

## **NOTICE AND AGENDA FOR REMOTE MEETING**

**The Rail Trail Council** for the Northwest Vermont Rail Trail will be meeting remotely on  
**Monday, September 18, 2023 at 6:00 PM**

### **Information on how to access the remote meeting:**

- By computer, smartphone, tablet, or other device: Click on the Zoom meeting invite- <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85140788308> You may be prompted to enter a meeting ID: 851 4078 8308.
- By telephone: Dial +1 646 558 8656. When prompted enter the meeting ID: 851 4078 8308.

*All meeting participants will first enter a virtual “waiting room” until the meeting organizer opens the meeting.*

Please review our "Informational Handout for Remote Public Meetings" to understand how these electronic meetings will be managed. If you wish to make a public comment but do not have the ability to comment remotely during the meeting, please email your comment(s) to Amy Adams at [aadams@nrpcvt.com](mailto:aadams@nrpcvt.com)

To ensure smooth access, we recommend that you test your remote meeting software in advance of the meeting. **If you have difficulty accessing the meeting, please email [aadams@nrpcvt.com](mailto:aadams@nrpcvt.com).**

### **Agenda:**

1. **Minutes** – May 15, 2023 minutes enclosed
2. **Financial Report** - 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter 2023 financial report
3. **Updates**
  - **LVRT Community Grant updates (Sheldon & Swanton)**
  - **LVRT Update**
  - **Trail Etiquette** – J. Cassino (enclosed)
  - **Summer Season**
  - **VAST** (M. Bushey)
4. **Other Business**
5. **Next Meeting** – November 20, 2023

***If you cannot attend the meeting, please notify Amy Adams at [aadams@nrpcvt.com](mailto:aadams@nrpcvt.com).***

*In accordance with provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990, the NRPC will ensure public meeting sites are accessible to all people or provide an opportunity for individuals to request special accommodations. Requests for free interpretive or translation services, assistive devices, or other requested accommodations should be made to Amy Adams, NRPC Title VI Coordinator, at 802-524-5958 or [aadams@nrpcvt.com](mailto:aadams@nrpcvt.com), no later than 3 business days prior to the meeting for which services are requested.*

## INFORMATIONAL HANDOUT FOR REMOTE MEETINGS

### Remote Public Meetings

All public body meetings for the Northwest Regional Planning Commission will be conducted remotely via electronic means for the duration of Governor Scott's State of Emergency declaration. Whenever feasible, the public will also be able to access and participate in the remote meetings by dialing in through telephone.

### Accessing a Meeting

Please refer to each notice and agenda for information on how to access a remote meeting. Please note that whether you join by telephone, computer, or device, you may be put on hold or in a waiting "room" until granted access to the meeting. You also may be muted or restricted from using any chat function until the public comment portion of the meeting.

### Participation

All meetings will be conducted in accordance with the respective "Rules of Procedure" of each public body, to the extent practicable. The public body will follow its agenda and allow public attendees to participate through voice (audio) means where feasible or alternatively using any chat function during the designated public comment periods on the agenda and at other applicable times as needed. Initially, the meeting's host/organizer will mute all participants that are not members of the public body. This is necessary to control background noise. The host/organizer will then unmute participants or allow participants to unmute themselves when invited to speak by the Chair of the public body. Please review the following guidelines:

- The Chair will invite comment:
  - during the time designated on the agenda for public comment;
  - after the public body discusses each agenda item;
  - before the public body takes action;
  - during any open public comment period, if applicable; and
  - other times as determined by the public body.
  
- When a participant/attendee is unmuted, they must state their name before commenting.

When the public body adjourns the meeting, the host/organizer will end the electronic meeting by turning off/closing the remote meeting software. Attendees will be automatically disconnected. Minutes and other public records that were part of the meeting will be made available in accordance with VT's Open Meeting and Public Records Laws.

**To learn more about Remote Public Meetings and the Open Meeting Law, please visit the Secretary of State's Municipal Assistance webpage at <https://sos.vermont.gov/municipal-division/laws-resources/covid-19-response/>.**



# 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 MEMBERS

**St. Albans City**  
Richard Stahl

**St. Albans Town**  
Randy Chadburn

**Swanton**  
Vacant

**Fairfield**  
Jane Williams

**Sheldon**  
Dianne Crane

**Enosburg Town**  
Robert Gervais, Sr.

**Enosburg Falls**  
Ellen Stanley

**Berkshire**  
Carol Hickey

**Richford**  
Vacant

**VAST**  
Mark Bushey

**At Large**  
Don Mueller  
Alisha Sawyer  
David Stanley

### Ex-Officio

VT Agency of  
Transportation

Northwest Regional  
Planning Commission

VT Dept. of Forests,  
Parks, & Recreation

## Minutes of Meeting held Monday, May 15, 2023 Zoom Meeting

**Present:** Dave Stanley, Carol Hickey, Ellen Stanley, Mark Bushey, Jane Williams, Bill Gray (Vtrans), Jackie Cassino (Vtrans), Kathy Lavoie and Amy Adams.

