

Guide to Serving on a Regional Board

Introduction

There are many regional organizations that serve Williston. These organizations perform a variety of functions covering water, sewer, parks, transportation, planning services and others. Each organization performs an important function for the Town of Williston and the region. What follows is a guide to serving on a regional board.

Frequently Asked Questions

How to apply?

With the exception of the Champlain Water District, the application process is simple. Just complete the Committee Application form included with this document or you may complete the form on-line by visiting the Town's web page and clicking on the on--line resources tab. Once the application has been submitted, an interview with the Selectboard will be scheduled. Prior to the interview you may want to learn more about the organization you hope to serve. Visiting the organization's web site, reviewing the mission statement, bylaws, past minutes etc. are all good ways to learn more.

If appointed, what happens next?

Following the interview, the Selectboard will decide who to appoint and you will be notified of its decision by mail. The regional organization to which you've been appointed will then get in touch with you concerning their meeting schedule and other details.

What are my obligations to the regional organization?

Each organization will be different. The duties and responsibilities of each regional board will be dictated by the organizations charter and/or bylaws. These documents will explain the role of the Board and may have special information on voting procedures. The staff of the regional organization should be able to provide you with the information you will need to serve on the Board.

What are my obligations to the Town of Williston as a representative?

Town government focuses on the *local* impacts of proposed actions. Regional groups focus on the *regional* impacts of proposed actions. As a Board member, you are expected to think regionally – to make policy decisions that consider more than the impacts on the community or constituency you represent and assess what is in the best interest of the region as a whole. This does not mean abandoning local considerations. Member municipalities and other public and private organizations in the region have resources and powers and considerations that may at times be at odds with regional concerns.

Attachment A

Regional Organizations

Below is a list of those organizations and their primary function:

1. Channel 17 Government Access Trust - The Board of Trustees generally meet on the fourth Thursday of each month from 10:00 A.M. to 11:30 A.M. The Board is responsible for determining channel policy in the following areas: Planning, Finance, Development, Community Relations, Human Resources. Williston has one representative serving on this Board.
2. Chittenden County Metropolitan Planning Organization (CCMPO) - Williston has one representative and one alternate representative on the Board, each serving a two-year term. Appointments are by the Selectboard. The purpose of the organization is to provide a forum for the development of regional transportation policies and to act as a vehicle to coordinate the implementation of these policies. The CCMPO is a federally mandated agency that plans, prioritizes, and coordinates the use of federal transportation funds in Chittenden County. Its' mission is to "ensure the implementation of a multi-modal transportation plan that meets all the requirements mandated by federal transportation laws and facilitates achieving metropolitan transportation priorities.

The CCMPO meets the third Wednesday of each month with locations rotating among the various member jurisdictions. Member municipalities include: Burlington, Charlotte, Colchester, Essex Junction, Essex Town, Hinesburg, Huntington, Jericho, Milton, Richmond, St. George, Shelburne, South Burlington, Underhill, Westford, Williston, and Winooski.

3. Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) - The Chittenden County Transportation Authority (CCTA) was founded in 1973 by the Vermont Legislature and provides transit services in seven communities in Chittenden County. CCTA is a full service public transportation provider, offering services including: fixed route bus service; parking lot, supermarket and school shuttles, a county-wide ridesharing program, transportation for Medicaid recipients and contracted paratransit service for people who cannot use the bus. CCTA is governed by a 16 member Board of Commissioners with one Commissioner each representing Essex, Milton, Shelburne, South Burlington, Winooski and Williston; two Commissioners representing Burlington; and one representative each from Washington, Franklin, Grand Isle, and Lamoille Counties. Each commissioner representing a municipality is appointed to the CCTA Board by their municipality. Board seats are held for a 3-year term and it is at the discretion of the municipality to renew each Board Member's term.
4. Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations - The Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations (CUSI) was formed in 1992. It is a multi-agency task force dedicated to providing criminal investigations in response to reports of sexual assaults and serious child abuse. The professionals within the unit are specially trained to deal with the unique and sensitive nature of sex crimes. Advocacy for the victim is paramount while we strive for successful prosecutions. Funding for the task force involves contributions from most towns and police

departments in the county. A policy board oversees the overall functions of the unit. New board members are appointed by the sitting policy board.

