



~ **MINUTES** ~

**70<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL MEETING**  
**Zooming Meeting**  
**September 24, 2020**

**THOSE ATTENDING:**

**Directors:** Louisa Dotoli, Paul Brouha, Woodman Page, Paul Monette, Mark Whitworth, Ed O'Leary, Ken Linsley, Rudy Chase, Shari Cornish, William Davis, Farley Brown, Larry Thompson, Joel Cope, Martha Feltus, Laura Dolgin, Robert Starr, Cynthia Stuart

**Guests:** Katherine Sims

**Employees:** Judy Butson, Tina Gonyaw, David Snedeker

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The 70<sup>h</sup> Annual Meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM.

Martha Feltus opened the meeting, explained the general ZOOM etiquette, and welcomed all present.

**Updates to Agenda**

Nominate and Elect Orleans County Executive Committee Member for a term of 1 year

**Meeting Minutes**

A motion by Mark Whitworth seconded by Robert Starr, to accept the minutes of September 26, 2020 Annual Meeting as mailed, carried unanimously.

**Appointment of ballot clerks**

President Feltus announced Fred Saar and Judy Butson as clerks to count the election ballots.

**Election Results**

Judy Butson announced the results of the election of officers as follows:

President	Martha Feltus
Vice President, Caledonia County	Paul Brouha
Vice President, Essex County	No Election
Vice President, Orleans County	Grant Spates
Secretary/Treasurer	Thomas Robinson

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### **Nominations & Vote for Essex County Committee Members**

NVDA's Executive Committee has two open positions on the Executive Committee. 1 term for a length of 2 years; 1 term for a length of 3 years.

A nomination of Gina Vigneault for a term of 2 years was made by Joel Cope. There were no other nominations. The position for a 3-year term will remain open until the next Full Board Meeting unless Essex County representatives meet to caucus before then.

A motion to accept the Essex County Committee Member by Robert Starr and, seconded by Mark Whitworth, carried unanimously.

### **Nominations & Vote for Essex County Vice President**

A nomination of Gina Vigneault for Essex County Vice President was presented to the Board.

A motion to accept the Essex County Vice President by Robert Starr and, duly seconded, carried unanimously.

### **Nominations & Vote for Orleans County Executive Committee Member**

A nomination of Paul Monette to replace Amanda Carlson as an Orleans County Executive Committee Member was made by Laura Dolgin. There were no other nominations.

A motion to elect Paul Monette to the Executive Committee as a representative of Orleans County for a 1-year term was made by Laura Dolgin, and seconded by Robert Staff, carried unanimously.

### **Ratification of Election Results**

A motion for ratification of the election results by Paul Monette and, seconded by Robert Starr, carried unanimously.

### **Guest Speaker**

David Snedeker, NVDA Executive Director, introduced guest speaker Katherine Sims, Executive Director of NEK Collaborative

Please see attached presentation.

### **Toast to All – David Snedeker**

David noted that normally the annual meeting is the time when NVDA can showcase all the great work that staff does across the region. This year, staff have been working remotely since mid-March, but the amount of work has been incredible. The annual report provides highlights of that work. David thanked the staff, the board, and all of the local and regional partners who make it possible for NVDA to do what we do.

### **Other Business**

None

A motion by Robert Starr and Joel Cope and duly seconded, to adjourn the meeting, carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 6:46 PM.



## Northeast Kingdom Collaborative

Building strong and vibrant communities  
in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom.

# NEK Recovery Plan

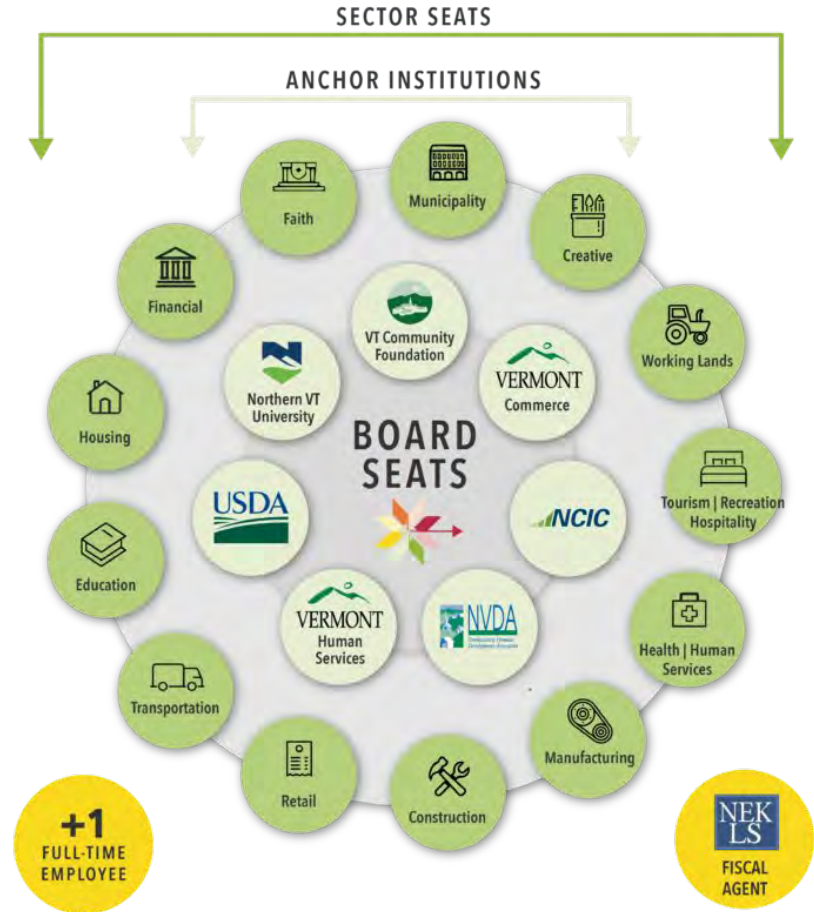
We bring people together to spark positive change in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.



