



**Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region
Board of Directors Meeting**

Tuesday, November 17th, 2020 | 8:00 a.m. | Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82083109940?pwd=WcTtTmJhV2t3MG5kdFhHWfZ0NnR1Zz09>

Agenda

- Call to Order John Casella II, President
- Approval of Minutes from October 20th, 2020 John Casella II, President
(see attached minutes, [pages 2-4](#))
- Executive Director's Report Lyle Jepson
Guest – Secretary of Tourism and Marketing Heather Pelham: State update
- Committee Reports Laurie Mecier-Brochu, Chair
 - Membership (see attached minutes, [page 5](#)) Drew Smith, Chair
 - Policy (see attached minutes, [page 6](#)) Karen Garrow, Chair
 - Finance (see attached minutes, [page 7](#)) John Russell III, Chair
 - Business Development (see attached minutes, [page 8](#)) Eric Mallette, Chair
 - Events (see attached minutes, [pages 9-11](#)) MaryAnn Goulette, Co-Chair
 - Marketing (see attached minutes, [page 12](#))
- Old Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

Upcoming Meetings:

Policy Committee – Wednesday, December 2nd, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Marketing Committee – Thursday, December 3rd, 12:00pm – 1:00pm

Events Committee – Thursday, December 10th TBD – Robo-Rhino presentation

Membership Committee – Friday, December 11th TBD

Finance Committee – Tuesday, January 12th, 8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Membership Committee – Friday, January 8th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Business Development Committee – Wednesday, January 13th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Events Committee – Thursday, January 14th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Board of Directors – Tuesday, January 19th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.



Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - October 20, 2020

Members Present: John Casella II, Shana Louiselle, Karen Garrow, Russ Marsan, Nicole Kesselring, Laurie Mecier-Brochu, John Russell III, Jessica Anderson, Mary Cohen, Michael Doenges, Mary Ann Goulette, Amy Laramie, Kelley Robinson, Andrew Smith, Jonathan Spiro, Mark Werle, Wayne Wilmans, Alex Adams, Ed Bove, Brennan Duffy

Staff Present: Penny Inglee, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson, Brooke Rubright, Kim Rupe

Others Present: Amanda O'Connor, Alex Kelley, Bill Moore.

Call To Order: The meeting was called to order at 8:02am.

Approval of Minutes: Russ Marsan moved to accept the minutes of the September 15, 2020 Board of Directors meeting. The motion was seconded by Karen Garrow and passed unanimously.

Executive Director's Report – Lyle Jepson

Lyle introduced Brook Rubright as CEDRR's new Communications Assistant. Brooke has been an intern for some time. When Elicia gave her notice the decision was made to offer Brooke a part time position. Brooke is currently in her senior year at Castleton University.

Broadband – Communication Union Districts - Guests: Amanda O'Connor, Rutland Regional Planning Commission and Alex Kelley, Center on Rural Innovation

Amanda and Alex spoke extensively about the Otter Creek CUD which currently will includes Brandon, Hubbardton, Pittsford, Goshen and others. The Otter Creek CUD will bring fiber optic broadband internet to underserved areas. CUD's were authorized in 2015 and are similar to a solid waste or water district. Towns that participate in a CUD have no risk or liability. The feasibility study is almost complete. The next step would be creating a business plan.

Fiber optic broadband will provide symmetrical speeds. It is the most cost effective, as speed can be upgraded without replacing the underlying fiber. A CUD could offer phone service, data center services, cyber security and a large range of other services.

Real Bucks Program: CEDRR partnered with Brandon, Killington, Poultney and Castleton to submit and receive five individual \$10,000 grants. Participating businesses in Rutland and the other towns are offering \$10 off a purchase of \$30 or more. The program runs October 12-November 12th. All a patron needs to do is go to a participating business, ask for Real Bucks and

they will receive a \$10 coupon to fill out. There are 11-15 businesses per town participating. The majority of businesses are restaurants, but there are also select retail businesses.

