

Winooski Valley CESA Organizational Meeting Minutes

Date: July 29, 2026

Time: 1:00 PM

1.0 Call to Order - the meeting was called to order at 1:00 PM by BUUSD Superintendent, Emilie Knisley

2.0 Introductions were made, and appointments were verified. The following people were in attendance: Emilie Knisley, Jody Emerson, Michael Leichliter, Catherine Gallagher, Deborah Clark, Libby Bonesteel, Lisa Floyd, Rebecca Tatistcheff, Alicia Lyford, Heather Lawler, Prudence Krasofski, Kayla Link, Rob Stalling, and Eric Lopez

3.0 The group reviewed the Purpose and Statutory Authority of the CESA - referencing relevant documents

4.0 Election of CESA Officers

- Cat Gallagher nominated Michael Leichliter; the nomination was seconded and approved with one abstention.
- Election of Treasurer postponed pending additional guidance on governance and fiscal structure.
- Lisa Floyd volunteered to serve as clerk, it was so moved, and she was unanimously elected Clerk.

5.0 Adjustments to the Agenda

- Libby Bonestell made a motion to approve the agenda as written, which was seconded by Emilie Knisley and unanimously approved.

6.0 Discussion

6.1 Bylaws

- State guidance is expected.
- A bylaws subcommittee will be formed to begin drafting documents prior to the next meeting. Lisa, Eric, and Deb volunteered to serve on this committee. Any meetings that they have will be warned and will be open meetings

6.2 Asset Mapping & Shared Services

- Members discussed identifying regional resources and opportunities for shared services.
- Recognized overlap with merger study committees and agreed to coordinate efforts where possible.

- A common template for districts may be developed following additional state guidance.
- Members discussed regional service models that focus on shared expertise, cooperative purchasing, specialized services, and cost efficiencies while allowing districts to access services as needed.

6.3 Financial Structure

- Reviewed available start-up funding and discussed organizational structure, fiscal management, and the future Executive Director role.
- Michael Leichter, Libby Bonesteel, and Emilie Knisley will gather information on funding access and fiscal models.

6.4 Review of Statutory Deadlines/Timeline

- Statutorily, we must meet quarterly. Sub-committees may meet in the interim in warned open meetings.

6.5 Executive Director Position and Timeline

- We will make decisions related to this position and timeline when we have more information/guidance about funding and the work of the merger committees

7.0 Public Comment

- Sandra Cameron, a resident of Barre Town, shared that the Vermont School Boards Association will be offering a CESA webinar with Jill Graham on August 11, and on August 20, there will be a webinar hosted about the merger study process.

8.0 Establish Regular Meeting Schedule and Location

- Eric Lopez made a motion that we: meet again on October 26, 2026, at 3:00 PM at Montpelier High School, and subsequently that we will meet on the last Monday of the months of October, January, April, and July (Oct. 26, Jan. 25, April 26, and July 26) with the location set on a rotational basis and a remote option available. The motion was seconded by Deb Clark and unanimously approved.
- The Barre Unified District website is designated as the official location for meeting notices, agendas, and minutes; in addition, members will provide copies of these materials to their district, and they will be posted in the same places as their regular board agendas, minutes, etc., are publicly posted in hard copy
- Emilie Knisley made a motion to designate the Times Argus as the newspaper of record. The motion was seconded by Eric Lopez and unanimously approved.
- Eric Lopez made the motion that the Member district websites will link to the CESA website (hosted by BUUSD [thank you!]) and continue local public notice requirements. This was seconded by Deb Clark and unanimously approved.

9.0 Adjournment

- Deb Clark made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 2:45, which was seconded by Emilie Knisley and unanimously approved. The meeting was adjourned at 2:45

Next Meeting

October 26, 2026

3:00 PM

Montpelier High School

Next Meeting Focus

- Proposed bylaws
- Funding and fiscal structure
- Regional needs assessment and service priorities