

**VLITE Board of Directors Annual Meeting:
DRM Conference Room and by Zoom
52 State Street, 3rd Floor, Montpelier, VT**

**Minutes of March 9, 2022
Approved on June 8, 2022**

Meeting called to order at 1:00

In attendance:

Board members: Dick Marron (via Zoom), Richard Rubin, Hal Cohen (via Zoom), Sarah Hofmann (via Zoom), Tony Klein, and Peter Walke.

Absent: Amy Shollenberger

Others: Gabrielle Malina, Theresa Alberghini DiPalma, Cort Richardson, Maura Collins, Michael Dworkin, Maisie Howard, Missy Mackin, Julia Leopold, Ken Nolan, Michael Lazorchak, Lisa Morris, Andrea Cohen, Brian Lowe, Jessica Savage.

Approve Minutes of December 8, 2021 and December 15, 2021

- A motion was made to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2021 Board of Directors meeting.
 - 1st – Sarah Hofmann, 2nd – Hal Cohen
 - All in favor
- A motion was made to approve the minutes from the December 15, 2021 Board of Directors meeting.
 - 1st – Sarah Hofmann, 2nd – Tony Klein
 - All in favor

Nominate and Vote Amy Shollenberger to the VLITE Board

- A motion was made to appoint Amy Shollenberger as VLITE director.
 - 1st - Tony Klein, 2nd – Peter Walke
 - All in favor

Treasurers Report

Treasurers Report read: Treasurer Sarah Hofmann provided bank account balances. As of February 8, 2022 there was \$1,574,997 in savings \$10,000 in checking, \$8,697 in money market.

- A motion was made to accept the report.
 - 1st – Tony Klein, 2nd – Richard Rubin
 - All in favor

Review Informal Reports

Staff reviewed available and committed funds reports that demonstrates grants payable and grants considered at present meeting are within VLITE's means.

VELCO Update from VLITE's Appointees

Theresa Alberghini-DiPalma, Cort Richardson and Michael Dworkin provided perspective on VELCO's board and the company's operations. Theresa described evolution at VELCO towards Environment, Social, and Corporate Governance (ESG) principles and remarked on the beneficial workplace culture. Cort discussed VELCO's emphasis on cybersecurity and its solid financial picture. Michael gave a historical perspective of the VELCO board from the time of the merger of GMP and CVPS, the formation of VLITE and changes to VELCO's governance, and stated that he was "deeply pleased with the results."

VLITE board members expressed gratitude to Michael Dworkin for his years of service as a VLITE-named VELCO director.

Vermont Works for Women (VWW) Grant Application

Maisie Howard, Director of Development & Communications and Missy Mackin, Program Manager, VWW presented a grant application for \$60,000 for the Trailblazers workforce training program for women in renewable energy jobs. Women only make up 5 percent of solar installers. Trailblazers was originally funded in 2018 by the US Department of Labor and has trained 69 women in carpentry, electrical and plumbing, and about half of those are currently working in trades. The trainings will be comprised of four weeks of basic skills training and a three-week on-site work experience with local employers. Those employers receive training in gender equity practices. VWW will run two cohorts over one year with up to 20 participants each.

Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA) Grant Application

Julia Leopold Director of Public Affairs and Ken Nolan General Manager presented VPPSA's application for \$90,000. The grant funding will be used in conjunction with three weatherization and electrification-related pilot programs: residential EV charging; Weatherization Repayment Assistance Program (WRAP); and, Weatherization Assistant Program (WAP) Fuel-Switching.

The VPPSA grant aims to reduce barriers to uptake by income-qualifying households in these pilots. Barriers include the cost of in-home electrical service upgrades e.g. from 100-amp to 200-amp service, and the upfront cost of new technologies. VPPSA will provide the funding but the involved-entities, Vermont Housing Finance Agency, the WAPs will make determinations about the suitability of households to participate such as whether a home is weatherized enough to work efficiently with a cold climate heat pump.

Stowe Electric Department Grant Application

Michael Lazorchak Regulatory Compliance Manager for Stowe Electric Department (SED) presented the grant application. Stowe requests \$125,000 for the construction of a hydroelectric dam adjacent to its department headquarters. The dam was taken off line during Tropical Storm Irene and SED wants to modernize the facility, and increase the utility's behind the meter renewable generation capacity. Approximately 45 low and moderate income households would participate in a "community hydropower" program and receive generation credits of about 35% each month on their electric bills for three years. Stowe will do outreach to its customer base to

market the program and also rely on referrals from Capstone to identify income-qualified participants.