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

### MEETING MINUTES

*M. Bushey moved to accept the minutes of the March 20, 2023; seconded by C.Hickey. Motion passed.*

### Updates

- **MVRT & LVRT (J. Cassino & W. Gray, Vtrans):**
- Trailside Facility Design Guidelines, sent out a notice to the RPCs to send out to the trail councils- but the Trailside Facility Design Guidelines are complete and can be found on the AOT website.
- Meeting with Bates in Enosburg on 5/17 to discuss encroachment issues.
- May 27 Event- St. Albans to Cambridge is approved by Vtrans and volunteers are secured.
- LVRT Grand Opening. Governor's Office is now planning this. Need to confirm- but was looking like a weekend day in early June.
- Mowing schedule was finalized but now need to do some rearranging – so stay tuned on that. Anticipate beginning the first cut of the year on the LVRT next week. We will be completing two cuts (mowing) during the season. The last week of May they will begin on MVRT. Vtrans will keep the website updated with mowing locations.
- LVRT Construction wrap up. Lots of maintenance and wrap up construction related work happening this month:
  - A sink hole has developed along a section of the LVRT in Walden. Due to its size, the trail is CLOSED between Bayley Hazen Road and Keene Road (MP 23.3-22.5) in Walden until further notice. Work on the sink hole began last week.
  - The Fisher Bridge in Wolcott is not accessible to the public due to ongoing construction. However, it is expected to be open for use by Memorial Day.
  - The eastern side of Bridge #47 in Wolcott Village (MP 40.4) to the Wolcott slide area (MP 39.9) resurfacing work to be completed. Trail is rough but is open currently. Trail segments will be temporarily closed for resurfacing in the coming weeks. This work is expected to be complete by Memorial Day.
- W. Gray met with a Contractor for sections on LVRT Swanton, Sheldon, Fairfield and MVRT Richford for guardrail installation to keep ATV's off the trail.
- LVRT green up, someone has cleaned sections along Swanton and Sheldon but left items along the trail, State has had to coordinate pickup to get those items off the trail, planned for May 16, 2023 dump trucks will be on the trail.

- **Spring Season-** A. Adams thanked the Council for helping to green up the MVRT as well as District 8 for allowing the Council to drop off items at the garage.
- **Paddle/Pedal Event – July 15, 2023 volunteers needed** – if interested please email A. Adams and she will pass along details to Northern Forest Canoe group.
- **Renew Ride w/ GPS/Interactive Map** – Discussion as to whether MVRT Council will be fully responsible for this cost in the coming year as LVRT rolls out their options to also consider this interactive map. D. Stanley and M. Bushey recommended that the Council continue the renewal for the coming year. J. Cassino said she is meeting with SE Group to start a discussion for the LVRT. *M. Bushey moved to accept the yearly renewal cost of \$499, seconded by C. Hickey. Motion passed.*
- **VAST-** M. Bushey reported membership numbers of 22,253 for the state and out of that 804 are members for Franklin County, which is down significantly. The winters are not what they used to be. M. Bushey asked about the large holes at Green's Corner parking lot if they could be filled and also suggested once they do the pavement project on 105 if they could pave a portion on the entrance into the parking lot. W. Gray will address these concerns at the parking lot, no promises on the paving part!

**OTHER BUSINESS** – M. Bushey got a quote from Sticks and Stuff for the rail fence in Sheldon, post is \$23.49 each, rail is \$29.99 each, complete project would be about \$860 for 11 posts and 20 rails. D. Stanley will check other locations for pricing and bring costs back to the July meeting. E. Stanley suggested asking businesses for a donation if possible. E. Stanley presented the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2023 financial report (Jan 1, 2023 – Mar 31, 2023). M. Bushey moved to accept the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter report as presented; seconded by C. Hickey. Motion passed.

#### **NEXT MEETING**

Our next meeting will take place on Monday, July 17, 2023.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting adjourned at 6:45 pm.