Navigator Program and Second Round of Economic Recovery Grants:

- Navigator Program – The 12 RDCs throughout the state are working to connect businesses with the technical support they require. There are some small grants that can assist as well with e-commerce and digital marketing.
- Economic Recovery Grants – The second round is designed to identify unmet need/gaps following round one. There is a three week application period. CEDRR is part of a state-wide network reviewing the grant applications. These grants are open to all types of business that can demonstrate financial need due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Committee Reports

Membership Committee – Laurie Mecier-Brochu

- The committee is looking for ways to increase membership, welcome new members, design and communicate member benefits and measure the impact of membership.
- Drafts of membership materials were included with the meeting minutes in the board packet.

Public Policy Committee – Drew Smith

- A legislative update was given by Patti Koline from Downs Rachlin & Martin.
- The Legislators were given background on the merger. The information was well received.

Finance Committee – Karen Garrow

- Budget: A general review of the budget was presented.
- Russ Marsan made a motion to accept the budget as presented. Laurie Mecier-Brochu seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

Business Development – John Russell

Megan Sullivan from Vermont Economic Progress Council gave an overview of two programs that would be valuable to the region and businesses.

Events Committee – Laurie Mecier-Brochu

- Annual Meeting: The annual meeting went well at both locations. Great feedback has been received.
- The committee is looking at possible online gaming events or trivia as a fundraising event.

Marketing Committee – Mary Ann Goulette

- The committee will meet on November 3rd to review the proposal from Lift Marketing.
- Lyle is currently working on outreach for funding from towns and businesses.
- When CEDRR members were surveyed, regional marketing was the number one priority.
- There was concern expressed that some members of the Board of Alderman were not aware of the positive impact of the regional marketing efforts. Lyle will follow up.

Old/New Business

Bill Moore express his appreciation for having one of the annual meeting locations in Brandon.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:08am.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Penny J. Inglee". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'P'.

Penny J. Inglee

Member Services | Events | Office Manager



Membership Committee Meeting Minutes – November 13, 2020

Attending: Alex Adams, Amy Laramie, Jeremy Carroll, Laurie Mecier-Brochu, Lyle Jepson, Penny Inglee

Call to order: 8:03am

- Lyle is meeting with Chamber directors throughout the state today regarding membership and the future of membership-based organizations.
- The member benefit information was shared.
 - There is still the possibility in the future to have shared benefits with KPAA.
 - Lyle will be meeting with The Mint on a possible discounted rate for CEDRR members.
 - CEDRR is open to suggestions on additional benefits that could be offered.
- Information was shared on staff outreach to members and the use of ChamberMaster to track the contacts.
- The asks for payment of past due invoices have been soft. The decision has been made to allow a business to remain a member for the next year, even if they cannot pay.
- The initial thought was that membership revenue would be down about 20%, it looks more like it will be down 35%. CEDRR's budget has been adjusted accordingly.
- The Annual Meeting video has been used to show businesses and towns what we are doing. In the future the video and b roll will be segmented to highlight specific towns.
- We may want to consider some messaging to let members know how they have benefited from being a member, remind them what CEDRR has been doing.

Next Meeting: January 8, 2020, 8am.

Proposed Agenda:

- Update on Membership numbers and outreach
- MINT update
- Other

Respectfully submitted,

Penny J. Inglee
Member Services | Events | Office Manager



Policy Committee Meeting Minutes | Wednesday, November 4, 2020 | Via Zoom

Present: Ray Ault, Dennis Carroll, Brennan Duffy, Blair Enman, Caprice Hover, Shana Louiselle, Jennifer Scott, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson, Kim Rupe, Wayne Wilmans

Potential Legislative Priorities

Kim shared that the “Real Bucks” program was the result of a Restart Vermont Stimulus grant and has received some great attention throughout Rutland and surrounding towns. The program is allowing for additional consumer spending within the retail and hospitality industries which have been impacted the most. Tyler has been working on the ReStart Vermont Technical Assistance Program which are matching vendors with local business needing technical assistance. There are currently twenty-seven businesses and sixteen vendors participating within Rutland. Tyler shared the program has been incredibly effective. The CEDRR Marketing Committee is also resuming its marketing efforts for Real Rutland and the concierge service and have a new increased budget to raise funds for. Megan Sullivan from Vermont Economic Progress Council presented to the Business Development Committee last month and provided an overview of both VEGI and TIF. Lyle hopes that we can support these programs to increase our support for our smaller communities. Caprice shared the challenges around housing developments locally and the importance of determining how to mitigate some of these expenses. It was suggested that additional funds be advocated for a loan fund for landlords get their units up to code. Caprice volunteered to research some weatherization language to put together next steps at our next meeting. Lyle would like this committee to consider advocating for additional funds for these various programs.

