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2025 VLCT Service Award Winners and Nominees





By Josh Hanford, VLCT Director of Intergovernmental Relations

Several hundred people were in attendance on Wednesday at VLCT's Town Fair 2025 in South Burlington when Mary Ann Goulette, VLCT Board President and West Rutland Town Manager, announced this year's winners of VLCT's awards for outstanding service to Vermont local government. The 2025 VLCT Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Bill Fraser, former Montpelier City Manager and past VLCT Board President. For the second year in a row, two 2025 Municipal Service Awards were presented: one to Linda Martin of Wolcott and the other to Farley Brown of Craftsbury. Continue reading to learn more about them and the other Municipal Service Award nominees. Nominations can be made each summer by any VLCT member or the VLCT Awards Committee.

2025 Lifetime Achievement Award: Bill Fraser



From time to time, VLCT presents its Lifetime Achievement Award to a municipal official or employee who has dedicated their career to serving local government, both within their community and through service at a statewide level on a board, commission, or the Vermont League of Cities and Towns. The winner of this year's Lifetime Achievement Award is Bill Fraser, who until recently was the City Manager of Montpelier and Past President of VLCT.

Bill Fraser served as the Montpelier City Manager for 30 years, an unusual feat in this line of work – and a testament to his outstanding work ethic as well as his commitment to Montpelier, its people, and the larger community. During that time Bill directed and managed the work of over one hundred city employees, handled a budget of over \$30 million, and oversaw the operations of all city departments and collective bargaining agreements.

During this tenure, Bill was responsible for preparation and passage of thirty consecutive municipal budgets: it's literally impossible to visit Montpelier without seeing and being affected by the changes and projects carried out by the city during Bill's term in office. As city manager, Bill was responsible for the construction of a new state-of-the art water treatment facility as well as numerous other municipal and public assets including a new police station, affordable housing, Stone Cutters Way, the wood-chip district heating system, and the downtown transit center. Moreover, Bill managed and presided over the city's responses to major floods in 2011, 2023, and 2024.

Beyond his work with the city, Bill has worked to advance his profession, serving as the president of the Vermont Town and City Managers Association, president of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns from 2023 to 2025, and Northeast Regional Vice-President of the International City-County Management Association from 2020 to 2023.



"As a council member, and currently as mayor, I have come to truly appreciate all Bill has done for this City. Bill displayed a breadth and depth of knowledge of all the affairs of the city, and a mastery of the details of city government and the many dynamics and influences touching on our city operations that is nothing short of astounding. No matter the topic, Bill has always had an insightful response and analysis of the potential risks, benefits, and countervailing opinions raised by any proposal. For all these reasons and more, Bill Fraser has truly earned the Lifetime Achievement Award." Jack J. McCullough, Mayor of the City of Montpelier

2025 Municipal Service Award

The Municipal Service Award is given to a Vermont municipal official who has shown an active commitment to strong local government, both within their community and beyond its borders, or to a person outside of local government who works to improve the governance and support of or service to Vermont cities, towns, and villages. This year we honor two winners.

Linda Martin of the Town of Wolcott

Linda Martin has served the community of Wolcott for almost 40 years in numerous positions. In 1986 she was elected as the Wolcott Town Clerk & Treasurer and served in that role until five years ago, when she was elected to the selectboard and became its chair. During her tenure she was instrumental in modernizing recordkeeping systems from paper to digital formats. She also served in the state legislature for 12 years, advocating for municipal government on the House Committee for Government Operations. Linda is also an active board member of the Lamoille County



Planning Commission and its brownfields and transportation advisory committees.

Linda's ability to constantly participate and engage in a cross section of topics important to her community has effectively advanced many goals of the Wolcott Town Plan and, in fact, the region's goals. Whether it be wastewater, flood recovery, transportation, or recreation, Linda engages the community and meets people where they are.

"Vermont's small rural communities struggle to develop infrastructure. Linda's leadership on the Wolcott wastewater system has provided a clear template for small communities. The model Linda has created for identifying and obtaining funds, project administration, and community buy-in provides a model for other communities to follow," said Sarah Haskins, Town of Morristown.

Farley A. Brown of the Town of Craftsbury

For over two decades, Farley Brown has served the Town of Craftsbury with unwavering commitment as a member of both the planning commission and the conservation commission. She has worked closely with the Northeastern Vermont Development Association on multiple updates to the Craftsbury Town Plan, village center designations, energy planning, and master planning for the village. Her work is always marked by extraordinary commitment to leadership, professionalism, respect, and willingness to engage with all members of the community, while doing her utmost to ensure that all voices are heard.

As planning commission chair/co-chair, Farley has facilitated an ongoing dialog among diverse viewpoints, empowering each member to have a say in the difficult conversation of responding to growth and change – and to consider the role of land use regulations in Craftsbury's future. The latter topic can be fraught with emotion in



Craftsbury, and Farley has always demonstrated patience and compassion in ensuring the dialog stays productive. Farley has served on multiple other committees, and she is a professor at Sterling College, which has allowed her to integrate the school's programming to the benefit of the community.

