

VLITE Board of Directors Meeting
DRM Conference Room and on Zoom, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT
Minutes of June 13, 2024
Approved on September 23, 2024

Meeting called to order at 1:10 PM

In attendance:

Board members: Tony Klein, Richard Rubin, Larry Lackey, Sarah Hofmann Hal Cohen, Peter Walke (in person).

Others Attending: Gabrielle Malina; Jean Hamilton, Paul Dragon (remote). Grant applicants: Joe Gunter, Peter Schneider, Jonathan Gilbert, Lucy Leriche, Kerrie Lohr, Hannah Schwarz, River Parker.

Approve Minutes of March 19, 2024

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 19, 2024 Board of Directors meeting with one scrivener's correction on the last page correcting the motion regarding the VCRD grant to \$180,000.

- 1st – Larry Lackey, 2nd – Peter Walke
- 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 \$1,399,291 as of May 31, 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.

Amendment to Capstone VERT Grant Discussed

The board reviewed a memo from Liz Scharf of Capstone Community Action requesting that the remaining VERT funds of \$59,426 be used for direct services to low and moderate income VERT participants and that the grant amount be officially capped at \$100,000. Originally the board approved "up to \$140,000" for the grant. The board opted not to vote on the amendment and will seek further information first. Peter Walke will follow up with Capstone to make sure they are fully plugged into the VCF-funded VSECU program providing "upfront" funds for expenditures as well as all available, pertinent Efficiency Vermont offerings for VERT participants.

Gabrielle relayed two requested adjustments to existing grants: VEEP requests to reduce down to 40 workshops, from 60 its energy education programming for adults. Vermont Electric Coop requests to reallocate VLITE incentives, increasing those for low income households from \$1,000 to \$2,000 for heat pump installations. The net effect of that proposed change will increase the total number of households receiving incentives from 54 to 62 in the VEC project.

Town of Fair Haven Grant Application

Joe Gunter, Town Manager of Fair Haven and Peter Schneider of Efficiency Vermont presented the grant application. The Town of Fair Haven is requesting \$60,000 from VLITE towards a feasibility study to reactivate the shuttered Skyline Homes manufactured housing factory. The factory has been shuttered for ten years but the building and equipment have been well cared for. This factory, if reactivated could deliver affordable and energy efficient homes that meet HUD's preemptive standard for manufactured homes and/or volumetric modular unit for single and multi-family housing. The housing will be designed and built to incorporate the latest building science and high performance measures to ensure energy efficiency, optimal indoor air quality, comfort and durability.

The Town of Fair Haven will work with development consultants and Efficiency Vermont, utilizing those expertises and relationships to explore reactivating this factory to be owned by a third party. The factory was capable of producing six-seven units of housing per day, when it was operational, whereas other high-end manufactured home factories in the state are capable of producing one unit per day. The state's current housing deficit calls for adding housing at a much faster pace than is being currently achieved. Multifamily modular housing in the Northeast is half the cost per square foot of current traditional multifamily construction. The factory would restore jobs to Fair Haven and the area where 11 percent of people live in poverty.

Heartbeet Lifesharing Grant Application

Jonathan Gilbert, Project Manager for Heartbeet and Peter Schneider of Efficiency Vermont presented the grant application. Heartbeet requests \$130,161 towards the construction of an all-electric energy efficient new Lifesharing residence, and a solar PV system that will power the entire Heartbeet community. Part of the grant will also support installation of electric vehicle charging equipment to support an electric truck the community is buying and that will allow the vehicle to act as a battery to the community.

Heartbeet, is a biodynamic farm located in Hardwick that is a licensed therapeutic residence where 65 individuals, including thirteen adults with developmental disabilities, live-in staff and their families and children, international volunteers and commuting staff live in community. The new residence will allow three new "Friends" and three new staff to join Heartbeet. The basement of the new residence will contain an art studio. The home is scheduled for delivery around August 26th and Friends and family would be ready to move in by the fall.

Lamoille Housing Partnership Grant Application

Lucy Leriche, Interim Executive Director and Kerrie Lohr, Advancement and Communications Director presented the grant application. Lamoille Housing Partnership requests \$40,000 from VLITE towards the construction of a 75kW solar system on a senior housing site and an 11kW system on each of two family apartment buildings in Jeffersonville. Residents of this housing are low and moderate income including 24 senior households and 10 families.

The total project cost is \$342,500 and includes rebuilding the roofs which is both necessary maintenance and will allow the roofs to accommodate the solar PV. LHP has raised all the rest of the necessary funds for the project and the request to VLITE is the final piece. The solar PV is part of a strategy to create place-based utility assistance with the goal of stabilizing housing affordability for these households. After one full year the PV systems are expected to reduce energy costs by approximately 70% (\$11,900) at the senior building and 60% at the family buildings (\$3,660). Savings will be passed on to residents as a reduced utility allowance. The project is expected to recoup costs after approximately 10 years.

Riverflow Community Grant Application

Hannah Schwarz, Executive Director and River Parker, Project Manager for Riverflow presented the application. Riverflow seeks \$50,000 from VLITE towards energy improvements to a recently-purchased eight-bedroom home in Monkton on 30 acres. Riverflow will be opening a new Therapeutic Community Residence and intentional community where individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and those without, live together. The project includes improvements to the thermal envelope with attic insulation and basement insulation, bringing those spaces to R-60 and crawl space encapsulation, bringing those spaces to R-22. They are also pursuing increased energy efficiency through updated electrical work and installation of three high-efficiency hybrid water heaters and centrally ducted heat pumps.

The house requires around \$450,000 total in renovation and repairs and Riverflow is pursuing multiple funding streams. They plan to open the community in October of 2024 when they will welcome four Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities and provide supportive, long-term, dignified housing.

Board discussion and vote on grant applications

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Hal Cohen to approve all four grant requests as presented: Town of Fair Haven, \$60,000; Heartbeet \$130,161; Lamoille Housing Partnership, \$40,000; and, Riverflow, \$50,000.

A motion was then made by Richard Rubin and seconded by Peter Walke to amend the above motion to increase the amount of the grant to Heartbeet to \$150,000.

- All present voted in favor of the amendment.
- All present voted in favor of the original motion with amendment.

Elect Officers

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann, seconded by Larry Lackey, and unanimously approved to elect VLITE Officers as follow: Tony Klein – President, Peter Walke – Vice President, Sarah Hofmann – Treasurer, Larry Lackey – Secretary.

Appointment of New VLITE Board Members

A motion was made by Richard Rubin, seconded by Hal Cohen, and unanimously approved to appoint Paul Dragon and Jean Hamilton to the VLITE board, effective June 14th.

The meeting adjourned at 3:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, June 2024

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