

VLITE Board of Directors Meeting
DRM Conference Room and on Zoom, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT
Minutes of March 19, 2024
Approved on June 13, 2024

Meeting called to order at 4:01 PM

In attendance:

Board members: Tony Klein, Richard Rubin, Larry Lackey, Sarah Hofmann (in person) Hal Cohen, Peter Walke and Amy Shollenberger attended remotely with Amy not being present for votes on grants.

Others: Gabrielle Malina; VELCO Board Members – Theresa Alberghini-DiPalma, Maura Collins, Deb Markowitz, and Karin Chamberlin. Grant applicants – Tom Longstreth, Andrew Jope, Melanie Paskevich, Laura Cavin Bailey, Charlie Smith.

Approve Minutes of December 13, 2023

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the December 13, 2023 Board of Directors meeting.

- 1st – Richard Rubin, 2nd – Sarah Hofmann
- All present in favor

Treasurer's Report

Gabrielle Malina read the account balances as laid out in the Balance Sheet. Between checking, operating accounts, and Mascoma Bank CD, VLITE accounts held \$1,337,257 as of February 29, 2024.

Gabrielle briefly reviewed informal reports including summaries of current grant progress and an 'available and committed funds' report demonstrating VLITE's continued ability to fund present and pending grant obligations.

Board Succession Discussion

Hal Cohen and Richard Rubin discussed with the board their thoughts on potential board members to succeed them as they prepare to term out of VLITE service in June of 2024.

Update and Discussion with VELCO Board Members

VLITE's current designees to the VELCO board reported on their observations of the current state of the organization. Theresa Alberghini DiPalma, Maura Collins and Deb Markowitz each relayed that VELCO is engaged with continual improvement activities and takes its efforts towards Diversity, Equity and Inclusion very seriously. Hiring remote workers had increased diversity. Also the head of human resources is particularly focused on gender equity. VELCO engages in comprehensive succession planning, across the scope of the organization, not just for executive succession. They collectively commented on the overall strength of VELCO leadership and its financial position is in a good place.

Maura Collins noted that VLITE's system for designating its VELCO board seats is working well. She said she appreciated the time that Michael Dworkin (a former VLITE VELCO designee) spent orienting her to the work prior to his stepping down.

ReSOURCE/Serve, Learn, Earn Grant Application

Tom Longstreth, Executive Director and Andrew Jope, Training Director for ReSOURCE presented the grant request. ReSOURCE seeks \$175,000 to re-build flood-affected homes of low and moderate income Vermonters in Barre and in Lamoille County. The project is intended to solve multiple problems: insufficient funding of these homeowners to rebuild, lack of construction contractor capacity and availability, and lack of coordination amongst recovery groups and ability to respond quickly by supplementation with ReSOURCE's network of partners in a project called "Serve, Learn, Earn". Serve, Learn, Earn is a workforce development collaboration among four nonprofits – Vermont Youth Conservation Corps (VYCC), ReSOURCE, Audubon Vermont, and Vermont Works for Women – dedicated to enhancing, and increasing the number of, paid service opportunities in Vermont.

ReSOURCE and SLE serve a dual role providing construction and weatherization services at approximately 86% cost savings to homeowner and provide skill development and job training pathways to careers facing significant workforce shortages. They plan to complete 24 rebuilding projects in 18 months.

Neighborworks of Western Vermont HEATSquad Grant Application

Melanie Paskevich, HEATSquad Director and Interim Executive Director of Neighborworks of Western Vermont presented the grant which revised a prior grant application to VLITE in December of 2023. Neighborworks is requesting \$154,000 to complete in one year 70 energy audits and healthy homes assessments and 35 weatherization jobs for low and moderate income households in Bennington County and the Northeast Kingdom.

Ms. Paskevich reviewed how Neighborworks fits in and coordinates with other low income weatherization, such as by referring families at less than 80% area median income to the state weatherization agencies so they can receive free services, and, in turn, sometimes OEO refers families to Neighborworks. She also reviewed a table of past grant activities that shows the breakdown of Efficiency VT rebates, VLITE incentives, and homeowner contributions to each completed scope of work. Paskevich said VLITE funds are helpful because they can be used 'upfront' so that the homeowner does not have to exclusively wait for rebates that only become available after the work has been completed,

One board member commented on the lack of service availability in Lamoille County similar to what Neighborworks offers and Ms. Paskevich commented that it has always been the organization's goal to offer their services statewide.

Vermont Council on Rural Development Grant Application

Laura Cavin Bailey, Climate Economy Program Manager and Charlie Smith, Interim Executive Director for VCRD presented the grant request. VCRD is requesting \$180,000 for two-years of

programming for the Climate Economy Initiative. The Climate Economy suite of programs includes Resilient Communities – a focused facilitation with a handful of communities each year; the Climate Catalyst Leadership program provides direct support to a 16-member cohort of new and emerging climate leaders embarking on a community project; and the Climate Catalyst Innovation Fund which provides small grants for community energy-saving and climate initiatives. VLITE ‘seed funding’ has consistently leveraged more funders to this program such that \$15,000 in VLITE funds has grown to \$80,000 annually for this popular small grant program.

Board discussion and vote on grant applications

A motion was made to approve all three grant requests: ReSOURCE for \$175,000; Neighborworks of Western Vermont for \$154,000 and Vermont Council on Rural Development for \$180,000.

In discussion, one board member noted that VLITE should not become a flood-relief organization. The board asked Gabrielle to confirm with ReSOURCE that home rebuilding activities in this grant include energy improvements to the home, and also check on the other funding sources listed in their grant budget, including whether \$500,000 from the legislature is pending or committed.

- 1st – Sarah Hofmann, 2nd – Hal Cohen
- All present in favor

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, March 2024

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