

# DRAFT 3/13/2026

## Rules of Meeting Conduct and Public Participation

### Rules of Meeting Conduct

**Purpose:** The purpose of these Codes of Conduct is to ensure that all meetings and official activities of the CVRPC are conducted in a respectful, orderly, and productive manner that supports the mission and goals of the organization. These standards are intended to foster open discussion, protect the rights of all participants, preserve the dignity and integrity of CVRPC governance, and promote the trust of the public and the camaraderie amongst members.

The public will be given a reasonable opportunity to express its opinion on matters considered by the public body, but the principal purpose of any meeting is for the transaction of the business of the public body.

The following statement will be included on the back of every agenda of a CVRPC public body and may be read aloud by the chair of the public body prior to the public comment period or a public hearing:

*CVRPC aims to conduct meetings in a respectful, orderly, and productive manner that supports the mission and goals of the organization. The purpose of this meeting is for the public body to complete its work as outlined in the meeting agenda. All members of the public will be given an opportunity to comment during the public comment period on matters to be considered by the public body at this meeting. However, they are not debates. The Chair of this public body is charged with running this meeting and all statements and questions will be directed to the Chair once a speaker is recognized. Respondents from the public body and staff will try to answer any questions of a factual nature.*

### General Conduct

Staff, commissioners, and committee members of the CVRPC shall conduct themselves in a manner that serves the public interest and is consistent with this Code of Conduct and other policies of the CVRPC. In addition, staff, commissioners and committee members will:

- Act honestly, conscientiously, reasonably, and in good faith at all times having regard for a member's responsibilities, the interests of CVRPC and the welfare of the region.
- Refrain from communicating or acting in a disrespectful, abusive and/or threatening manner towards members of the public, other commissioners or committee members, or staff.
- Comply with all applicable local, state and federal government laws, rules, and regulations including but not limited to Vermont's Open Meeting and Public Records Laws, as well as all CVRPC adopted policies including but not limited to the Conflict of Interest Policy and the Personnel Policy.

### Conduct in Carrying out Duties of the Board or Committee

CVRPC is striving at every meeting, forum or other official interaction to treat every person fairly and with respect, regardless of any differences. All members appointed to the Board of Commissioners or one of its committees are expected to maintain respectful discourse when acting in an official CVRPC capacity, with their fellow members, with those who work for CVRPC, those who volunteer their time and services on behalf of CVRPC, and members of the public. This means:

- Treat all members of the Board/Committee to which one belongs with respect despite differences of opinion; keeping in mind that professional respect does not preclude honest differences of opinion but requires respect within those differences.
- Participate and interact in official meetings with dignity and decorum fitting those who hold a position of public trust.
- Act only as a member of the Board/Committee. Recognize that no individual member is given authority to act alone. Do not assume any individual authority to represent the Board/Committee unless directed by the Board/Committee.
- Treat all staff as professionals and respect the abilities, experience, and dignity of each individual.
- Speak up within meetings, if it is safe to do so. Speak up to the Chair, anonymously if preferred, if something does not meet this Code of Conduct. Hear with a fair and open mind and be responsive to concerns about conduct brought by members of the public, staff and other Board or committee members. Never retaliate against a person or persons raising a concern.
- Uphold all adopted policies of the CVRPC, including but not limited to the Conflict of Interest Policy.

## Conduct in Carrying out Duties of CVRPC Staff

In their work to facilitate effective public discussion at every meeting, forum or other official interaction, Staff must maintain respectful discourse with CVRPC commissioners, those who volunteer their time and services on behalf of CVRPC, and members of the public.

As public officials, CVRPC employees are to conduct themselves with the highest level of ethical and moral standards under public law in any dealings in which they represent CVRPC. Staff are subject to all policies and enforcement procedures articulated in the CVRPC personnel policy.

### Upholding the Code of Conduct Policy:

CVRPC strives to assist members in adhering to this Code of Conduct through education, training and discussion. All Board, Committee, and staff members of CVRPC have a responsibility to respect and uphold this Code of Conduct.

The Executive Committee will receive and review concerns raised by commissioners, staff, or the general public. In addition to any other remedies or enforcement options available or required under the law, the CVRPC Executive Committee may take, any action including but not limited to:

- Request member(s) receive specific training or education
- Arrange for additional training for the Board or Committee
- Request an apology or other restorative action
- Vote to censure any member
- Notify the appointing authority that their member(s) is in violation of the Code of Conduct Policy
- Request resignation of the member(s)
- Remove the member from the Board or Committee (when CVRPC is the appointing authority)

If any staff member is accused of violating CVRPC requirements under our Personnel Policies or a state or federal law, the CVRPC will initiate actions as described in the CVRPC Personnel Policies.

## Rules of Public Participation

Vermont's Open Meeting Law assures the right of members of the public to attend, participate and comment on matters considered during the meeting of local public boards and committees ("public bodies").

The meetings of CVRPC's public bodies are working meetings, not meetings of the public (e.g., a public forum). The purpose of each meeting is for the public body to do its work on behalf of the CVRPC. To make the best use of everyone's time, CVRPC public bodies shall follow the rules listed below:

- Members of the public may only participate during the portions of the agenda reserved for "public comment."
- Public comment on the agenda will be held at the beginning of the meeting. Additional public comment on "other business" will be held at the end of the meeting.
- If you'd like to speak, raise your hand and wait for the chair to recognize you.
- Once you've been called on by the chair, please state your name and address.
- Direct all your remarks to the chair, not to others in the room.
- Make sure your comments are relevant to the agenda item being addressed.
- Comments under "other business" must pertain to the business of the public body.

Help ensure that this is a meeting in which everyone feels safe to express their views, and where disruptions are minimized so that we can accomplish our community's work. Please remember:

- Each person will be given three minutes of comment, which the chair may extend at their discretion.
- Public comment will generally be included at the beginning of the meeting. Each person should expect to only speak once during the comment period. Additional time may be granted with the consent of the chair. Those who have not been heard yet will be given priority over those who have already spoken.
- Respect the orders and rulings of the chair. Irrelevant comments and interrupting others are not allowed. Disruptive people will be asked to leave, and removed if necessary.
- Only commissioners or alternate commissioners have the right to vote on agenda items.
- Share your ideas, listen actively, and respect each participants' right to their opinions.
- Act honestly, conscientiously, reasonably, and in good faith at all times. Refrain from communicating or acting in a disrespectful, abusive and/or threatening manner towards other members of the public, commissioners or committee members, or CVRPC staff.

If a member of the public is not able to convey their message with the reasonable allotment of time as allowed by the chair of the public body, they may submit comments following the meeting. Members of the public are also advised that commissioners are a valuable resource to convey a message to the Commission.

#### How can members of the public engage with their Regional Planning Commission?

- Talk to your Commissioner
- Participate in RPC meetings
- Attend RPC public hearings
- Submit written comments
- Submit comments on the Regional Plan