NORTHWEST VERMONT RAIL TRAIL COUNCIL

c/o Northwest Regional Planning Commission
75 Fairfield Street
St. Albans, VT 05478
Phone: 802-524-5958 • Fax: 802-527-2948

APPOINTED

Berkshire-MVRT
Angel Larose
Enosburg Falls-MVRT
Ellen Stanley
Enosburgh Town-MVRT
Vacant
Richford-MVRT
Vacant
St. Albans City-MVRT
Richard Stahl
St. Albans Town-MVRT
Robert Bessette
Fairfield-MVRT/LVRT
Jane Williams
Sheldon-MVRT/LVRT
Bryan Derry
Swanton-MVRT/LVRT
Joel Clark
Bakersfield-LVRT
Vacant
Fletcher-LVRT
Aimee Tinker
Highgate-LVRT
Scott Fitzstephens

VAST
Mike Farmer

At Large
Andy Crossman
David Stanley
Randy Chadburn
Diane Leary

Ex-Officio
* VT Agency of Transportation

*Northwest Regional Planning Commission

*VT Dept. of Forests, Parks, & Recreation

*Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation

Minutes of Council Meeting held Monday, May 18, 2026

Present/Introduction: Ellen Stanley, Jane Williams, Richard Stahl, Bryan Derry, Jackie Cassino (VTrans), Dave Stanley, Mike Farmer, Joel Clark, Andy Crossman, Angel Larose, Scott Fitzstephens, Matt Walker, Bill Gray (VTrans), Richard Amore (Local Motion), Nicole Draper (Swanton Rec), Amy Adams, Planning Commission- St. Albans City-Chip Sawyer, Paul Olshan, Ray Stahl, Michael Nicholas, Michael Gawne, Janis Appel, Ryan Cleare and Dan Rohrbach.

Chair Dave Stanley called the meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Meeting Minutes
R. Stahl moved to accept the minutes of March 9, 2026; seconded by *A. Crossman*. Motion passed.

Financial Report - E. Stanley presented the 1st quarter 2026 financial report (Jan-Mar 2026). *R. Stahl* moved to accept the 1st quarter report as presented; seconded by *D. Stanley*. Motion passed.

St. Albans City Trailhead & Extension – Chip Sawyer gave an update on the new parking area plan, shared the plans with the cost estimate of $510,000, with a funding gap of $250,000. The City applied for a Recreation Trail Program grant which was not granted. Ultimately, the project may be scaled back due to funding. Concerns were discussed with the Route 7 crossing, Jackie Cassino offered to meet at an upcoming St. Albans City Planning Commission meeting to review the plans for this crossing and address any questions the PC may have.

Local Motion LVRT Mini Grants – Richard Amore gave an overview of what Local Motion offers and their mission for statewide pedestrian and bicycle organization focused on making it safe, accessible, and fun to bike, walk, and roll in Vermont. There are resources available from the dissolution of the *Friends of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail Group* which will be deployed this summer. Aims to strengthen connections between rail trail and community centers/main streets. Application Process: A brief survey/application form will be sent out in the next couple of weeks. Support will be provided for 1-2 communities per county.

MVRT Management Plan Status – J. Cassino updated that the draft management plan for *MVRT* will be circulated and hosted on the *Agency of Transportation (AOT)* website for additional comments, which will be added an appendix.

Updates
Green Up Day Recap – Angel Larose generally cleaner than previous year, but *Richford Trailhead* had an issue with discarded doggy bags. Discussion about signage or deterrents for dog waste disposal.

LVRT Pause Places – J. Cassino shared an opportunity for funding for a corridor-wide planning and feasibility project for rest stops/pause places primarily focused along the LVRT but potential for *MVRT* if communities express an interest. Examples: benches, bike racks, interpretive signs, shade trees, art (historic, natural resources). Not intended as parking areas. Each community identifies 3 locations (natural, scenic, historic areas/vistas), coordinates locations corridor-wide, prioritizes based on distance between trailheads/villages. Lead for the project is Lamoille County Planning Commission, pre-application due mid August, notify LCPC by late June of interest. Match requirement 20-50% local match.

Sheldon Junction Trailhead – AOT awarded contract to *Stantec* for design and engineering phase; work expected to start early June.

Swanton Trailhead Community Grant (LVRT) – Joel Clark updated that the trail is well-used, attracting visitors from other states. Event was well-organized on May 16th. Great attendance.

Highgate- LVRT Level 2 Trailhead – No updates on *Highgate* improvements, though a Recreational Trails Program grant was received last year for the parking area.

Franklin County Trails Alliance VOREC Grant – A. Crossman updated they received memorial fund for a bike scholarship for kids. Planning a bike rodeo safety event with the police department. Discussion on e-bike safety education, especially for new riders.

Northern Forest Canoe – Paddle/Pedal Event July 11th – Karrie Thomas reached out for volunteers for the day of the event to help with traffic, sign in, etc. Reach out to her at karrie@northernforestcanoetrail.org.

LVRT/MVRT – B. Gray updated there is a sinkhole in Sheldon (MVRT) off from Sweet Hollow Road AOT is addressing. Should be minimal impact to rail trail users, one lane of traffic will remain open during the week, construction anticipated this field season. Mowing is scheduled as usual, starting first week of June on the *MVRT*, then northern/western *LVRT*.

VAST- M. Farmer updated snow has cleared, quiet currently. Swanton grooming, discussion with Snowmobile Club about extending groomer turnaround in Swanton. They are interested, potentially using opposite spur or cutting a U-turn in woods

Other Business – Trail Ambassador Program: J. Cassino updated the Council that AOT is planning a soft launch of the program onto the MVRT this season. Orientation for new Ambassadors is being planned in Swanton, date TBD. Basic training, supplies for volunteers. **D**etails and application available on the VTrans rail trail webpage under "Get Involved."

NEXT MEETING- July 20, 2026

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.

Minutes Approved: *September 28, 2026*