3 Acre Rule

Nicole Kesselring provided a synopsis of what is happening and the challenges for local businesses. Blair suggested the primary focus be to assist businesses affected by advocate to defer the timeline and determine other ways to make this impact as minimal as possible. Lyle suggested Blair and Nicole present at an upcoming Growing Business Series.

Legislative Updates

Lyle would like the committee to start brainstorming ways to provide legislative updates to our business community without the usual Legislative Breakfast’s. Some options include Zoom meetings with breakout rooms for specific topics or topic centric meetings that would be smaller attended and could socially distance. Lyle, Tyler, and Kim will put together a proposal for the next meeting.

Other

Jennifer asked about what priorities have been set for healthcare workers, specifically incentives on increasing this workforce here. There are currently loan forgiveness programs, but they need to be shared outside Vermont to attract this population. Jennifer will investigate these programs and provide an overview to Lyle. Ray also shared he is still gathering information on the zero-based rent concept.

The next meeting will be Wednesday, December 2 at 8 a.m.

Adjournment at 9:03 a.m.



Finance Committee Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, November 10th, 2020 | Via Zoom

Present: Karen Garrow, Russ Marsan, Mark Foley, Jr., Sarah Furman, Rolf Hirschmann, Chris Keyser, Norm Ladabouche, Deb Quirk, Andrew Simonds, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson

The meeting was called to order at 8:16 a.m.

Motion: Chris moved to accept the minutes from October 13th, 2020. The motion was seconded by Russ and passed unanimously.

REDC Internal Financials

The committee reviewed two sets of financials: one for CEDRR and October activity for the Chamber. We have moved all activity over to the CEDRR side at this point, and Charlene will need to go in and make the final adjustments to integrate the reports. Tyler will set up a meeting with Karen, Norm, Charlene, Penny and Lyle to go over unresolved questions and concerns. There were questions around expense and revenue items that didn't appear in these reports, such as items around the annual meeting, that we will have a better handle on once the reports are aligned. To address last month's question, loan interest income does not appear on the September reports due to audit concerns and fiscal year alignment and, therefore, October interest income reflects two months. We have paid off the Chamber PPP loan and we closed the Chamber line of credit. We received three grants for area businesses through the Regional Economic Development Grant Program, and Tyler will arrange with Karen to sign checks relating to these grants. Andrew will follow up with Tyler on an example audit RFP.

Revolving Loan Fund

Tyler reviewed the IRP report, indicating we are missing a payment from one of our borrowers but we have followed up and it was a clerical error, and the payment is on the way. For the long-term delinquent loan (#108-01-01), we are still waiting on the November \$5,000 payment as part of the arrangement agreed upon at the last meeting. The borrower has indicated a \$2,000 check has been mailed, an additional \$2,000 will come towards the end of the month, and no resolution has been presented for the remaining \$1,000 for November. Tyler and Lyle will arrange a visit to the business, and Tyler will send the financial reports received from the business to the committee.

112 Quality Lane

Chris and Lyle visited the Quality Lane site to follow up on the Bodycote report, which suggested that the tank was an issue of concern because it is below ground. Chris and Lyle reviewed the oil tank location and mechanicals and took a look at the heating system throughout the building. Following the review, it was determined that the oil tank is a double-hulled alarmed unit installed in the early 2000s. It was properly installed and does not need replacement. Changing over to a propane system with above-ground tanks could cost as much as \$25,000. The Committee agreed to postpone the discussion of replacement of the tank and to move forward with servicing the current system and conducting a review of the system for use in any future modifications and upgrades.

