

September 28, 2026

VLCT to Honor Hartford's Hirshfield and Jericho's McMains at Town Fair





VLCT will recognize two municipal leaders for their contributions to local government during the largest gathering of municipal officials in the state, VLCT's Town Fair, on Wednesday, October 7 in South Burlington. Hartford Director of Planning and Development Lori Hirshfield will be presented with the 2026 VLCT Lifetime Achievement Award. Former Jericho Selectboard Member Catherine McMains will receive the 2026 VLCT Municipal Service Award.

Hirshfield, who has worked in Hartford for 30 years, has been credited with leading the revitalization of White River Junction by town and state officials. She championed the use of tax increment financing in Hartford and has been a vocal proponent of the program at the state level.

"We appreciate the thought leadership, persistency, and commitment to community engagement she has demonstrated throughout her years of service – qualities reflected in the revitalization of downtown White River Junction, the strengthening of Hartford's land use policies, and many, many other accomplishments," the Hartford Selectboard wrote in a letter of nomination.

VLCT Executive Director Ted Brady shared that he has known Lori for 20 years.



"Anytime I heard something exciting was happening in Hartford, I knew Lori was involved somehow," Brady said. "White River Junction's glow-up has been planned, supported, and professionally guided by Lori's presence in the planning department. And she's been quick to share the lessons learned statewide."

McMains has been involved in Jericho town government since 2000, when she became a member of the Jericho Development Review Board. She served 18 years on the selectboard, co-founded the Jericho Energy Task Force, and served on the Chittenden County Regional Planning Commission, including serving as chair.

"She is well known for her encyclopedic knowledge of state statutes, Jericho infrastructure, and her ability to bring people from all areas of Jericho together," the Jericho Selectboard wrote in their letter of nomination. "To her fellow board members, she was an invaluable wealth of knowledge as well as friendship."

CCRPC Senior Planner and Project Manager Darren Schibler pointed to McMain's work to lead the integration of climate resilience and energy planning into CCRPC's agenda and bringing practices learned from Jericho to other communities as evidence of her impact on local and regional municipal government. McMains was also instrumental in the creation of an icicle contest in Jericho aimed at raising awareness for the need for weatherization work in residents' homes.

VLCT received more than 20 nominations for the 2026 Lifetime Achievement Award and 2026 Municipal Service Award. The Lifetime Achievement Award is given to a Vermont 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 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.

VLCT also recognized eight other award nominees with VLCT Letters of Commendation in appreciation of their service:

- Sheffield Road Foreman and former Selectboard Member and Chair Aldrich Maxwell for 43 years of service including multiple disaster recovery efforts and the negotiation a favorable wind development deal in town;
- Edward Farrar Utility District Commissioner and former Waterbury Selectboard Member Skip Flanders for more than 40 years of service, including his advocacy for water and sewer expansions that have led to economic development projects such as attracting the Ben & Jerry's flagship factory to Waterbury;
- Rutland Alderperson Sharon Davis for 37 years of service to the City of Rutland, including her support of the Business Incentive Assistance Program;
- South Burlington City Councilor Tim Barritt for 20 years of service to the City of South Burlington, on the City Council, the Development Review Board, and the Library Board;
- East Montpelier Town Clerk Rosie Laquerre for nine years of service and her mentorship of other town officials, support of other clerks in the region and statewide, and deep knowledge and talent executing the roles and responsibilities of Town Clerk;
- Lincoln Administrator Patricia Waugh for seven years of service including work to strengthen budgeting processes, improve cash flow planning, and identify



cost saving opportunities;

- Canaan Town Clerk Zachary Brown for six years of service highlighted by his grant writing skills, leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment to his community; and
- Newport Mayor Rick Ufford Chase for five years of service to Newport, including two as downtown director, and his commitment to building more housing in the city.