Minutes Approved: \_\_\_\_\_

# Amy Adams

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To: Ellen Stanley  
Subject: RE: Treasurer Rep Q2

Q2-2023	
Ap 1 - June 30	
Income	
Membership	\$541.43
Interest	\$1.43
Total	\$542.86
Expenses	
Account Balances June 30	
Checking	\$1,218.47
Savings	\$19,321.82
Total	\$20,540.29

Greetings Trail Council members,

It's come to our attention that all rail trail users would benefit from some Tips & Tricks to sharing the trail with horses. VTrans will be updating their new website's (<https://railtrails.vermont.gov/>) trail etiquette page over the summer, but in the interim, we're asking for your help. Please spread the word to your communities however most appropriate (via Town websites, FPF posting, your email contacts, etc.) on sharing the rail trails. Some helpful language to use:

### **Sharing the Rail Trail: Equestrians, Hikers, and Bikers**

Many people have limited exposure to horses, do not know how to act around them, and may be afraid. And no one likes walking or riding a bike through horse manure. Let's be respectful and all do our part to share the trail. The rules are:

- Bikers yield to Hikers and Horses
- Hikers yield to Horses

The concept is that bikers are potentially fast and could come into conflict if passing other users too quickly- ***especially when passing from behind.*** Bikers can stop and go easily; thus, they let other users have the right of way. Horses are big and unpredictable, so ***horses get the right of way.***

**What should you do when you encounter a horse:**

#### **1) Stop or Slow.**

- If you are hiking, move to the side of the trail remaining within sight of the horse. You can keep walking or stop.
- If you are biking, slow down and then move to the side. Be prepared to stop. If a horse is acting up, you may need to stop and get off your bike. This helps the horse recognize that you are a human.

#### **2) Communicate, say "Hello"**

**Announcing your presence is probably the most important thing you can do.** If the horse sees you standing there and not saying anything, instinct tells it that you are a predator. Smile and say hello to the rider. Perhaps, try to strike up a conversation. This will calm the horse and also does wonders for relations between all trail users.

#### **3) Ask the rider what you should do.**

Ask the rider if you can pass (from behind) or continue riding/hiking (if approaching). Sometimes the rider will ask you to continue walking or riding while they wait on the side of the trail. Sometimes they will pass by while you wait. Again, remember that horses have individual personalities and only the horse's owner/rider knows that personality. Trust their judgment.

**4) Take EXTRA care if approaching the horse from behind.** Horses cannot see directly behind themselves, so approaching from behind can be dangerous to both the equestrian and the hiker or biker. Horses may kick out in what they perceive as self defense. Again, communication is critical: gently

announce, well in advance, to let the horse and rider know that you are approaching from behind and ask/wait for direction from the rider.

**What NOT to do:**

1. **Don't stand silently or hide behind something.** This makes the horse think you might be a predator and the horse might spook, spin or bolt as a result.
2. **Don't speed past by the horse.** This is almost certain to startle the horse which puts the equestrian and YOU in danger.
3. **Don't do anything that might startle the horse.** This might include yelling or making your bike brakes squeal.
4. **Don't wear ear buds or anything that impedes hearing on the trail.** If you can't hear a horse or other user approaching, you are putting everyone at risk and reducing the ability to communicate.

A note on horse poop. Horses can defecate while motoring down the trail. This means that their riders, who are facing the other end of the horse, will not always know when they do it. Because horses don't have rear view mirrors, it is unfair to expect their riders to know every time and dismount to clear it off the trail. It is reasonable to expect horse owners to clean up after their charges in the trail heads, parking lots and other gathering areas where the riders are not moving forward. Horse manure breaks down very quickly and repeated studies have shown that it is not hazardous to humans or other wildlife.

When we come across other user groups using a shared trail, we need to keep in mind that we are all out there for similar reasons; we are just doing it in different ways. We all have the right to ***be safe*** while we are enjoying our hobbies. It is also common courtesy not to endanger the safety of other trail users. <sup>1</sup>

Questions? Reach out to the VTrans Rail Trails Program Manager:

Jackie Cassino | Rail Trails Program Manager  
PPAID | Rail and Aviation Bureau

Vermont Agency of Transportation  
Barre City Place | 219 N. Main Street, Suite #402 | Barre, VT 05641-4129

802-505-8193 phone | [jackie.cassino@vermont.gov](mailto:jackie.cassino@vermont.gov)  
[vtrans.vermont.gov](http://vtrans.vermont.gov)



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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from the Trails are Common Ground website: [Trail User Resources](#) | [Trails Are Common Ground](#)