

Bi-Town Economic Development Committee
Meeting Minutes
via Zoom & Deerfield Valley Rescue
Thursday, September 4, 2025

Members present: Gretchen Havreluk, Vicki Capitani, Bill Benneyan, Heidi Taylor (8:06)

Members present via Zoom: Shannon Wheeler, Laura Sibilia, Meghan Wilcock

Also present: Josh DeBottis

There is no recording of this meeting, due to operator error

Meeting opened by Chair Gretchen at 8:04am and officially called to order at 8:06 when quorum achieved.

- I. Public Comments: *None*
- II. Additions or changes to the agenda: *None*
- III. Approve minutes of July 10th meeting:
 - a. Motion to approve by Vicki, seconded by Heidi. Motion approved.
- IV. Housing Committee Update:
 - a. Gretchen: had a guest from the Rutland Area Housing Authority at last meeting but had to postpone their presentation to next week's meeting due to a lack of members present. Actively reviewing strategic plan developed a few years ago, aiming to check off remaining tasks. A new member, Keith Balvin, is very interested in housing development and is actively exploring properties and how projects could work locally.
- V. Marketing Committee Update:
 - a. Gretchen: applied for another State of VT GROW grant, aimed at attracting new residents to area. Current marketing campaign is ending soon, will attend November meeting to provide an update and present 2026 budget. Due to a resignation on the committee from Wilmington Works and with a current lack of a Chamber Director, Charlie and Vicki will be stepping in.
- VI. Economic Data Reporting:
 - a. Shannon: Received a payment of \$64,400.93 in August - \$25,260.98 from meals and rooms tax and \$39,139.95 from sales and use tax. This is a 17% decrease from last August's payment. Historically this amount is consistent with typical August figures, excluding two years with significantly higher amounts.
 - b. Gretchen: Wilmington data reporting shows a delay with information for the first quarter of 2025 now becoming available. Total August payment was \$153,554 marking a 2.3% decrease. [Gretchen has sent this info out to the committee already]
- VII. Other Business: *None*
- VIII. Wilmington Update:
 - a. Gretchen: VT Community Development Association conference 9/24 at OSEC, focusing on repurposing civic buildings into community assets. Public meetings for four town flood adaptation project, a consortium with Dover, Readsboro, Whitingham, and Wilmington focused on flood resiliency are scheduled for September 15th and 17th at OSEC. Bridge replacement still scheduled for 2029, still waiting for final engineer's report. They have been out inspecting the bridge recently. New zoning administrator, Alex Miller, from North Bennington with a background from FEMA, started last week. Wilmington Works held a successful fairy stroll and blueberry block party.
- IX. Dover Update:
 - a. Vicki: Finished paving for summer, further up on Bluebrook and some other places. Town will temporarily repair the Bluebrook bridge with a one lane bridge, expected to last for five years.

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Expensive for a temporary fix. Signed up Tuesday with Windham Solid Waste for composting and we'll be able to sell if we choose. Jamaica, Townshend, Dover and soon Readsboro will all be composting stations.

- b. Shannon: Disc Golf tournament Saturday in Horace Hill. Dover Day returning October 5th with a rain date of October 19th. Technical assistance grant program open for applications until September 30. Short term rental registrations are ongoing around 50% now registered.

X. Hermitage Club Update:

- a. Bill – busier this summer with members visiting, hosted more events, cocktail parties on the patio some off campus events. Membership committee doing well, at right inventory numbers. Josh DeBottis joined us August 18. Working on that transition and looking at the history of the club. Bill officially GM through September 30 and then advisory in background for the operating season. Community day scheduled for Monday 2/2, Special Olympics returns March 9 & 10. 100 days this Saturday to opening day December 13. Thank you to all the contractors, Town staff, people involved with getting the club up and running in 2020.

XI. Mount Snow Update:

- a. Meghan: great summer with scenic chairlift rides and the golf course open daily. Hosted Eastern state cup downhill in July, and just came off Brewer's Fest weekend. Upcoming fall events include Wine and Harvest Festival, Wildlife Festival, and two Oktoberfest Saturdays. Will host a regional leadership summit for NE Vail managers in two weeks. Epic passes will on sale, opening date remains weather dependent.

XII. BDCC Update:

- a. Laura: in process of scheduling visits with Selectboards, sent out community surveys on how town needs are aligning. Number of programs with SoVT Economy Project, recently held a successful municipal leaders program in Wardsboro to troubleshoot and learn from each other on buildings. The 'Get on Board' program is upcoming, please invite those you think could be leaders in our communities.

XIII. Moover Update: *None in attendance*

XIV. Chamber Update:

- a. Shannon: Busy summer for the Chamber but have hired staff. Marketing coordinator Bridget Mooney and Executive Director Pam Greene start next week. Blueberry Festival had great weather, only rescheduled the Splash. Wilmington Works hosted a great block party. Thank you to both Towns, all our sponsors, and Janet and her team of help. Wine and Harvest festival is imminent, Soup Stroll becoming a fan favorite on Friday, September 19, pacing to potentially sell out. Head to Mount Snow Saturday for Wine and Harvest Festival and hoping for great weather. Membership Renewals have been sent out, hosting a member mixer October 20 at WW Design Center.

XV. Motion to adjourn by Vicki, seconded by Gretchen at 8:35 am.

Next meeting November 6th.

Respectfully submitted,

Shannon Wheeler
Economic Development, Town of Dover