

STRUCTURE OF THE VERMONT PUBLIC SERVICE BOARD



NARUC Energy Regulatory Partnership Program

*The Energy Regulatory Commission of the Republic of Macedonia
and
The Vermont Public Service Board*

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Vermont Public Service Board

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History of the Vermont Public Service Board

- ❖ Understanding history helps us understand:
 - Current structure
 - Objectives of regulation
 - Regulatory procedures
- ❖ 1855 — Vermont Legislature created position of Railroad Commissioner (later Commission, later Public Service Board)
- ❖ 1981 — Board and Department split
 - Board: modeled on court; independent of Administration
 - Department: public advocate, planning, consumer affairs; part of Administration

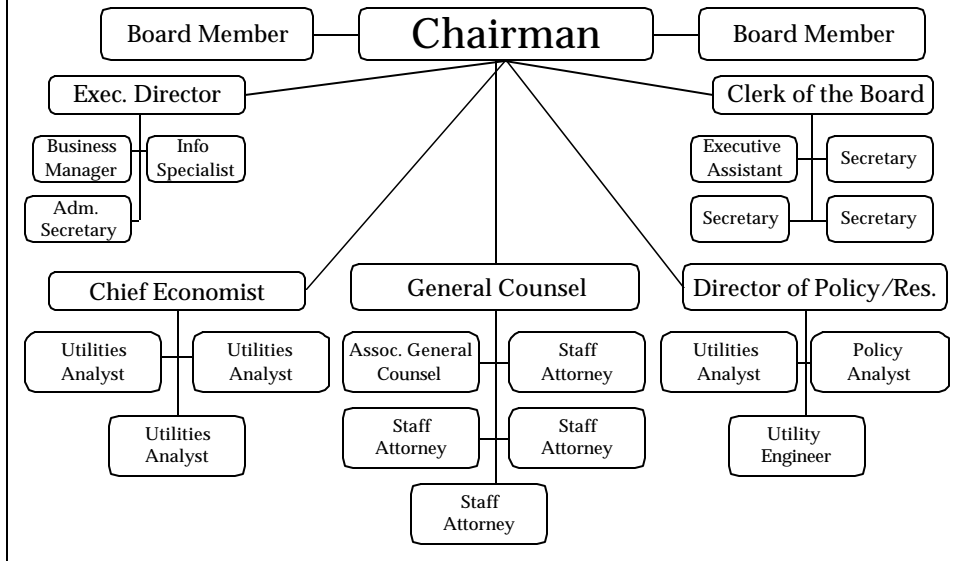
PSB Members

- ❖ Three Members
 - Full-time Chairman
 - Two part-time members
- ❖ Staggered, six-year terms
- ❖ Appointment
- ❖ Confirmation
- ❖ Removal

Staff

- ❖ 26 positions
 - Includes the 3 Board members
 - Currently, 2 vacancies
- ❖ Organizational Chart — 4 groups
 - Board members
 - Legal, Financial, Policy, Engineering staff
 - ◆ Staff distribution reflects Board's primary activities (legal analysis, economic analysis, decision writing)
 - ◆ Ability to retain outside experts when needed
 - Clerk's Office
 - Administrative support
- ❖ Code of Ethics and conflicts of interest

Organizational Chart



Legal, Financial, Policy, and Engineering Staff

TEAMS

- ❖ Electric
- ❖ Telephone and Cable
- ❖ Natural Gas
- ❖ Water
- ❖ Environmental (Siting)

Legal, Financial, Policy, and Engineering Staff

DUTIES

- ❖ Hearing Officer
- ❖ Staff cases that the Board hears directly
- ❖ Policy advisor
- ❖ Regional and national activities
- ❖ Legislative activities
- ❖ Respond to inquiries from public, legislators, utilities, press

“Small Court System”

- ❖ Hearing Officers
 - hear >90 % of dockets
 - responsible for case management
 - issue recommended decisions
- ❖ Board
 - issues final decisions
 - directly hears several major cases each year
 - reviews Hearing Officers’ recommended decisions
 - appeals are to Vermont Supreme Court
- ❖ Clerk
 - processes filings
 - issues notices and orders
 - contact point for parties and public

Clerk's Office

- ❖ Distribution, tracking, and filing of all official paperwork, both incoming and outgoing
- ❖ Manages relations with the parties and with the public
 - ex parte rule

Staff Training

- ❖ Internal
 - “On the job”
 - ◆ Assist experienced Hearing Officers
 - ◆ Hear expert testimony
 - Staff presentations
 - Seminars led by outside experts
 - Workshops (docket and non-docket)
 - Written materials (reports and periodicals)
- ❖ External
 - Camp NARUC
 - Seminars and conference

Budget

- ❖ Approximately \$2.5 million
- ❖ Special funded by a gross receipts tax on Vermont's utilities
 - Tax rate varies by industry
 - $\frac{1}{2}$ of one percent for electric, telephone, and cable companies
 - $\frac{3}{10}$ of one percent for gas utilities
 - $\frac{1}{10}$ of one percent for water utilities
- ❖ Board is funded with 40 percent of the total tax collections, the Department receives 60 percent
- ❖ Total tax receipts expected for this fiscal year is approximately \$6.3 million

Structure of the Department of Public Service

- ❖ Commissioner
- ❖ Divisions
 - Public Advocacy
 - Planning
 - Energy Efficiency
 - Engineering
 - Economics
 - Consumer Affairs