermont Economic Development Corporation Update

Jamie Stewart reminded towns to identify potential projects for the Capital Grant Program the Agency of Commerce has been promoting. Applications are live at this time. Grant funds are available for projects that are transformative. Projects should be shovel ready and tie to a need identified as a result of the pandemic, but are generally systemic in nature and have not been able to be addressed due to lack of funding. Information is available on ACCD website under Capital Grants Program - <https://accd.vermont.gov/economic-development/funding-incentives/capitalinvestmentgrant>.

Another program expected soon is the Small Business Development Center Hub & Spoke Technical Assistance Program. He noted there will be a lot of emphasis on underserved populations, but it will be available to all businesses. It will be similar to the technical assistance grants offered last fall through Regional Development Corporations, however, it will be available over two years.

He reiterated the challenges of a smaller workforce as a result of the pandemic and a tight labor pool is only going to get tighter. There will be a lot of effort and time spent on skills training to meet the needs of growing sectors. He also advised the West Central Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) is moving along well with lots of input. They will be identifying priority projects in the region in the coming month.

Floor discussion included comments related to less students applying to college. It was noted that nationally Vermont has one of the highest percentages of students going into college, but we need to get students who are not college bound into additional skills/technical training. It was also noted that Regional Development Corporations are very engaged with Let's Grow Kids and supporting the priority of child care in the state.

Lifting All Boats, Child Care in Vermont

Trey Martin of Let's Grow Kids (LGK) described his role in the LGK's organization. LGK's mission is to help Vermont policymakers, state officials and Vermont communities ensure there is quality, affordable childcare by 2025. Martin provided an overview of the child care crisis which COVID 19 exacerbated. Child care is not affordable for most families; there are not enough high quality spots available; and most early care educators do not earn a livable wage or have access to basic benefits. Access to childcare is a barrier to sustainable employment. Working mothers are three times more likely to leave their careers when unable to find or afford child care. The State has started tracking access to high quality care as a key measure of economic health.

LGK has advocated to invest in Vermont's Child Care Financial Assistance Program (CCFAP) over the long term, to cap family contributions at 10% of annual gross adjusted income, and to reimburse programs at a rate that allows early care educators to be compensated appropriately with access to benefits. These funds come from a mix of sources (both State and Federal). They are also advocating in the interim to invest one-time federal dollars for professional development and temporary wage supports, to stabilize the system and increase the quality of the workforce, and to increase program capacity in numerous communities where planning is already underway to grow high quality spots.

They are advocating at the both the federal and State level to be able to address the 'true cost of care'.

He reviewed why it is important to invest in child care. Quality child care is an opportunity to take lives that would end up as public cost and change them to public benefit.

There was discussion surrounding the definition of high quality care. Also discussed was if towns support senior centers and recreational programs, why are they not doing the same for childcare centers. Martin suggested this may be related to regulations and cost. There was also discussion on the

1 accountability of funds for reimbursement and utilization of school space for day care and after school
2 care.

3
4 Martin reviewed what CVRPC and member municipalities can do to help, which includes planning,
5 understanding policy, collaboration with partner organizations, state agencies and other municipalities,
6 working with stakeholders, and advocating for the state to prioritize resources for child care projects
7 and a sustainable child care system. He noted it also is important to understand the opportunities to
8 dedicate ARPA funding for child care businesses.

9
10 Waninger shared that CVRPC's 2021-22 VISTA member, Gavin Bodnar, will be creating an idea guide for
11 municipal action to address child care. For example, one municipality had a link to the State's childcare
12 provider database on its website. Another agreed to apply for a Community Development Block Grant
13 to build a facility. The municipality "loaned" the grant to the childcare business and then forgave it.

14
15 Martin said he welcomes suggestions for specific providers in municipalities that need LGK's assistance.

16 17 **Committee Nominations**

18 P. Carbee advised the Nominating Committee met to address vacancies on the Clean Water Advisory
19 Committee (CWAC) and Brownfields Advisory Committee. He provided an overview of the process it
20 undertook to make the recommendations. For CWAC, Emily Ruff, Orange Selectboard, was nominated
21 as a municipal representative and Joseph Whelan, Montpelier Conservation Commission, was
22 nominated as the Interested Stakeholder.

23
24 Chair Lotspeich opened the floor to additional CWAC nominations. No additional nominations were
25 made. Chair requested a motion to appoint the two representatives for the terms described in the
26 memorandum, Emily Ruff, Orange Selectboard and Joseph Whelan, Montpelier Conservation
27 Commission.

28
29 *R. Wernecke moved to set aside the rules for written ballots and appoint Emily Ruff and Joseph Whelan*
30 *to the CWAC; L. Cattaneo seconded. Motion carried.*

31
32 Carbee provided an overview of the process the Nominating Committee undertook to nominate a
33 candidate for the Brownfields Committee. *P. Carbee moved to suspend the rules and to elect Janet*
34 *Shatney to the Brownfields Advisory Committee, pending any other nominees; B. Arrand seconded.* Chair
35 Lotspeich opened the floor to additional nominations. No additional nominations were offered. *Motion*
36 *carried.*

37 38 **Reports**

39 Lotspeich requested Waninger discuss staffing. Waninger advised of two recent resignations – the
40 newly hired bookkeeper accepted another position after two weeks, and Pam DeAndrea is leaving to
41 take a position with the VTrans Mapping Unit. She advised Ashley Andrews will transition into a GIS and
42 IT position. CVRPC is re-advertising the Bookkeeper position. If unsuccessful in hiring, it will continue
43 contracting for accounting services. Waninger is completing reference checks for the Land Use Planner
44 position. Staff is considering options for additional positions in the near future related to Climate and

1 Energy, Clean Water Service Provider and the natural resources vacancy created by Pam's departure.

2
3 Chair Lotspeich requested an update on office renovations. Waninger said the conference room has
4 been expanded, which was funded by the landlord as part of renewing our lease for ten years. It should
5 accommodate most committees. Renovations also included installing a sink with running water in the
6 kitchen. A second phase of construction, funded by CVRPC, will make space to accommodate the new
7 positions. This has not gone out to bid yet.

8
9 Discussion ensued as to whether or not we could use the CVRPC conference room for Board meetings
10 instead of the Chamber. It was suggested this be discussed in more detail once we are meeting in
11 person again.

12
13 Waninger advised redistricting is expected to be a high point of discussion for the legislative session.
14 Our role is to talk to legislators and be sure they are aware of rural issues.

15
16 Chair Lotspeich advised that the September 14th minutes were not included as an item on the agenda,
17 however they are in the packet. It was suggested they be put in the next board packet instead of going
18 back and revising the agenda to include the minutes for action.

19
20 P. Carbee asked R. Wernecke for an update on the road construction project by the hospital. R.
21 Wernecke said the Town is awaiting arrival of the precast concrete structure. The site is well prepared
22 for the arrival of that piece. He advised if he gets an update he will share it.

23
24 **Adjournment**

25 *D. La Haye moved to adjourn at 8:04 pm; L. Cattaneo seconded. Motion carried.*

26
27 Respectfully submitted,
28 Nancy Chartrand, Office Manager