Vermont Electric Cooperative Grant Application

Lisa Morris Energy Service Planner and Andrea Cohen Manager of Government Affairs and Member Relations from VEC presented a grant request for \$100,000. VEC will offer enhanced incentives for low and moderate income households that have already weatherized for thermal fuel switching including heat pumps and pellet stoves. Participants up to 80 percent of area median income will receive free installation. VEC will work with Neighborworks, the WAPs and Home Performance with Energy Star for referrals.

About 54 households would be served.

Vermont Council on Rural Development (VCRD) Grant Application

Brian Lowe Executive Director and Jessica Savage Director of Community Collaboration of VCRD presented a grant application in the amount of \$190,000 for a two-year program. The program, Climate Economy Communities Program is a suite of three community development, networking, small grant and education programs focused on energy work at the local level. Lowe said that with the influx of federal funding for energy programs, the biggest constraint for action is capacity at the local level.

Climate Catalysts selects a cohort of individuals across the state selected for their vision and ability to invoke change in their communities. The Innovation Fund offers small grants to qualifying community organizations for local projects. The first round of innovation fund from VLITE of \$15,000 leveraged another \$25,000 from VSECU and the Vermont Community Foundation and made 20 grants through a competitive application process. The program formerly known as Model Communities will evolve in this latest iteration to include three to five communities to work extensively with VCRD's expertise with facilitation, strategic planning and project support on focused climate and energy projects. VCRD will work with VEIC, and VECAN to seek proposals from identified communities to participate.

Board Discussion and Votes on Grant Applications

- A motion was made to approve the Vermont Works for Women, VPPSA, and Vermont Electric Coop grant.
 - 1st – Tony Klein, 2nd – Peter Walke
 - All in favor
- A motion was made to approve the Stowe Electric Department grant.
 - 1st – Hal Cohen, 2nd – Sarah Hofmann
 - All in favor, except for Dick Marron abstained.
- A motion was made to approve the VCRD grant with the second year of funding contingent upon reporting and outcomes from the first year including reporting on specific projects and grants in communities that result from VCRD's work. This contingency will be written into the grant agreement.

- 1st – Tony Klein, 2nd – Sarah Hofmann
- All in favor

Policy on Multi-Year Grants

The Executive Director will draft a policy on multi-year grants for the board’s consideration at the June meeting.

Nominate and Vote Slate of VELCO Directors for 2022

- A motion was made to nominate Maura Collins, Theresa Alberghini-DiPalma and Cort Richardson as VELCO directors for 2022.
 - 1st – Dick Marron, 2nd – Sarah Hofmann
 - All in favor

2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan Overview

TJ Poor, Director of Planning for the Public Service Department presented a slide deck on the 2022 Comprehensive Energy Plan. The energy plan is rooted in Vermont energy policy as found in 30 VSA, Sec 202a. Vermont should meet its energy service needs in a manner that is adequate, reliable, secure, and sustainable; ensures affordability and encourages the state’s economic vitality; uses energy resources efficiently and managing demands cost effectively; and, achieve greenhouse gas reductions requirements. Those principles are often in conflict but the Plan attempts to lay out how to balance them.

The bases for weighing tradeoffs should be data that identifies gaps and successes, benefit/cost tests reviewed from societal, Vermont-level, administrator and customer perspectives, continuous LEAP modelling, and consideration of technological feasibility, equity, economic development, reliability and risk.

A major theme of the Plan is equity and just transitions. The CEP relied on the work of the GWSA Climate Action Just Transitions subcommittee to articulate what equity means and how to achieve buy-in. Equity should be a core evaluative criteria in policy-making. The other major theme is grid evolution. The CEP lays out a vision for an optimized grid and discusses how “distributed energy resources” such as electric vehicles and heat pumps that are being brought into play to reduce fossil fuels show up on the grid.

Board planning discussion

Dick Marron reminded board members that in June he will term out from VLITE. The board president signs grant agreements and other contracts, approves grant payments, advises the Executive Director as needed and generally pays attention to VLITE’s direction. It is a reasonable time commitment but a commitment just the same.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, March 2022

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