# WHO WE ARE

The **20-member** board represents a diverse cross sector of federal, state, local, private, and nonprofit leaders from the region.

- Founded in 2000
- Relunched in 2017
- Board meets quarterly
- Members leave their org. hats at door



**We are not a “service provider” but rather, a convener, supporter and coach. We are a catalyst for change and then we get out of the way.**

## **THE NEED**

The effects of the COVID-19 crisis have illuminated the Northeast Kingdom's most pressing issues.

**We can seize this opportunity to manifest our shared vision for a vibrant, thriving Northeast Kingdom.**

# NEK RECOVERY PLAN

Highlight the most feasible and impactful action steps to accelerate the recovery of the Northeast Kingdom.

The result of over 30 in depth interviews with experts



Ben Doyle

ASSISTANT STATE DIRECTOR,  
VT/NH | USDA RURAL  
DEVELOPMENT



Jon Freeman

PRESIDENT | NORTHERN  
COMMUNITY INVESTMENT  
CORPORATION



Jody Fried

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR |  
CATAMOUNT ARTS



Kathy Austin

PRESIDENT & CEO |  
COMMUNITY NATIONAL BANK



Tom Lovett

HEADMASTER | ST.  
JOHNSBURY ACADEMY



Dr. Elaine Collins

PRESIDENT | NORTHERN VT  
UNIVERSITY



# NEK Recovery Plan Summary

NORTHEAST KINGDOM COLLABORATIVE | JUNE 2020

The effects of the COVID-19 crisis have illuminated the Northeast Kingdom's most pressing issues. With increased community engagement and funding, we can seize this opportunity to manifest our shared vision for a vibrant, thriving Northeast Kingdom.

As the convener for our region, the NEK Collaborative has partnered with key thought leadership in the NEK to articulate this series of immediate strategies for community and economic recovery.

Based on extensive expert interviews, the most feasible and impactful action steps to accelerate the recovery of the Northeast Kingdom cover these five priority areas:

## 1 Broadband

Ensure affordable, high-speed internet for all NEK residents.

## 2 Housing

Meet all NEK residents' housing needs.

## 3 Education

Construct a high-quality, sustainable birth to career education system.

## 4 Business Support

Organize & promote structured business support for long-term recovery.

## 5 Cultural & Civic Infrastructure

Reinvigorate the cultural and civic infrastructure of the NEK.

With an eye on long-term systemic change, the following short-term actions should be implemented immediately.

# Broadband

Goal:

Ensure affordable,  
high-speed internet for  
all NEK residents.





# Broadband

**1.**

Install fixed wireless projects as short-term solutions to be completed in 2020.

**2.**

Maintain subsidies for internet service & device purchase for low-income Vermonters.

**3.**

Fully fund build-out of a regions-wide last mile high-speed broadband network through a combination of federal and state grants, loans, private investment and bonding.

# Housing

Goal:  
Meet all NEK residents'  
basic housing needs.





# Housing

**1.**

Designate and/or build permanent, year-round supportive housing to address those struggling with chronic homelessness.

**2.**

Expand integrated mental, physical health, and social supports that can stabilize families and prevent future homelessness.

**3.**

Initiate time-limited rental/ mortgage assistance program for households earning up to 80% of median income.

# Education

Goal:

Reimagine an effective and sustainable birth to career educational system in the NEK that is both high-quality and affordable.





# Education

**1.**

Increase Child Care Financial Assistance Program reimbursements for early childcare programs to reflect the increased cost of providing care.

**2.**

Conduct a community child care needs assessment to identify new/ emerging child care challenges and develop solution.

**3.**

Bring state appropriation for the Vermont State College system in line with other New England states.

# Business Support

Goal:

Organize and make accessible structured business support for long-term recovery.







# Business Support

**1.**

Provide direct financial assistance to small businesses for fixed cost expenses.

**2.**

Assign NEK Recovery Guides to provide technical assistance, business and financial planning, grant and loan writing support, and business support.

**3.**

Fund shovel-ready municipal capital projects to restart jobs & construction.

# Cultural & Civic Infrastructure

Goal:  
Reinvigorate the  
cultural and civic  
infrastructure of the  
NEK.





# Cultural & Civic Infrastructure

**1.**

Provide bridge overhead funding for 12--18 months for arts and cultural institutions that are unable to reopen yet.

**2.**

Develop best practices guide and coaching to help towns develop recovery plans.

**3.**

Provide public funding to put artists and creative economy back to work.

# WHAT'S NEXT?

- Form task forces
- Assess current status
- Develop implementation plan
- Secure funding
- Move work to action

# BUILDING ALIGNMENT



Working together, we can achieve great things for our region



# QUESTIONS?

Find the full report at  
[www.nekcollaborative.org](http://www.nekcollaborative.org)

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