

## Approved Minutes

Tax Structure Commission

Monday, September 23, 2019

1:00 P.M. – 4:00 P.M.

Ethan Allen Room, State House

Montpelier, VT

**Present:** Commissioners: Stephen Trenholm, Deb Brighton, Bram Kleppner via phone; Staff Director: Sean Sheehan; Consultant to the Tax Structure Commission: Susan Mesner; JFO Staff: Joyce Manchester, Chloe Wexler; Tax Department: Doug Farnham, Jill Remick; General Assembly: Representative Scott Beck, Representative James Masland; Public Assets Institute: Julie Lowell; Vermont School Board Association: Nicole Mace; Vermont Superintendent’s Association; Jeff Francis; Helping Overcome Poverty’s Effects: Jeanne Montross; Vermont Natural Resources Council: Jamey Fidel, Kate McCarthy; Vermont Land Trust: Nick Richardson; Vermont League of Cities and Towns: Gwynn Zakov

- 1:03 P.M. Welcome – Deb Brighton, Commissioner – call to order 1:04**  
Approval of [minutes from 8/29/19](#) – Commissioner Trenholm moved, Commissioner Kleppner seconded, all in favor.  
Review of agenda - no changes
- 1:06 P.M. Perspectives on education finance and the education property tax**  
**1:06 P.M. Jeanne Montross**, Helping Overcome Poverty’s Effects  
**1:17 P.M. Jeff Francis**, Vermont Superintendents Association [\[submitted testimony\]](#).  
**1:47 P.M. Representative Scott Beck** [\[submitted supporting documents\]](#).  
Additional discussion and/or public comment - none
- 2:00 P.M. Perspectives on current use**  
**2:07 P.M. Jamey Fidel**, Vermont Natural Resources Council [\[submitted supporting documents\]](#).  
**1:27 P.M. Nick Richardson**, Vermont Land Trust [\[submitted presentation\]](#).
- 2:43 P.M. Work status update/Future work**
- Demographic paper and discussion of draft findings.
    - Commissioners made final decisions on the title/subtitle and refined the findings. Commissioner Brighton asked that an additional or revised finding emphasize the importance of the current demographic transition (ie the change of the age structure from “pyramid to pillar” as detailed in Appendix D of the report)
  - Survey and stakeholder outreach
    - Commissioners refined the survey questions.
  - Internal feedback on existing taxes
- Sean Sheehan, Staff Director, Tax Structure Commission

Susan Mesner, Consultant to the Tax Structure Commission

**3:11 PM Update on Commission budget**

Stephen Klein, Joint Fiscal Office – presented an update. Catherine Benham, Joint Fiscal Office, suggested they revisit the budget during the December meeting.

**3:30 PM**

**Discussion by Commissioners** – Commissioners will each generate a spreadsheet of the topics raised in education finance testimony over the last couple months, separated into categories, and share prior to the next meeting.

**3:50 P.M.**

**Next meeting date and agenda**

Deb Brighton, Commissioner – Commissioners will plan the next meeting with an open agenda to discuss education finance. Commissioner Brighton suggested they all give some thought as to how to adjust the education paper to be more forward-looking.

Next Meeting Date: November 6, 2019, 1-4 P.M. at Bristol or Vergennes Library

**4:00 P.M. Adjourn by consensus**