5. Lake Iroquois Recreation District - The District has one member from each municipality that borders on the Lake including Williston, Richmond and Hinesburg. Members serve staggered two-year terms and are appointed by the Selectboard of their respective Towns. The Committee is responsible for owning, leasing, developing, maintaining and managing its property located on Lake Iroquois and vicinity, for public park, conservation and recreational purposes to serve its member communities.
6. Regional Planning Commission - The Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission (CCRPA) often serves as an important resource for local zoning, subdivision and development review boards. They provide planning assistance to the planning commissions and are often able to help answer many of the mundane questions about how the local planning and zoning office should be administered.

Regional planning commissions are created by vote of the legislative body or voters of each of a number of contiguous municipalities, upon the written approval of the Agency of Commerce and Community Development. (24 V.S.A. § 4341, et seq.) The commission is made of up at least one representative appointed from each member municipality. The individual legislative bodies of participating municipalities fill vacancies.

7. Solid Waste District - The Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) was formed in 1987 to provide efficient, economical and environmentally sound management and disposal of solid waste generated in member towns. Presently there are 17 member communities. Williston has one representative and one alternate appointed to the Board of Commissioners by the Selectboard. This Board sets policy for the District. Members serve a two-year term. The term of Williston's representative ends in odd numbered years.
8. Tri-Town Sewer District - The District has three member Towns: Essex, Essex Junction and Williston. All three towns utilize the wastewater treatment plant located in Essex Junction. Treatment fees are paid to Essex Junction based on written agreements. Representatives to the District normally are paid staff including the Town Manager and Public Works Director.
9. Water District - The Champlain Water District (CWD) has one representative on the Board of Commissioners from Williston who is elected for a three-year term. The Town Manager normally serves as the Alternate. Presently, there are nine communities served by the District. The Board of Commissioners sets policy for the District. The purpose of the District is to provide safe, clean water in an economical and efficient manner to member communities.
10. Winooski Valley Park District - Williston has one representative on this regional Board who is appointed by the Selectboard for a one-year term. The Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD) was created in 1972 by cities and towns in the Winooski River Valley with a common interest in preserving open space for the purpose of conservation, environmental protection and recreational use.

Attachment B
Responsibilities as a Williston Representative

1. Reporting Back

At least once or twice each year you should meet with the Selectboard to learn of their concerns on issues relating to the regional board you are serving on and brief them on deliberations and decisions made by that board.

2. Attend Meetings

If you cannot attend a meeting of your Board, make arrangements for your alternate to attend and be sure he/she is prepared (especially that he/she is aware of previous deliberations on agenda items).

Meetings typically follow established agendas prepared and distributed about one week prior to meetings. Most action items for meetings are based on Committee or staff recommendations. Agendas routinely set aside time for meeting participants to provide “Members Items” (informational items with no background provided in advance of the meeting). Agendas also may be amended by the Board members present, per the Organization’s Bylaws.

3. Be Informed

Set aside a regular time to review materials sent to you in advance of Committee and Board meetings. Reflect on the questions and proposals scheduled for consideration and be prepared to discuss the merits and shortcomings of options. Your preparation will help you to advocate positions more effectively with your colleagues and will make meetings more productive investments of time for everyone involved.

Stay informed about what is going on in the County and your community. Let other Board members, the Executive Director/Manager, or staff know when you believe a matter warrants investigation, follow-up, or the attention of a Committee or the entire Board.

The staff of the organization you serve, are there to assist you. They can help you to find information about special topics or from special sources. Town staff is also available to provide guidance when called upon.

4. Participate at Meetings

Participate in the deliberations at meetings. Ask questions. Share your special expertise and help other Board members to understand issues, recognize the pros and cons of options, and consider particular insights. Doing so will help the Board to make fully informed decisions that other people will regard as being correct, realistic, and fair.

Meetings are relatively informal. The Board you serve is a governmental body and must follow specific procedures established by State statutes, Bylaws, and *Robert's Rules of Order*. These guidelines set basic protocols, such as providing advance public notice of meetings and allowing members of the public to attend and to be heard according to specific rules. In order to preserve an accurate record of the Board's actions, a written record of the meeting ("minutes") is made and considered for approval by the body at its next meeting.

