

**VLITE Board of Directors Meeting
DRM Conference Room and on Zoom, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT
Minutes of September 12, 2023
Approved on December 13, 2023**

Meeting called to order at 3:00 PM

In attendance:

Board members: Tony Klein, Richard Rubin, Larry Lackey, Sarah Hofmann and Hal Cohen on Zoom.

Absent: Amy Shollenberger and Peter Walke

Others: Gabrielle Malina; Liz Curry, Marie Polches, Dan Smith

Approve Minutes of June 9, 2023

- A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 1, 2023 Board of Directors meeting.
 - 1st – Larry Lackey, 2nd – Tony Klein
 - All in favor

Treasurer's Report

Sarah Hofmann and Gabrielle Malina reviewed recent VLITE financial statements. As of August 31, 2023 there was a total of \$1,502,389 in VLITE's operating account, money market and CD accounts. Hal Cohen suggested that additional money markets be explored to optimize interest rates and diversify banks. The Northfield Savings Bank accounts earn about 2%. Sarah will review options. Richard Rubin commented that it was more important to keep VLITE accounts in local banks rather than prioritizing higher interest rates.

Informal Reports and Grant Extensions

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.

A motion was made to extend the grant periods for Washington Electric Coop until December 31, 2023, and to Vermont Public Power Supply Authority (VPPSA), Vermont Electric Cooperative and Vermont Adult Learning until December 31, 2024.

- 1st – Richard Rubin, 2nd – Larry Lackey
- All in favor. Hal Cohen abstained .

Milton Mobile Home Cooperative Grant Application

Marie Polchies, Secretary of the Milton Mobile Home Cooperative (MMHC) board and Liz Curry, Project Manager, presented a grant request for \$55,000. The VLITE funds would accompany a \$235,000 grant from the Department of Housing and Community Development to

upgrade the electrical service at MMHC. Specifically, the electrical meters and feeder wires to the homes would be replaced and brought up to code. The electric system upgrades are being done in conjunction with a large infrastructure overhaul of water and wastewater systems.

The park, consisting of 100 homes, became a cooperative in 2012 and necessary infrastructure upgrades were part of the purchase agreement. The cooperative owns the land and residents own their mobile homes.

Board members asked why Green Mountain Power was not responsible for upgrading the meters and feeder wires. Liz Curry said she had reached out to GMP and gotten no response. Sarah Hofmann posited that it may be due to mobile homes legal status as personal property rather than real property, as with traditional houses.

Sarah Hofmann suggested that Liz Curry reach out to the Public Service Department Consumer Affairs Division to get a full understanding of what the law is regarding electric utilities and their obligation to pay for this work.

Agritech Institute for Small Farms Grant Application

Dan Smith Executive Director of Agritech Institute presented a funding request for \$65,000. The funds are for a pilot program to manage vegetation around utility rights-of-way using invisible fencing with GPS locators to graze goats. If effective, the animals would replace or supplement fossil fuel equipment and herbicides used to currently control vegetation. Washington Electric, Vermont Electric, and Ludlow Electric are all interested in participating.

Dan explained that the “NoFence” technology is well established but he is not aware that it has ever been used to manage animals to graze around utility ROWs. Goats do not eat all vegetation so they would have to be followed by other means of controlling vegetation. They would be part of an overall strategy, not a complete replacement.

Board discussion and vote on grant applications

A motion was made to approve the Milton Mobile Home Coop grant subject to a response from the Public Service Department stating whether or not Green Mountain Power is obligated to pay for replacing meters and feeder wires, or any part of the project.

- 1st – Larry Lackey, 2nd – Sarah Hofmann
- All in favor

A motion was made to approve the Agritech Institute grant.

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

VELCO Board Director Search Discussion

Gabrielle will put out another solicitation for a VLITE nominee for the VELCO board. This will be through Seven Days advertising and passing the information to social equity groups and other affinity groups to publicize to their mailing lists. The goal will be to conduct interviews of finalists during the quarterly meeting in December. Tony and Richard will be a subcommittee

that will plan a scoring rubric for the full board to use that will then identify three or four candidates to interview. Similar to past years, VLITE would nominate the person officially in March and VELCO then appoints them at its annual meeting in April.

The meeting adjourned at 4:50 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, September 2023

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