Old Business – None.

New Business – None.

Adjournment at 9:13 a.m.



Business Development Committee Meeting Minutes **Wednesday, November 11th, 2020 | Via Zoom**

Present: John Russell III, John Casella II, Rick Gile, Jerry Hansen, Jenney Izzo, Nicole Kesselring, Bernie Krasnoff, Russ Marsan, Greg McClallen, Mark Werle, Don Jamison, Michele Kupersmith, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson

The meeting was called to order at 8:04 a.m.

Mark moved to accept the minutes of the September 9th, 2020, and October 14th, 2020 meetings. The motion was seconded by Russ and passed unanimously.

Lyle gave an update on the most recent Policy Committee meeting, as the committee has reviewed the TIF and project-based TIF information from Megan Sullivan at VEPC and will be working on language to produce a policy statement supporting project-based TIFs for the new session. Lyle, Tyler, and Karen McCalla are working with the Vermont Community Foundation on a grant proposal for \$50,000 to assist with staffing at the MINT. The 8,000 square feet behind the MINT, currently being leased by Bodycote, may become available next year, and staff would like to investigate what a redesign of this space could do to support the MINT and other incubator efforts. Tyler has been working on the ReStart Vermont Technical Assistance Program, matching vendors with local businesses needing technical assistance. There are currently twenty-seven businesses and sixteen vendors participating within Rutland County, and the program has been incredibly effective so far. Lyle reported the latest ACCD round of economic relief grants closed out this week, noting the program is over-prescribed and the total unmet need among the applicants far exceeds the available funding. Webinars under our Growing Business series are underway every other Wednesday, with rotating topics and presenters held over the noon hour. We have expanded the deadline for the Real Bucks program.

Lyle introduced Michelle Kupersmith, Program and Outreach Coordinator, and Don Jamison, Co-Executive Director, from the Vermont Employee Ownership Center (VEOC), to talk about the work of their organization and how they're helping businesses with succession planning. Their mission is to promote and assist with implementing employee ownership, which typically becomes a conversation around succession planning. They partner with RDCs and regional experts to lead webinars on exit planning, employee stock ownership plans (ESOPs), and worker cooperatives. They emphasize succession planning should occur early in the life of a business, as it will inform how the business is run. Don reviewed the details of, and differences between, ESOPs and worker cooperatives, highlighting the advantages, disadvantages, processes, structures, and costs. As business owners age, it's a concern for economic and community development partners as businesses often close due to a lack of a successful ownership transition – VEOC can help.

Old Business

None.

New Business

The next meeting is on January 13th, 2021.

Adjournment at 9:01 a.m.



Events Committee
Minutes – November 12, 2020

Present: Jess Anderson, Bill Ackerman, Mary Cohen, Mary Ann Goulette, Eric Mallette, Russ Marsan, Lyle Jepson, Penny Inglee

The meeting was called to order at 8:01am.

Annual Meeting Debrief

Overall the annual meeting was a success.

Brandon location:

- People were very pleased that we brought part of the annual meeting to Brandon.
- Food vendor was good, had home cooked food.
- We will consider holding more events up that way.

Rutland location:

- There were people there that hadn't been to the drive in all summer.
- Everything went smoothly at the entrance.
- People seemed engaged.
- Need additional food trucks in the future. Lines were long.

Additional thoughts:

- Cost of video seemed a bit high. It is good that we have the b roll and get expanded use out of that cost.
- The video has been used after the meeting as Lyle meets with towns.
- Attendance may have been better if we had not had to reschedule due to weather.
- The annual meeting made a small profit.

Real Rutland Retro Gaming

Jess gave an update on her research progress.

- The most popular platform for live stream gaming is Twitch and they do work with non-profit organizations.
- The event may be costly, but there is a large profit to be made.

- Two thirds of adults regularly game online. There is a huge audience for this sort of event.
- The would not take place until September or October 2021 to give enough lead time.

Action Items:

- Jess will do further research on Twitch and their work with non-profits.
- Mary will speak with her son and his friends to gage interest and see if they have any ideas.

