



Chair: Devon Neary, RRPC  
Vice-Chair: Bill Colvin, BCRC  
Treasurer: Charlie Baker, CCRPC

## VAPDA DIRECTORS & ASSOCIATES MEETING

March 6, 2025, 8:30 AM

### MEETING MINUTES

Virtual: Microsoft Teams

**Members Present:** Christian Meyer, Devon Neary(Chair), Bill Colvin, PG, Charlie Baker, Jason Rasmussen, Catherine Dimitruk, David Snedeker, Adam Lougee, Seth Jensen, Chris Company

**Guests and Associates:** Chris Cochran, Jacob Hemmerick, Jeff Dube, Katie Buckley, Bronwyn Cooke, Matthew Arancio, Ari Rockland-Miller, Emily Harris, Amy bell, Emma Spett, Marielle Matthewx, Tanya Wells, Jared Thatcher.

The chair called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM

**Meeting Minutes:** Jason moved to accept the February meeting minutes. Peter seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**Treasurers Report:** Charlie reviewed the treasurers report. Some discussion ensued. Bill moved to accept treasurers report. Catherine seconded the motion. The motion carried.

**NADO Report:** The NADO report is complete. Jason will share it out with stakeholders. Available here: <https://www.vapda.org/legislative-reports.html>

**Adjustments to Agenda:** Adam will be discussing his email about rural housing affordability under Government Relations.

**Meeting Scheduling:** The April meeting will be in person at National Life. Members are encouraged to coordinate with Devon on future agenda items. Devon, Peter, Katie Buckley will meet to discuss recommendations for a second round of MTAP. Devon, Peter and Tasha will meet to discuss a VAPDA staff item.

## Emergency Management

Chris and the Emergency Management Committee will be meeting with Eric Forand (3/7/25). The plan is to discuss EMPG, future tasks, and coordination.

Emily Harris noted that the EMPG NOFO has not been published.

Katie Buckley noted that VLCT has training on how a municipality can create a rainy day fund. VLCT is also advocating for legislative action to allow towns to more easily carry a reserve.

Catherine wondered if the flood omnibus bill could include the reserve fund language. Also, language allowing governing bodies to carry five years of debt without voter approval would be valuable.

Seth added that it would also be helpful for water/sewer utilities to be able to budget more than 20% of replacement costs under statute.

Adam asked what the expected impact to the LHMP funding might be given it is funded through BRIC. VEM responded that there is currently no risk, though the future is always unknown.

If RPCs are getting LEMP questions, be sure to forward them to regional coordinators. Regional coordinators will CC RPCs on LEMP meetings.

Chris commented on the Flood Omnibus Bill, stating that it would be valuable if it included a framework for self-reliance first where federal resources would only augment that framework. He further clarified that the bill may be making assumptions about what will exist in terms of federal resources that may not actually be there in the future.

## Energy

Adam – no updates.

## Government Relations

The regional planning funding looks like it will get a 3% increase over base.

MTAP 2.0 seems to be moving forward.

There appears to be support for additional brownfields funding.

Other bills to follow: H.233 regarding contracts and grants. H.134 and H.291 regarding current use. H.421 regarding Councils of Government.

Adam shared his email about supporting rural housing. They are requesting a legislative study to look at issues and develop recommendations and consider how to fund small village water/wastewater systems, what new technologies should be available, and what financial reforms are needed to get money out easier.

Chris added that that it should consider how RPCs can be used as direct technical assistance. Catherine asked that not just systems be considered, but also the difficulty around permitting and amendments for permits.

## Planning & Economic Development

Chris Cochran shared that his department is developing recommendations on rural technical assistance, assessing who is doing what and what is working and not working. There will be extensive outreach and training. They will develop a report as a deliverable. Charlie recommended integrating NADO study survey results.

The CIB is planning a bus tour to look at housing and economic revitalization projects.

Jeff Dube discussed the CDBG-RD proposal. About \$6 million for Washington and Lamoille Counties (and Hardwick). The funding will be used to undertake watershed wide resilience planning and how it can be supported by existing organizational structures. The Governor will review the

proposal this week. There will be a forthcoming public comment period. Administration of projects will be discussed once the project begins to advance.

Seth noted a complete list of potential projects would be nice and requested it be shared with RPC to ensure the needs of quieter towns were considered.

CP+R is developing designation transition materials. RPCs will be the vehicle to help get this info out to towns. Further a data and mapping platform is under development for tiers, FLUAs, and designations.

Jacob Hemmerick shared that work plan updates are being made. These changes could potentially streamline the process, and a draft may be ready by April.

## Transportation

Jason shared that the RPCs met with VTTrans asked to withdraw the payback provisions from bike and ped projects. There will be an additional \$700K for better roads and REIs.

Matthew Arancio shared TPI is going through a biennial process improvement. There will be changes to the TPI work plan. This should create additional flexibility and develop additional resources for sharing among transportation planners. A new invoicing process is under consideration that should create more clarity. Devon and Christian will discuss amendments with Matthew. Task seven is sunsetting.

Amy Bell shared that the study to look at implications of Act 181 on transportation impact studies is underway. Charlie will serve on the committee as the VAPDA representative.

Phase one of the design guidelines revision is looking to be completed in April.

## Water Quality/Natural Resources

Ari Rockland-Miller encouraged everyone to submit nominations for the agriculture hall of fame.

VAPDA representatives will be meeting with DEC on the 14<sup>th</sup>.

Jason is closing out DIBG but enhanced DIBG is coming. Start collecting your ideas. He continued that First Flood bylaws meeting forthcoming.

Adam is working to close out their CW project development grant and may need to circle back to participating RPCs for additional resources.

Katie Buckley added that VLCT has put out a post town meeting cheat sheets and check lists. VLCT is moving to a new location (yet to be determined).

VLCT is engaged in a number of issues related to Act 171 and municipal ethics committee question and looking for ordinances to support municipalities. There is nothing to support towns now.

## UVM WASTEWATER MAPPING PROJECT

Emma Spett and Kendall Fortney joined VAPDA from the University of Vermont Leahy Institute for Rural Partnerships to discuss their wastewater mapping work they have engaged in with VERSO and

ORCA, and with further support from the Vermont Community Foundation. This project aggregates data on where community water/wastewater systems exist and where gaps need to be filled. Current data can be downloaded via GitHub. This project has not developed any new data but has focused on piecing together existing data. The completion of the data work is expected to be wrapping up in June. Community engagement, communication and graphics are anticipated to follow.

## VT CLIMATE ACTION OFFICE PROGRESS TOOL

Item removed from agenda as the Vermont Climate Action Office was unable to attend.

## VDH TOBACCO CONTROL PROGRAM

Tonya Wells and Jared Thatcher joined the meeting from the Vermont Department of Health. Their work on tobacco control has included work on local policy, zoning, permitting and point of sale. Municipalities are limited by state enabling language. However, they have created template language to steer municipalities to those areas where they can implement tobacco controls.

Tonya also reshared the Active Living and Healthy Eating resources, which focuses on healthy community design.

## FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS / VAPDA UPDATES

RPCs will share status of FLUA maps at the April meeting to assess conformity.

Further discussion ensued on the FLUA mapping and housing targets.

The Chair adjourned the meeting at 11:53 AM.

*Respectfully submitted by,*

Christian Meyer