5. Build & Improve Effective Working Relationships

The governing body of each regional organization represents the combined views of many Board members. Board members must work in partnership with staff to make the mission of the organization a success. Success depends on relationships with municipalities, regional partner organizations, the State, and others. At the heart of all of these institutional relationships are the personal relationships that you establish with these other people.

Sometimes, these relationships are strained by the unreasonable actions of others, by having inadequate resources to successfully address important objectives, by impending deadlines, and by deeply felt disagreements. During such times it is especially important that you strive to be considerate, polite, and respectful.

6. Making Decisions

While serving on a regional board, there are times when important policy decisions must be made. This can involve a difficult balancing of interests. How you should vote or respond to these policy decisions is not always clear. A number of considerations need to be taken into account. How will the decision affect Williston? How will the decision affect other towns and the region as a whole? What is Williston's Selectboard position on the issue? What are the Town's staff thoughts? Do you have any personal bias or interest that might conflict with what decision you make? It may take some time for you to understand when to seek input and when input may not be necessary. The best advice is to simply ask if you are uncertain. The best board members ask questions and seek input from a variety of sources.

Attachment C

Decision Process Rules

To help ensure that the Board's decision-making process is orderly and that proposed actions are clearly understood, these rules also call for following a sequence of steps in order to take an official action:

1. A voting member must make a **motion** that describes the proposed action;
2. Another voting member must **second** that motion;
3. The Chair opens **discussion** on that question, during which time the body can undertake no other business until the Board acts on the motion for the proposed action;
4. The Chair closes discussion and calls for a **vote** on the motion for the proposed action; and
5. Approval of the motion must be by a certain required **majority** of the voting members (some actions require a specially defined majority).

In addition to these basic motions, the Board also uses the following special motions to propose taking specific types of actions:

- ✦ **Amend** – Proposes changing the content of an original motion and is debatable.
- ✦ **Table** – Proposes postponing discussion on a subject to the near future and is not debatable or amendable.
- ✦ **Recess** – Proposes ending consideration of unfinished business before the Commission until a definite place and time and is debatable.
- ✦ **Reconsider** – Proposes reconsideration at the same or next meeting of a motion that was carried or lost, that should be made by someone who voted with the prevailing side. This motion is debatable. No question can be reconsidered more than once.
- ✦ **Point of Order** – Proposes an objection to a ruling of the Chair or to clarify a rule of parliamentary procedure.
- ✦ **Roll Call Vote** – Proposes that each member vote individually and that the minutes record the vote of each member. Any voting member may request a roll call vote on any matter.
- ✦ **Adjourn** – Proposes ending a meeting and is not debatable.

Any voting member may abstain from voting on a question. There also are rules governing “conflicts of interest” that generally provide that no one can vote on an issue in which he/she has a direct personal or pecuniary interest, except for voting for oneself for any office.

All persons present at a Board meeting are expected to extend every courtesy to all speakers. Discussion is expected to be civil, especially when there is disagreement over an issue or proposed action. Civil discussion focuses on reasons, not on the personalities or motivations of people with whom you disagree. When stating what you believe to be facts supporting reasons, be open to the healthy skepticism of others and don't assume their skepticism is an attack on your personal truthfulness or integrity.

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Acknowledgment:

I acknowledge receipt of this “*Guide to Serving on a Regional Board*” and accept the responsibilities detailed in Attachment B - “*Responsibilities as a Williston Representative*”.

Name

Signature

Date

Check the appropriate regional board(s) you will be/are currently serving on

<input type="checkbox"/>	Channel 17 Government Access Trust	<input type="checkbox"/>	Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Champlain Water District (CWD)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lake Iroquois Recreation District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chittenden County Regional Planning	<input type="checkbox"/>	Tri-Town Sewer District
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chittenden County Transportation Auth (CCTA)	<input type="checkbox"/>	Winooski Valley Park District (WVPD)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Chittenden Unit for Special Investigations (CUSI)	<input type="checkbox"/>	