Members Present: Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair; Piet van Loon, Tim Arsenault, Jack Cunningham, Steven Lembke, Bobbi Kilburn, Carolyn Partridge

Members Participating by Phone: None.

Absent: Lise Fortin

Staff present: Chris Campany, Executive Director

Public/Guests: None

Presenter: None

Call to Order: Commissioner Gabby Ciuffreda, Chair, called the meeting to order at 6:03 p.m. Introductions were made.

Additions/Changes to Agenda: Executive Director Campany asked that two Working Communities Challenge proposals be added to the agenda for discussion. They were added ahead of the Executive Director’s Report.

Administrative Reports:

Secretary’s Report: The minutes of the September 17, 2019 meeting were amended to correctly reflect attendance. On a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Arsenault, the minutes were approved.

Treasurer’s Report: Treasurer Bobbi Kilburn explained the FY2018 audit was complete and reviewed its findings, noting the auditors offered a modified opinion due to some incomplete information related to record keeping in the wake of Finance Manager Mike Shaughnessy’s unexpected passing. Attention will now turn to updating the indirect cost rate proposal and the FY 2019 audit. Executive Director Campany explained that contractually we are expected to have our FY 2019 audit complete within six months of the end of the fiscal year. Chair Gabby Ciuffreda asked Treasurer Kilburn if she anticipated the Board would have enough information to make staff compensation decisions on December 17th. She believed that would be the case and that the practice of having financial statements for the Executive Board could resume. She also explained that Finance Manager Inessa Muse was in the process of setting up Quick Books for use by the beginning of the year, and that automated timesheet software that would link to Quick Books had been acquired. On a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Lembke, the Treasurer’s report was accepted. On a motion by Commissioner Partridge, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham, the FY2018 audit was accepted.

Program:

WRC Staff Health Insurance Policy Coverage Selection: Executive Director Campany explained that the budget for FY2020 assumed the WRC would continue with Blue Cross-Blue Shield Standard Gold coverage, but he had asked staff to consider whether they would prefer to switch to MVP. No staff
person indicated they would prefer to switch. Campany went on to explain that he had concerns about the very high deductible and that he would like the Personnel Committee to work with him in the coming months to review the WRC insurance and overall benefits package to explore what might be done to reduce the health care cost burden on staff. It was agreed this was an important discussion and that other commissioners with experience in this area may be invited to participate in the deliberation.

**Wardsboro Town Plan Approval, Planning Process Confirmation, and Determination of Energy Compliance:** Commissioner and Planning Coordination Committee Chair Piet van Loon explained the town plan review process and made a motion that the Wardsboro Town Plan be approved. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Partridge. The Wardsboro Town Plan was approved by a unanimous vote. Commissioner van Loon then moved that Wardsboro’s planning process be confirmed, which was seconded by Commissioner Lembke. Wardsboro’s planning process was confirmed by a unanimous vote. Commissioner van Loon moved that the plan be approved for Determination of Energy Compliance. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Lembke and the Determination of Energy Compliance was approved by a unanimous vote.

**Executive Session:** On a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Partridge, the Executive Board went into executive session at 6:50 to discuss the performance evaluation of the Executive Director. The Executive Session concluded at 7:15 with no decisions made.

**Appointment of Committee Chairs:** Chair Ciuffreda made the following appointments, which were approved on a motion by Commissioner Partridge, seconded by Commissioner Cunningham:

- Brownfields – Gabby Ciuffreda
- Community Development – Tim Arsenault
- Emergency Planning – Steve Lembke
- Energy – Tim Arsenault
- Finance – Bobbi Kilburn
- Natural Resources – Lise Fortin
- Nominating – Carolyn Partridge
- Personnel – Piet van Loon
- Planning Coordination – Piet van Loon
- Project Review – Jack Cunningham
- Sibling Region – Stephen Dotson
- Transportation – Karen Astley

**New Appointments:** Chair Ciuffreda appointed Wilmington Commissioner Michael Tuller to the Community Development and Natural Resources Committees, explaining that he had a meeting time conflict with the Transportation Committee. She also appointed Prudence McKinney to the Transportation Committee as a non-commissioner. On a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by Commissioner Partridge, the appointments were approved.

**Citizen Interest Commissioner for Healthy Communities:** Current Healthy Communities Citizen Interest Commissioner Prudence McKinney has recommended to the Chair that her successor as Vermont Department of Health District Director Laura Overton also succeed her in her Commissioner appointment. On a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, seconded by
Commissioner Partridge, the Executive Board voted to recommend the election of Laura Overton to the position of Citizen Interest Commissioner for Healthy Communities at the next Full Commission meeting.

**Working Communities Challenge Proposals:** Executive Director Campany explained that the Boston Federal Reserve Bank was sponsoring a grant program that would provide funding for communities to pursue specific community and economic development initiatives. The first step required interested communities to submit a 50-word proposal. The Town of Brattleboro has submitted one related to housing, and the Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation submitted another for the Southern Vermont Economic Zone to recruit new immigrants to southern Vermont as is described in the comprehensive economic development strategy. Chris explained that he had endorsed both submissions and that he would ask successful candidates to present the proposal(s) to the Community Development Committee if they make it through the first round of review.

**Executive Director Report:** Executive Director Campany explained that the WRC was waiting to hear whether it would be awarded a Broadband Innovation Grant to develop a regional broadband access feasibility study and related business plan. He also explained that at the next Executive Board meeting, Commissioner Stephen Dotson, Chair of the Sibling Region Committee, would be on the agenda to get the Board up to speed on the committee’s activities. Two members of the committee are planning a trip to Sweden at their own expense, during which they plan to meet with representatives of Hassleholm. It’s been explained to them that they cannot speak on behalf of the WRC. Commissioner Lembke asked about the Regional Conservation Partnership meeting being hosted by the Highstead Foundation on November 13th at UMass Amherst which he plans to attend and which Campany will be attending. Campany explained that he’d been asked to participate in the planning for the immediate and long-term development of the Winston-Prouty campus, which was formerly the Austine School. He noted that this is an important site that could potentially help connect Algiers Village in Guilford to the greater Canal Street and West Brattleboro neighborhoods. Winston-Prouty is providing the WRC a stipend of $500 for its participation in the effort.

**Committee Chair Updates:** Project Review Committee Chair Cunningham noted that small wind installations may become more prevalent. The Committee reviewed a proposal for an installation in Wardsboro and determined it to not be of regional significance. These wind turbines are approximately 100 feet in height with blade lengths of approximately 35 feet. Commissioner Lembke noted the successful establishment of a telephone protocol for use by agencies that serve at risk populations to identify needs that result from a disaster.

**Purpose and Objectives Statements:** Chair Ciuffreda noted that the Executive Board is tasked with reviewing and approving committee purpose and objectives statements each year, typically in October. It was noted that most Purpose and Objectives Statements had been revised and approved during the past year. The Sibling Region and Brownfields statements need approval. On a motion by Commissioner Lembke, seconded by Commissioner Kilburn, the purpose and objectives statements were approved.

**Public Comments:** Commissioner Lew Sorenson announced that this would be his last Executive Board meeting as a Commissioner. Those present expressed their appreciation for Lew’s decades of service first as Executive Director, followed by service as a Commissioner, Executive Board member and officer.
**Review of Action Items from Meeting:** Chair Ciuffreda asked Commissioner Lembke if he was still able and willing to review the Commissioner Handbook. She also asked that work on the updating of the WRC personnel policies resume.

**Adjournment:** On a motion by Commissioner Cunningham, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:50 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ashley Collins