

VLITE Board of Directors Annual Meeting
At Downs Rachlin Martin Conference Room, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT
Minutes of June 9, 2023
Approved on September 12, 2023

Meeting called to order at 1:00 PM

In attendance:

Board members: Tony Klein, Richard Rubin, Sarah Hofmann, Hal Cohen, Amy Shollenberger and Peter Walke.

Absent: Larry Lackey

Others: Gabrielle Malina; Miranda Lescaze, Jess Neubelt and Kathy Beyer (remote); Sophia Donforth (remote); Julie Iffland and Peter Schneider (remote).

Approve Minutes of March 1, 2023

- A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2023 Board of Directors meeting.
 - 1st – Sarah Hofmann, 2nd – Amy Shollenberger
 - All in favor

Treasurers Report

Sarah Hofmann reviewed recent VLITE financial statements. As of May 20, 2023 there was a total of \$1,425,553 in VLITE's checking, savings, money market and new CD accounts. Hofmann reported that on June 8th VLITE moved its banking to Northfield Savings Bank to attain better interest rates and ensure full insurance for all its deposits through a "cash sweep" vehicle at NSB.

Informal Reports

Gabrielle reviewed the Available and Committed Funds reports demonstrating VLITE's continued ability to pay for its existing grant commitments and continue to receive new grant applications.

Gabrielle noted that Vermont Foodbank had decided to forego its remaining grant funds due to being unsure of, if and when, they would choose to purchase another all-electric vehicle (AEV) for its fleet as per the grant scope. Because the EV chargers and installation ran over budget and the AEV purchased by Foodbank was more expensive than the one budgeted for in the grant, Foodbank did not have enough grant funds remaining to purchase an AEV. Rather than amend the terms of the grant further, Foodbank opted to ask for the funds that it had already expended and close out the grant forgoing a remaining balance of \$15,560.

Grants that are finishing or recently completed are: East Calais Community Trust, Vermont Works for Women, Burlington CEDO, and Burlington Electric Department.

Grant Extensions

A motion was made to extend the grant end dates for Washington Electric Coop, Vermont Electric Cooperative and Neighborworks of Western Vermont HEAT Squad until December 31, 2023.

- 1st – Peter Walke, 2nd – Sarah Hofmann
- All present in favor

VLITE Marketing Campaign Update

Gabrielle reported that VLITE ran two weeks of “run of site” ads announcing VLITE’s grant opportunity costing \$800 on VT Digger at the end of April/beginning of May. The ads did not yield any direct inquiries but Gabrielle has asked for click rates from Digger to review. Amy Shollenberger suggested that marketing efforts take repetition and said it might be worth another run of the Digger ad and also expanding to other venues such as Front Porch Forum. Gabrielle will email the “landing page” to the board that viewers were sent to when they clicked on the link that described VLITE and its grantmaking. Gabrielle will research the cost of advertising on FPF.

Champlain Housing Trust and Evernorth Grant Application

Jess Neubelt and Kathy Beyer of Evernorth and Miranda Lescaze of Champlain Housing Trust presented a grant application for \$150,000 towards a 150kW ground mount solar array in Shelburne. The VLITE award would help them leverage other funds they are applying for, including federal Greenhouse Gas Reduction Funds from the Inflation Reduction Act. The solar would power a new 68-unit permanently affordable multifamily development to be built by both parties and managed by Champlain Housing Trust. 20 of the units will be directed towards homeless individuals and the rest are for families at less than 80% of area median income. The goal is to pass no utility costs on to residents. The apartments will include three and four-bedroom apartments suitable for larger families in addition to one and two-bedroom units. The array will be located on land owned by Champlain Housing Trust that is across the street from the new development, and placed behind a former motel building, also owned by CHT, that has been converted to housing for the homeless. The array is not visible from Route 7 and is in a sunny, suitable site. Construction of the array is slated for spring 2024.

CHT and Evernorth aim to build the solar debt-free and in doing so will be able to make more affordable the utility operating costs of this all-electric building. They estimate operating costs rise by 40% compared to heating with natural gas. The ground mount array is necessary because rooftops in this size of multifamily buildings would only provide a maximum of 30% of electric needs, and the available roof space must be used for HVAC equipment related to heat pumps.

