

**VLITE Board of Directors Meeting:
Via Video Conference**

**Minutes of March 10, 2021
Approved on June 8, 2021**

Meeting called to order at 1:05

In attendance:

Board members: Dick Marron, Richard Rubin, Hal Cohen, Peter Walke, Annie Noonan, Tony Klein, Pat Moulton

Others: Gabrielle Malina, Jonathan Bond, Michael Dworkin, Cort Richardson, Theresa Alberghini-DiPalma, Julie Iffland, Peter Schneider, Patrick Murphy, Annie Bourdon, Tom Fritzsche

Approve Minutes of December 2020

- A motion was made to approve the minutes from December 16, 2020 Board of Directors meeting.
 - 1st - Richard Rubin, 2nd – Peter Walke
 - All in favor

Treasurers Report

- Treasurers Report read: Gabrielle Malina provided the account balances. As of February 24, 2021 there was \$21,266 in checking, \$1,590,311 in savings, \$8,685 in money market. Grants payable is currently \$745,000.

Update on Committed and Available Funds

Staff reviewed the unofficial report showing committed grant funds and available funds that demonstrate the board is spending within its means.

Housing Foundation Inc., Introduction

Jonathan Bond Executive Director of HFI provided an introduction to HFI, its housing portfolio and challenges to coordinating energy improvements. HFI is statewide which distinguishes it from the regional housing trusts and is often an owner of last resort in both the mobile home portfolio and apartments. They are one of largest affordable housing developers in the state and own the most mobile homes. Unique ownership structure in mobile home communities: HFI owns the parks but residents own the land. 1,000 lots plus ability to increase lots within those.

Energy efficiency work and other improvements, especially in existing and older properties are often done on what was available, funding and technology-wise rather than what was needed the most. HFI would like some help developing a strategic pipeline of energy projects in its portfolio so that it is not reacting to availability of funding piecemeal, but make informed, cohesive decisions and funding requests.

1. Would VLITE consider funding this; and, 2. What path would you feel most comfortable with: a portfolio-wide approach, to match the efficiency pipeline with the redevelopment pipeline. Alternatively, an assessment of the three buildings currently in the redevelopment pipeline now in Barre, Plainfield and White River Junction.

Initial request would be for engineering, assessment and recommendation. Goal is to avoid white elephant projects.

VELCO Board Member Updates

Michael Dworkin, Cort Richardson, and Theresa Alberghini-DiPalma provided an update about the VELCO board. Reliability of the grid is VELCO's primary job, they said.

VELCO board has put a lot of time and attention in last several years to how best to deploy significant fiber optic resources to broadband expansion. A lot can be done on state level but ultimately needs massive federal funding commitment. VELCO is well positioned to take a leadership role if there are significant federal dollars coming in to Vermont. It is project on the scale of rural electrification.

The VELCO board members stated that they were supportive of the concept of term limits from a best practices perspective. The VLITE board will take this up at its June meeting. Mr. Marron said that VELCO has a provision that we reappoint annually. Mr. Rubin said VLITE could develop its own internal policy and still comply with VELCO's bylaws. Many of the VELCO board seats have open-ended terms.

Ms. Alberghini-DiPalma serves on two committees: the executive committee and the compensation committee.

Mr. Richardson serves on the audit and trust committee which sets annual budget. Pension is 93% funded. Revenues are slightly down.

Mr. Dworkin: Governance committee – supervises the CEO.

Grant Presentations

Randolph Area Community Development Corporation

Julie Iffland Executive Director and Peter Schneider of Efficiency Vermont presented the application.

The request is \$75,000 for an engineering and feasibility design for a novel DC-based community microgrid in Salisbury Square, an affordable housing development in Randolph. The site went through brownfield reclamation and is three blocks from downtown. Northern Borders funding has been obtained for infrastructure. Each home is high performance, all-electric and will have solar PV generation and battery storage. The homes will be able to share power with each other adding to energy resiliency and reliability.

NREL will contribute technical expertise. Every design and engineering element developed will be open source. This will be a first in many ways, small scale, residential, located in the

Northeast, DC-based. This phase of the project will be solely funded by VLITE flowing through RACDC and with in-kind contributions from NREL, EVT, GMP and other stakeholders.

CarShare Vermont

Annie Bourdon Executive Director and Patrick Murphy Director of Planning and Operations presented the grant.

One of the few nonprofit carshare organizations in the country. Vehicles are self-accessible so they can be used any time of day. Membership is down on average due to Covid but membership is up amongst low income members. CarShare through the MobilityShare Plan offers free memberships to income-qualified individuals but have not always been able to locate vehicles conveniently for them. VLITE funding will contribute to this program expansion and the purchase of four to six electric vehicles.

Have obtained a VTRANs grant for \$100,000 for this project. Champlain Housing Trust, Cathedral Square and utilities BED and GMP are partners in the project.

Milk With Dignity Standards Council

Tom Fritzsche Executive Director and Peter Schneider of Efficiency Vermont presented the grant.

MWD is a worker-based, social responsibility model amongst the Northeast dairy industry. Over 50 dairy farms participating and 250 farmworkers living on those farms. The MWD Standards Council is a separate nonprofit set up as third party monitor for working and housing conditions. Standards are helped through market-based mechanisms. MDSC works with farmers on solutions and ensures violations are fixed. The code of conduct incorporates state and federal law. They do not refer to the wage and hour division. But workers comp is different.

These are motivated farmers who want to get their farmworkers in to better housing. It is a very challenging housing niche. Benefits to workers are obvious: healthier and safer. For farmers this subpar housing is a huge challenge for them. On average spend \$500 per month on energy costst alone. This would be a better option. We have looked at this issue for decades. We are working hard to deploy a solution. VT Community Foundation funding predevelopment work. Working with VT Law School bc each project between USDA RD, current use, permitting etc. are complex.

Renominate VELCO board members

- A motion was made to re-nominate for one year Michael Dworkin, Theresa Alberghini-DiPalma and Cort Richardson for the VELCO board according to the attached resolution.
 - 1st – Richard Rubin, 2nd – Tony Klein
 - All in favor

Votes on proposals

- A motion was made to approve all three projects - RACDC, CarShare and Milk with Dignity Standards Council - as recommended by our director.
 - 1st - Pat Moulton, 2nd - Tony Klein
- The motion was withdrawn by Pat Moulton
- Pat Moulton left the meeting but indicated support for all three proposals.

- A motion was made to approve the RACDC and CarShare grants as recommended.
 - 1st - Tony Klein, 2nd – Richard Rubin
 - All in favor

- A motion was made to approve the Milk with Dignity Standards Council grant as recommended.
 - 1st - Tony Klein, 2nd – Hal Cohen
 - All in favor

The board adjourned at 4:12 pm.