Rutland Robo Rhinos

CEDRR was approached by Rutland Robo-Rhinos to support their game project. The students are tasked with creating games that business teams would play. CEDRR would assist in getting teams and sponsors and the revenue generated would be split. The games will probably be Minute To Win It type games

Action Item:

- Lyle will meet with the Robo Rhinos Advisor to discuss how to move forward. Then, Lyle and Eric will meet with them in preparation for the next Events Committee meeting.

Trivia Event

Mary Ann did some research and didn't find a good fundraising component. Trivia may be something that is an add in to a mixer or other event or a by request for members.

Action Items:

- Mary Ann will send everyone a link to information
- Lyle will send everyone information on Kahoot

Other

End of year donations:

- PPP income is going to be taxable.
- Businesses may be finding out they need to make additional donations to offset some of the tax burden from PPP income.
- Businesses can make additional donations, pre-buy for 2021, pre-pay sponsorships and memberships.
- Discussion around how we help get the word out.
- There was discussion around some businesses needing to make donations prior to the end to offset some tax burden because PPP income is going to be taxable.
- There have been some changes for 2020 that will make it easier to deduct donations.

Action items:

- Jess and Lyle will discuss wording
- Sarah will see if there is a list of who received PPP through SBA and provide to Lyle
- Direct outreach to businesses - Lyle

Russ has invited the group to get together prior to Thanksgiving socially.

Next meeting

December 10th at 8am.

Proposed agenda:

- Retro Gaming following up – Jess and Mary
- Robo Rhino gaming update – Lyle and Eric
- Trivia as a social mixer event (s) – Penny and Mary Ann
- Business outreach, PPP potential – Sarah and Lyle
- Other

Respectfully submitted,



Penny J. Inglee

Member Services | Events | Office Manager



Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes Wednesday, November 3, 2020 | Via Zoom

Present: Bill Ackerman, Steve Costello, Brennan Duffy, Mary Ann Goulette, Lyle Jepson, Amy Laramie, Shana Louiselle, Rob Megnin, Polly Mikula, Bill Moore, Traci Moore, Sarah Pelkey, Steve Peters, Jordan Spear, Tyler Richardson, Kelley Robinson, Brooke Rubright, Kim Rupe, Andy Shinn, Michael Talbott,

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m.

Mary Ann welcomed the group and Lyle facilitated introductions.

LIFT Update

Mary Ann shared that marketing efforts were put on pause in mid-March as a result of COVID but have recently brought LIFT back to begin working on these efforts again so it was important the committee reconvene so that everyone is on the same page. Lyle shared the updated proposals from LIFT to get things started again which were also shared with the committee in the meeting packet. Lyle, Mary Ann, and Steve have agreed to begin phase one of the proposal which is approximately \$6,000 and would like permission from the committee to move forward with the additional phases to fully automate the process. Lyle also provided a proposed budget to the group with the assumption that some travel restrictions are lifted by Summer 2021. Currently, all concierge services will be done remotely.

Motion: A motion was made by Brennan to approve the spending of an additional \$9,000 for phase two with LIFT and to give staff approval to move forward with any other additional spending as needed from the LIFT proposal. The motion as seconded by Steve Costello and passed unanimously.

The partnership with Rutland Young Professionals has extended which is resulting in additional volunteers for concierge services. There is a concierge training on November 12 from 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. and if anyone is interested in becoming a concierge should let Kim know.

Members of the committee expressed interested in reaching out to someone who works within the elementary school systems to bring this perspective and assist in changing the school scores/ratings to be more accurate. It is also important to continue to market Real Rutland to locals through realtors and increase the work with RYP.

Other

Lyle shared a new concept known as “Lifestyle Locations” that has been evolving primarily under the direction of Mike Doenges. This program will work with larger businesses to help encourage people to move to Rutland County as a remote worker. An incentive package would include items such as ski lift tickets, housing information, etc. More information to come but Lyle envisions this living under Marketing Committee.

The committee agreed to continue to meet on a monthly basis on the first Thursday off every month at noon. The next meeting will be held on Thursday, December 3 at noon.

Adjournment at 12:59 p.m.