Commissioners Present: Piet van Loon (Acting Chair), Heath Boyer, Tom Buchanan, Jack Cunningham, Corky Elwell, Denis Pinkernell, Lew Sorenson
Excused: Maggie Bartenhagen, Tom Consolino, Jodi French, Carolyn Partridge, Norm Wright
Staff Present: Chris Campany, Ashley Collins
Convened: 7:04PM

Administrative Reports:
Secretary’s Report: On a motion by C. Elwell, seconded by J. Cunningham, the minutes from the November meeting were approved.
Treasurer’s Report: On a motion by C. Elwell, seconded by J. Cunningham, the Treasurer’s Report was approved.

State-Entergy VY Memorandum of Understanding: Tom Buchanan explained that a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was filed on December 23, 2013, with the Public Service Board (PSB), which includes many of the elements of a broader Settlement Agreement also announced on December 23rd. The PSB held a status conference on January 2, 2014, and the board issued a scheduling order and questions to be answered by the signatories to the MOU. A public hearing has been scheduled, as has a technical hearing for the end of the month of January. Tom explained that the VY Study Committee met on January 8th and concluded that the MOU filed by Entergy provided limited promises with no guarantees. The Committee also reviewed the discovery questions asked by the parties of the MOU signatories. WRC will not be filing for discovery and will not be participating in the technical hearings, but will be present to witness the hearings. While WRC is not participating in the hearings it may file a final brief at the end. WRC drafted a letter to the PSB explaining the MOU should be allowed to stand or fall on its own within the larger record already entered into the docket. After extended discussion and some minor language changes to the document T. Buchanan made a motion to give Executive Director Chris Campany the authority to edit and send the letter at his discretion, seconded by J. Cunningham; motion was approved.

WRC Representative for VAPDA: Executive Director Chris Campany provided some background information and there was an extended discussion on the history of Vermont Association of Planning and Development Agencies (VAPDA), including WRC’s participation, Commissioner involvement and how it has changed over the years. It was suggested that the representative be a member from the Executive Board, and it was suggested that the designated representative report back to the Board and at the Full Commission meetings. J. Cunningham moved that the Board elect Piet van Loon as the representative to VAPDA until WRC’s annual business meeting in August; at which time the Committee appointments and election of officers are held. With no language regarding the VAPDA representative in the bylaws it was suggested that the motion be tabled, and that the bylaws be
reviewed to consider whether or not they should establish a process by which the commissioner representative to VAPDA is chosen; all approved, motion was **tabled**. Piet van Loon will continue as the WRC representative for VAPDA.

**Letter of Support for CEDS**: The Brattleboro Development Credit Corporation (BDCC) and the Southeast Vermont Economic Development Strategy (SeVEDS) has conducted an extensive process to develop a Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) that identifies specific tasks and projects to promote economic growth and workforce development in the region. BDCC and SeVEDS has requested a letter of support from WRC stating that the strategy is consistent with the regional plan, and it will beneficial to the region as a whole. The Community Development Committee approved the letter of support at their latest meeting on January 9, 2014, and is now seeking the approval of the Board. The Board suggested minor language changes be made. H. Boyer made a **motion** that at the discretion of Executive Director Chris Campany, to sign and send the letter of support with amendments, seconded by all who were present; motion was **approved**.

**Executive Director’s Report:**

1. Executive Director Chris Campany explained that a staff member had paid for certification and membership required for their specific position as a planner, and asked the board for approval to reimburse staff for these expenses. J. Cunningham made a **motion** to reimburse this WRC staff person for membership and certification expenses, seconded by H. Boyer; motion was **approved**.

2. Chris mentioned that the Franklin Regional Council of Governments wrote a letter to the PSB in support of the WRC’s positions with regard to VY. WRC is establishing a good working relationship with FRCOG on a number of common issues and collaboration will continue.

3. Chris and Tom Buchanan met with the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) about decommissioning issues, and were introduced to Pat Field who is involved with organizations that develop and facilitate public participation processes. Chris organized a meeting among the secretaries or commissioners of commerce, health, environmental conservation and public service to discuss the need for a structure and process to include all the agencies, municipalities, and the region.

4. Chris mentioned that he had organized a regional forum with the Vermont Telecommunications Authority on cell service and broadband scheduled for January 22nd at the Newbrook Fire Station.

5. Chris testified before the House Commerce Committee and would testify before the Senate Appropriations Committee regarding the WRC’s close collaboration with the BDCC in the development of the CEDS, and that if funding from the state-Entergy MOU does materialize, that the CEDS would guide the use of those funds.

**Committee Reports:**

**Regional Plan Update**: The complete draft plan will be distributed to the Executive Board and Regional Plan Update Committee at the end of January for review. The Committee will seek approval from the Board in February to release the draft to the public.

**Transportation**: The most recent meeting was largely spent discussing the Vilas Bridge in the Town of Rockingham / Village of Bellows Falls. Development Director Dutch Walsh is seeking support from the WRC as they try to get the bridge restored and reopened. There was extended discussion within
the Committee as well as the Board regarding this topic. The action of the Committee was to authorize a letter of support that that the restoration of the bridge comports with the regional plan. The Committee is also asking that the new regional plan be include sufficient language in support of the bridge. The Committee also responded to a request from VTrans to prioritize their re-pavement work for the upcoming year. It appeared that a number of projects have already been scheduled and in some instances project work has already begun. The Committee responded that they did not have adequate time to review everything, and if the opinion of WRC is sought in the future to allow more time to review projects before scheduling or project work begins.

**Other Business:** Heath Boyer mentioned that the Energy Committee had invited a group to speak which turned out to be promoting their own services. Heath wondered what the Commission’s policy is concerning guests at meetings who might also advocate for the sale of their services. There was considerable discussion about a range of issues related to inviting guests to educate commissioners and the public and ensuring we do not advocate or appear to advocate a business or a business service.

**Brownfields:**
**Community Development:**
**Emergency Planning:**
**Energy:**
**Finance:**
**LEPC:**
**Natural Resources:**
**Nominating:**
**Planning Coordination:**
**Project Review:**
**Public Policy & Legislative:**
**VY Study:**

No Meeting / Nothing to Report

Meeting Adjourned: 9:04PM

Respectfully Submitted,
Ashley Collins