"We believe Farley embodies the spirit of outstanding municipal service this award seeks to recognize. Her long-standing dedicated and knowledgeable efforts have made a lasting positive impact on the Town of Craftsbury." Bruce Urie, Craftsbury Selectboard.

Other 2025 Nominees for VLCT's

Municipal Service and Lifetime

Achievement Awards

Kathleen Ramsay, former Town Manager, Town of Middlebury

Kathleen was nominated by Bill Finger – retired Town Manager of Middlebury, Shelburne, West Rutland, Ira, and Lincoln – for being a highly motivated, quietly confident, and absolutely competent individual who has dedicated her professional life to patiently building honest and sustainable public trust in local government.

Lily King, Customer Care Manager, Stowe Electric Department

Lily was nominated by Caroline Klosowski of Stowe Electric Department. For the past eighteen years, Lily has been an integral part of the Stowe Electric Department, dedicating her career to advancing reliable public power and serving her community with unwavering commitment, professionalism, and heart.



Elly Majonen, Treasurer, Town of Guilford

Elly was nominated by Veranda Porche, Selectboard Chair of the Town of Guilford, for being an outstanding public servant who has stepped up, even in emergencies, to guide her town and community in multiple roles. She is principled, capable, dedicated, compassionate, versatile, and humble. The motto below Elly's signature broadcasts her message: Building community with kindness, respect, and civility.

Catherine McMains, Selectboard Member, Town of Jericho

Catherine was nominated by Paula Hollstein, Town Administrator of Jericho, for actively serving the community of Jericho and its residents for 25 years in multiple roles. Her service beyond the selectboard, to lead on climate and energy issues and serve on the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, demonstrates commitment to Jericho and beyond.

DeForest Bearse, Selectboard, Town of Weathersfield

DeForest was nominated by Patience Bearse of the Wethersfield Conservation Commission for being a pillar of the community in Weathersfield for decades. DeForest has served as the Land Use Administrator for many years, the secretary for countless boards and committees, a co-founder of the local food shelf, contributor of countless hours on the 1879 Schoolhouse Committee, a member of the Veterans Memorial Committee for 20 years, and is now a selectboard member. DeForest always answers the call for civic duty.

Sue Gage, Clerk/Treasurer, Town of Brandon

Sue was nominated by Patricia Welch, Justice of the Peace of the Town of Brandon, for elevating Brandon's local government and finances to the highest level of professionalism. She is always available to the community to answer any question or need that arises. She was the catalyst for the town's adoption of the local option tax,



which required the General Assembly to enact a governance charter for Brandon for the first time, and which has to date realized nearly \$2M of non-property-tax revenue for the town's capital needs.

Julie Hance, Town Manager, Town of Chester

Julie was nominated by Deborah Aldrich, Treasurer/Clerk of the Town of Chester, for being a strong and dedicated leader who always goes above and beyond in her role as Town Manager. Julie worked tirelessly with Vermont state agencies and FEMA during and after the 2023 flooding to improve response and recovery in Chester and other impacted communities throughout southern Vermont. She has also worked hard to improve emergency services in the region and serves on the VLCT board of directors.

Joan Shannon, former City Councilor, City of Burlington

Joan was nominated by Samantha Sheehan, Municipal Policy and Advocacy Specialist of VLCT, for her 22 years of service as a city councilor in Burlington. Joan was City Council President from 2012 to 2015 and was the chair of numerous council committees including the Ordinance Committee. Throughout her career she has been a strong champion for municipal employees, with a particularly strong record of support for the Burlington Police Department. She also supported numerous significant federal infrastructure projects including at the airport and the Champlain Parkway, and she provided oversight and support for the city's two TIF districts.

Kristen Leahy, Zoning and Floodplain Administrator, Town of Hardwick

Kristen was nominated by Matt Hand, Hazard Mitigation Planner for the State of Vermont, for her demonstrated ability to go above and beyond to assist her community by taking an active role in the application process for many buyouts under various Vermont and FEMA programs. Kristen has spearheaded the Town of Hardwick's efforts to reduce future flooding and assist vulnerable residents with



getting out of flood zones. She and the Town of Hardwick have taken a targeted yet compassionate approach to flood mitigation, by addressing the needs of those in the toughest situations first, while also having an overarching goal/plan to reduce future flooding in the community.

2025 Legislative Service Award

The Legislative Service Award is given to a member of the Vermont General Assembly who, through their service, has best shown an awareness of the issues facing local government and its capacity for self-governance and, through legislative action, has sought to solve those problems and provide local authority on a statewide basis.

No nominations for the 2025 Legislative Service Award were received this year.

Attachments

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