

November 1, 2025



Working Effectively with Local Government

Bonnie Waninger, Project and Funding Specialist

Vermont League of Cities and Towns

Today's Speakers



**Bonnie Waninger, Project
& Funding Specialist,
Vermont League of Cities
and Towns**



**Brian Cali, Chair,
Reading Energy
Committee**

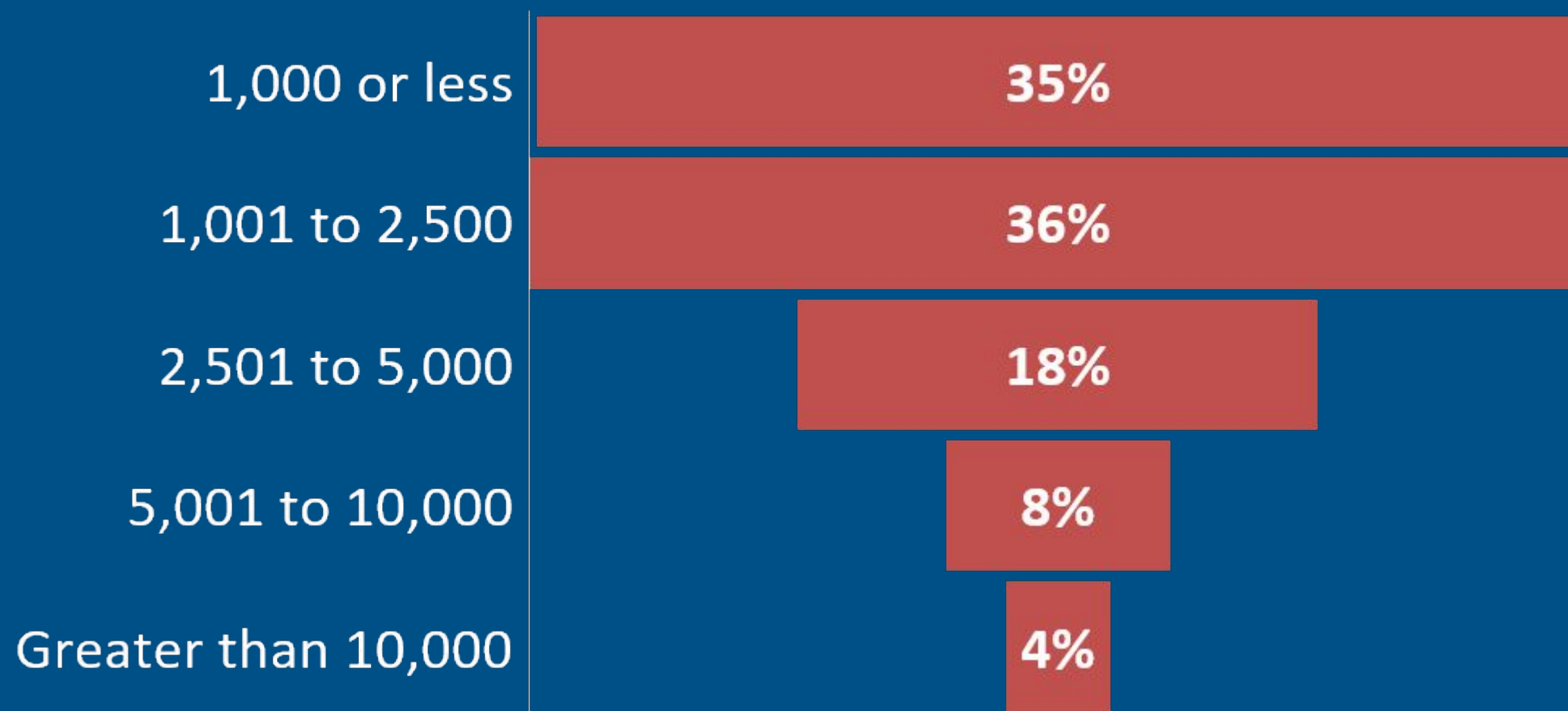


**Stephanie Moffett-Hynds,
Chair, Arlington Energy
Committee**



**Alyssa Johnson, Chair
Waterbury Selectboard**

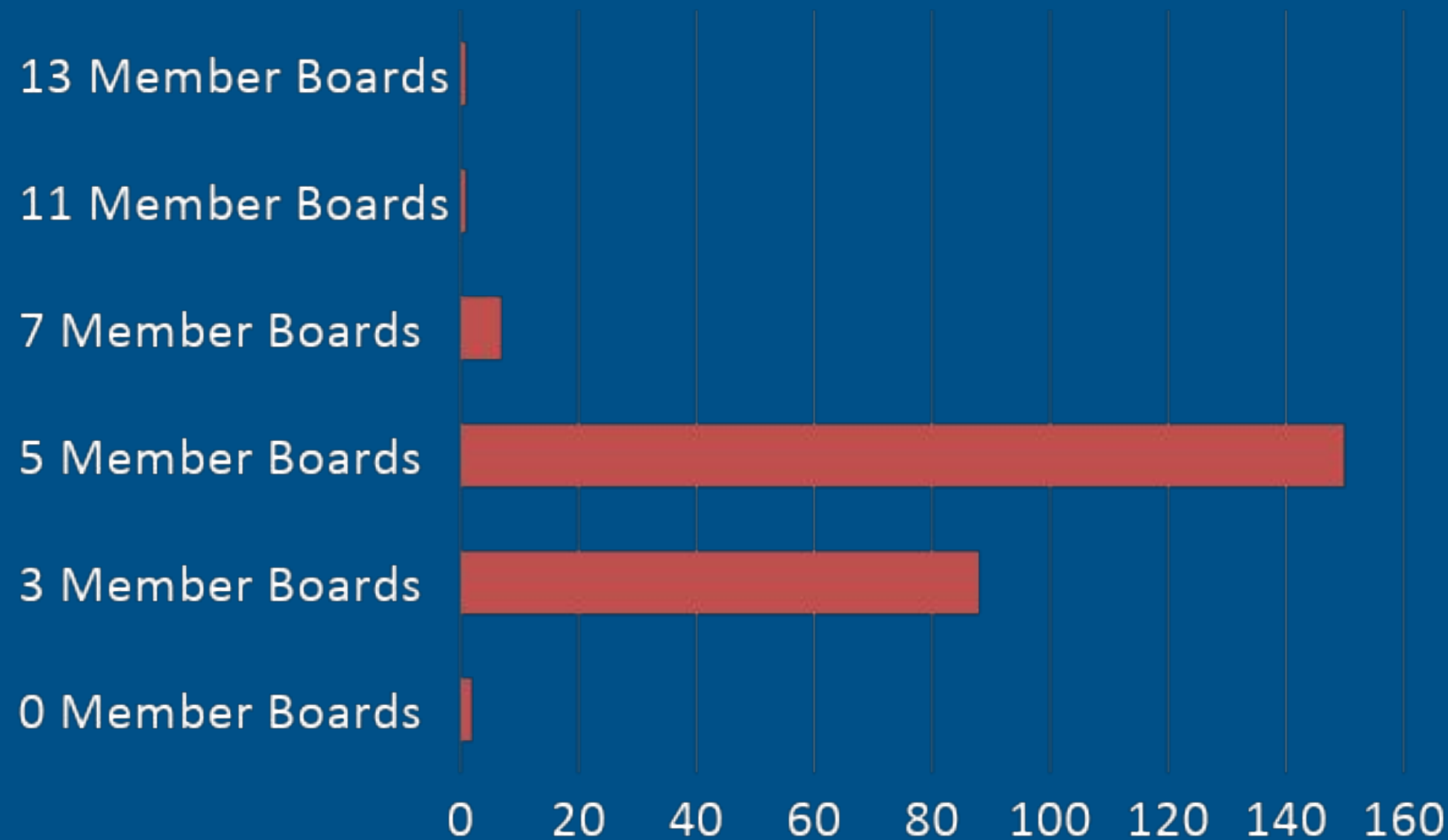
Vermont Municipal Government Fast Facts - 2020 Population