Vermont Energy Education Program Grant Application

Sophia Donforth Executive Director for Vermont Energy Education Program (VEEP) presented a grant application for \$40,000 for a pilot program which would bring VEEP-style interactive energy education to adults in community settings. Donforth said VEEP had been approached by several organizations to extend its programs to adults – that there was a need for it. VEEP is

well-positioned to deliver energy education to adults because it specializes in making data understandable and accessible.

VEEP will partner with other groups including Local Motion, Efficiency Vermont, Regional Planning Commissions, Town Energy Committees and Window Dressers and be able to offer workshops and materials piggybacking off of other energy-oriented events. VEEP will also work with libraries, senior centers and other community-oriented meeting spaces with an eager-to-learn audience. Donforth says workshops could range from a minimum of six adults to a max of 15. The goal of the pilot would be to run 60 workshops in roughly a two-year period.

Randolph Area Community Development Corporation Grant Application

Julie Iffland, Executive Director for RACDC presented a grant application for \$150,000 towards the design, engineering and installation of a direct current-based microgrid for the Salisbury Square development. The VLITE grant will help fill a \$300,000 gap in the microgrid budget. Salisbury Square is very close to downtown Randolph and this additional housing will increase density in a walkable area. RACDC will build twelve new permanently affordable rental units for very low income families. The final phase of the project will also build nine affordable single family homes, targeted towards the “missing middle” of 80 to 120% of area median income – to be sold at a projected price of \$266,000. All 21 new units plus four existing units in the historic “Bookkeeping Building” will be on the microgrid. Key equipment for the microgrid, such as storage, will be housed in the basement of the Bookkeeping Building. Salisbury Square will be a “planned community” sharing solar and sharing the microgrid.

Each building will have solar for generation, and DC appliances being developed for this microgrid purpose by LG. RACDC will manage the multifamily housing, and possibly common spaces, and Green Mountain Power will manage the microgrid. RACDC hopes the microgrid will help level out the volatility of utility pricing. Construction of the site road, utility infrastructure and 12 affordable rental units is slated for the next 12 to 19 months.

Board discussion and vote on grant applications

- A motion was made to approve all three grants – CHT/Evernorth Bay Ridge Solar for \$150,000; VEEP Pilot for Adult Energy Education for \$40,000; and, RACDC DC-based community microgrid for Salisbury Square development for \$150,000.
 - 1st – Sarah Hofmann, 2nd – Hal Cohen
 - All present in favor

Election of Officers and Reappointment of Member

Gabrielle reviewed the terms of current members pointing out that Hal Cohen and Richard Rubin will each term out in June of 2024 so VLITE should be planning for their replacements at that time. The VLITE bylaws require that board members be drawn from “state government service and representatives of the energy policy, utility, and consumer/low-income advocate sectors”. So

looking for an individual from state government should be strongly considered for new membership.

- A motion was made to approve the current slate of board officers for another year – Tony Klein as President, Richard Rubin as Vice President, Sarah Hofmann as Treasurer and Hal Cohen as Secretary.
 - 1st – Richard Rubin, 2nd – Peter Walke
 - All present in favor
- A motion was made to reappoint Amy Shollenberger to the VLITE board for a term of three years.
 - 1st – Hal Cohen, 2nd – Sarah Hofmann
 - All present in favor

Board President and Treasurer Compensation

Tony Klein suggested that the President and Treasurer be paid an additional \$200 per quarter to address the extra work that both officers do, and so the Executive Director is comfortable requesting that support.

- A motion was made to pay the VLITE board President and Treasurer each \$200 per quarter.
 - 1st – Peter Walke, 2nd – Richard Rubin
 - All present in favor

Other Changes to Board Member Reimbursements

The default for meeting attendance and mileage reimbursements will be for the Executive Director to keep attendance and submit those on board members' behalf, for payment. One check per year, in December, will be the default. Gabrielle will also ascertain who needs mileage reimbursement and get the mileage requested. Members may also request more frequent reimbursements.

The meeting adjourned at 3:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, June 2023

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