

VT Tax Structure Commission  
Tuesday, May 12, 2020 – 2:30 P.M.  
Virtual Meeting via Zoom

**Draft Minutes**

Present: Commissioners: Stephen Trenholm, Deb Brighton, Bram Kleppner; Staff Director: Sean Sheehan; Consultant to the Tax Structure Commission: Susan Mesner; Representative Emilie Kornheiser

**2:36 P.M. Commissioner Trenholm called the meeting to order at 2:32 P.M.**

Approve minutes from 4/6/2020 and 1/13/2020.

Commissioner Kleppner motions to approve both sets of previous minutes.

Commissioner Brighton seconds. All in favor

**Discussion:** Commissioner Kleppner had asked about the possibility of a Tax Commission extension. Commissioner Kleppner raised two COVID-related considerations: 1) that the Commission has enough time to do their best work, and 2) and that it is delivered at an optimal timing for the Legislature, recognizing that schedules and priorities have changed. He suggested revisiting this question on or around September 1, 2020.

Mr. Sheehan mentioned that it may be feasible going forward to have panels, as well as meetings, via Zoom.

Commissioner Trenholm suggested setting an agenda for resuming monthly meetings. Commissioner Trenholm proposed the Commission wait a week, digest the materials that Mr. Sheehan and Ms. Mesner will send out and then schedule the next meeting. He also suggested that the Commission keep Zoom meetings as an option even when in person meetings resume in the State. All agreed.

Commission agreed that, now having a few Zoom meetings under their belt, they reincorporate public testimony again in a way that works for everyone who would like to speak.

Commission acknowledged that they may need to pull out priorities from Bram's outline and focus on crucial items given the time left. Education finance should remain part of the scope. Commissioner Kleppner said he will email latest version of the draft final report outline to the Commission. Commissioner Trenholm reminded the Commission they have taken a lot of testimony on education finance and have a good handle on some of the taxation issues which are still relevant. He suggested revisiting education testimony at the next meeting or the meeting after. Commissioner Brighton said they should go through the list of criticisms in education testimony. She then asked about Joint Fiscal Office staff availability over the summer months. Mr. Sheehan said he would inquire regarding availability.

Commissioner Trenholm recaps: 1. Receive the information from Mr. Sheehan and Ms. Mesner and look it over, 2. Individually revisit education funding testimony and list criticisms and, 3.

Schedule a meeting within the next two weeks. The next meeting will be open discussion centered on tax burden and benefit distribution and education finance testimony.

Mr. Sheehan said the Commission will have YouTube public viewing option going forward. Rep Emilie Kornheiser introduced herself as a new member of the House Committee on Ways and Means and supports the move to YouTube so that she and others can see the Commission proceedings in addition to listening.

**3:36 P.M.      Adjourn by consensus**