Bennington County Regional Commission

Minutes

Thursday, July 16, 2026

6:00 PM

Merck Forest & Farmland Center, Rupert, VT
and via Zoom

Commissioners Present: John LaVecchia, Walter Klinger, Dana Rozycki, Joan Nash, Sheila Kearns, Dana Rozycki, David Conwill, Josh Fisette, Lisa Gramlin, Charlie Rockwell, Michael Fernandez

Public Present: Travis Hart, Alden Finney, Doug Lyons, Coryn Britton, Bonnie Daley, Arianna Collins, Town of Manchester (Unnamed on Zoom)

Guests: Angie Allen – VT DEC, Rob Terry – Merck Forest

BCRC Staff: Bill Colvin, Callie Fishburn, Samantha Page, Nick Zaiac, Dara Zink, Jim Henderson

The meeting was called to order at 6:02pm.

1. **Approval of Minutes of January 15, 2026, February 19, 2026 and May 21, 2026 meetings**
   Motion to approve by John LaVecchia, second by Walter Klinger. Approved.

2. **Public Hearing – *Bennington Regional Plan***
   Charlie Rockwell made a motion to open the public hearing which was seconded by Michael Fernandez. BCRC staff reviewed the process for the proposed *Bennington Regional Plan* which needs to be approved by December 31, 2026 to meet the requirements of Act 181. Staff then explained the public engagement for and process, organization and major themes of the plan, shared the Future Land Use maps and how the required housing targets were calculated. Staff then responded to questions from Commissioners and the public. The public hearing was closed

3. **Public Hearing – Draft 2026 Basin 1 (Battenkill, Hoosic, Walloomsac Rivers) Tactical Basin Plan Final Report**
   Angie Allen, VT DEC Watershed Planner, walked the group through a story map highlighting the *2026 Basin 1 Tactical Basin Plan* and responded to questions. She noted that the public comment period for the proposed final plan, which is completed every five years, opened on June 15, 2026 and closed on July 31, 2026.

4. **Merck Forest & Farmland Center Update**

Rob Terry provided a brief update on the importance of the Merck Forest & Farmland Center as part of a 42,000 acre unfragmented forest block and a portion of the Appalachian biome noted by Nature Conservancy as one of the four most important in the world. Given the late hour, Mr. Terry did not provide his full presentation, and it was agreed that he would be invited to a future meeting to do so.

There being no other business from commissioners, the meeting was adjourned at 7:58pm.

Respectfully submitted,

William Colvin
Director