**71% of Vermont
cities and towns
have less than
2,500 residents**

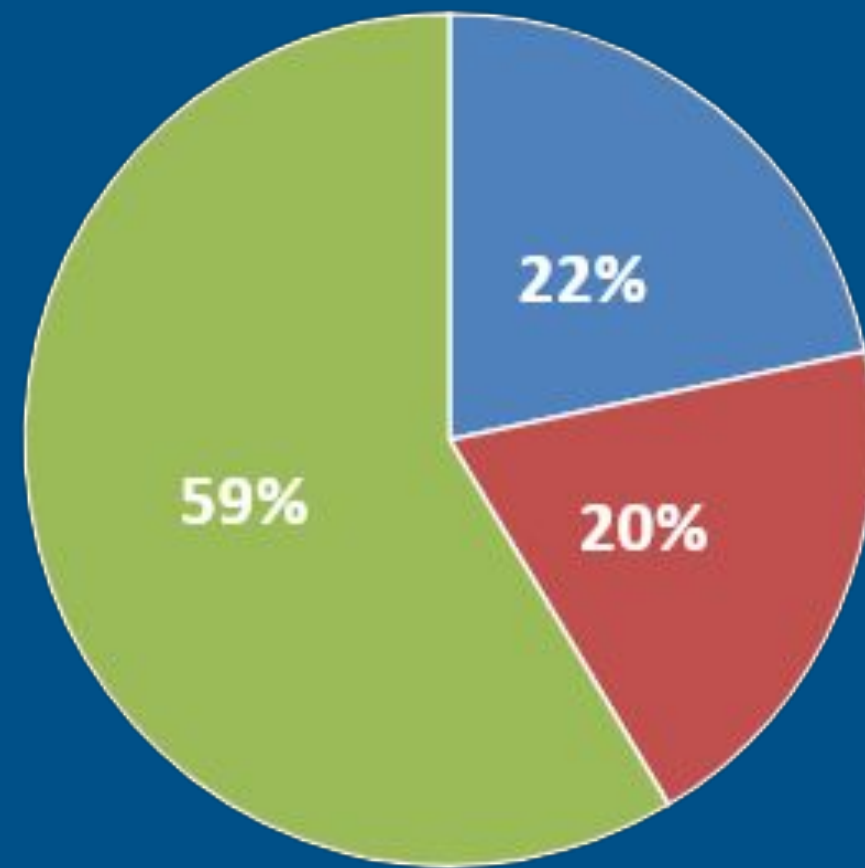
Vermont Municipal Government

Fast Facts - 2025 Legislative Body Size



60% of Vermont cities and towns have 5-member selectboards

Vermont Municipal Government Fast Facts - 2025 Capacity

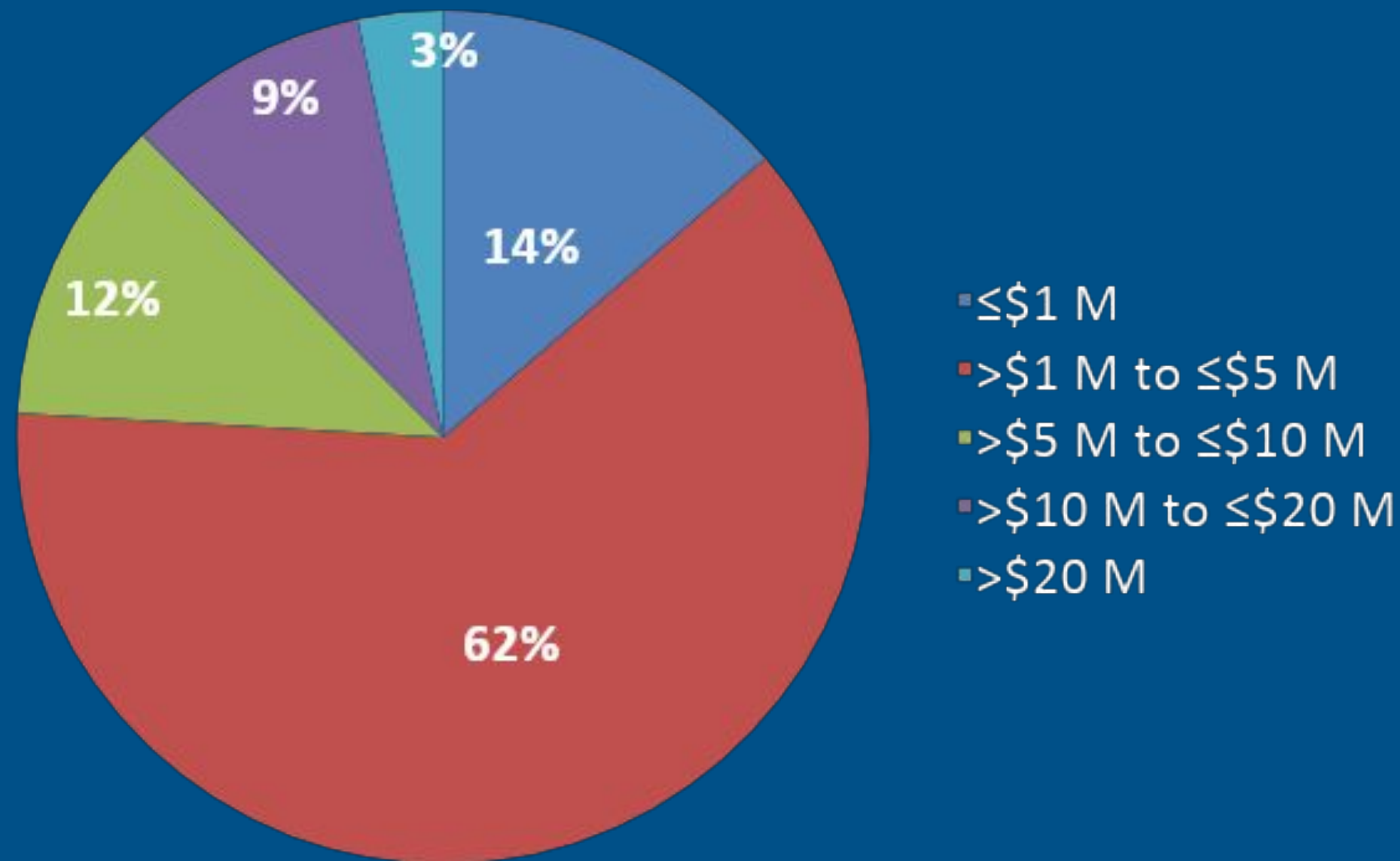


▣Managers ▣Administrators ▣Neither

42% of Vermont cities and towns have a **manager or administrator**

Vermont Municipal Government

Fast Facts - Equalized Grand List Value



62% of Vermont cities and towns have equalized municipal grand list values of less than \$5 million

Understanding Roles

Statutory Duties

What are municipalities required to do?

- Maintain roads and bridges
- Assess and collect property taxes to fund municipal operations
- Hold an annual town meeting
- Conduct elections
- Comply with open meeting laws
- Maintain and manager public records, including land records and vital statistics
- Appoint or elect key officials - selectboard, clerk, treasurer, health officer

Dillion's Rule

Local government only has the power granted to it by the state.

Understanding Roles

Statutory Duties

What may municipalities do?

- Establish and operate libraries, recreation departments, and cultural programs
- Create zoning bylaws and land use regulations
- Form planning commissions and adopt municipal plans
- Provide police services
- Offer public or senior transportation services
- Support economic development initiatives
- Manage municipal utilities
- Create conservation commissions
- Adopt local ordinances beyond state requirements

**In times of crisis,
local leadership is
most likely to
reduced these
services.**

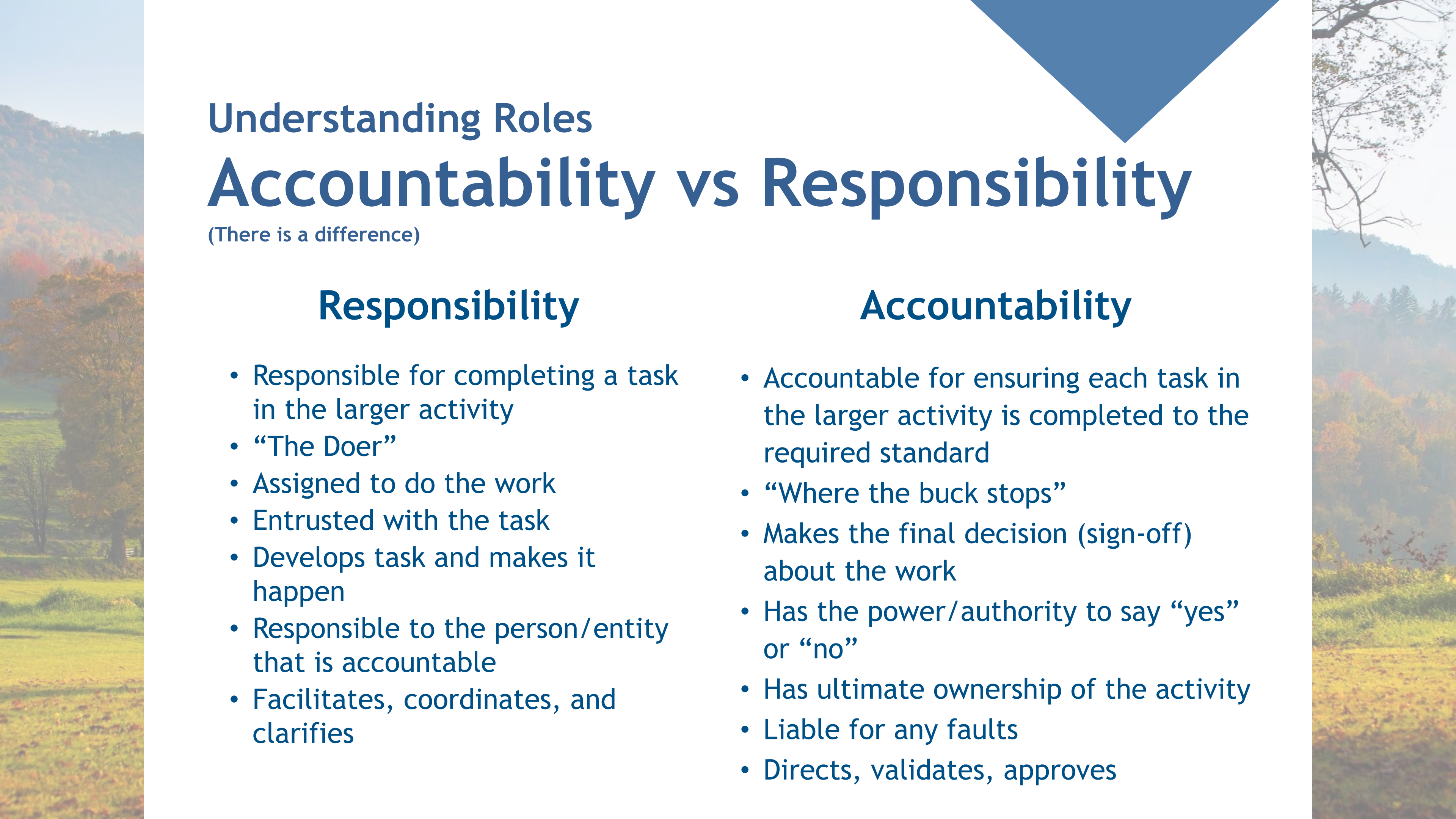
Understanding Roles

Whose does what?

- Selectboard*
- Manager or Administrator (they are different!)
- Clerk*
- Treasurer*
- Highway Supervisor
- Energy Committee
- Residents (voters)

*See VLCT's Vermont Elected and Appointed Local Officers

The overlapping duties of municipal entities require a “spirit of cooperation”.



Understanding Roles

Accountability vs Responsibility

(There is a difference)

Responsibility

- Responsible for completing a task in the larger activity
- “The Doer”
- Assigned to do the work
- Entrusted with the task
- Develops task and makes it happen
- Responsible to the person/entity that is accountable
- Facilitates, coordinates, and clarifies

Accountability

- Accountable for ensuring each task in the larger activity is completed to the required standard
- “Where the buck stops”
- Makes the final decision (sign-off) about the work
- Has the power/authority to say “yes” or “no”
- Has ultimate ownership of the activity
- Liable for any faults
- Directs, validates, approves

Wisdom from Panelists



Brian Cali
Chair
Reading Energy Committee



Stephanie Moffett-Hynds
Chair
Arlington Energy Committee



Alyssa Johnson, Chair
Waterbury Selectboard

Have questions?

LET ME KNOW!



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