

**VLITE Board of Directors Meeting
DRM Conference Room and on Zoom, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT
Minutes of December 12, 2024
Approved on March 18, 2025**

Meeting called to order at 1:00 PM

In attendance:

Board members: Tony Klein, Peter Walke, Larry Lackey, Sarah Hofmann, Paul Dragon attending remotely), Jean Hamilton, Amy Shollenberger

Others Attending: Gabrielle Malina, Theron Lay-Sleeper, Kyle McDonald, Phil Cechini, Will Eberle, Jared Duval

Approve Minutes of September 23, 2024

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Larry Lackey to adopt the minutes of September 23, 2024 with the correction of a scrivener's error on page 3.

The motion was unanimously approved.

Treasurers Report

Sarah Hofmann reviewed the bank account balances for the board and financial statements. She noted that VLITE's assets are very similar to this same time last year. Total current account assets are \$1,364,582 as of November 30, 2024. The total in grants payable for the same point in time is \$858,462.

Gabrielle noted that in a conversation with Brian Sewell from the State Department of Buildings and General Services, BGS confirmed that the grant work is complete. Due to historical changes to the scope of the grant related to a. the pandemic delaying the launch of the SEMP expansion, and b. the legislature then passing Act 172 of 2022 infusing \$40 million into a Municipal Energy Resilience Program (MERP), the VLITE grant was reduced from \$300,000 to \$175,000. BGS will not invoice for the remainder of the grant and \$125,000 will be back on the VLITE books. This means that the Available and Committed Funds Report can be updated with the addition of \$125,000 to the "Available Funds" entry.

2025 VLITE Operating Budget and DRM Contract Renewal

Gabrielle briefly reviewed the draft 2025 operating budget noting that an entry was added for interest income since that has increased significantly since VLITE changed banks. The DRM contract is for Gabrielle Malina to serve as Executive Director and the terms are unchanged from the 2024 contract.

Larry Lackey moved that VLITE accept the 2025 Operating Budget and contract renewal. Sarah Hofmann seconded and the board unanimously approved the motion.

Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District Eco Depot Grant Application

Theron Lay-Sleeper, General Manager of Central Vermont Solid Waste Management District (CVSWMD) presented the application. CVSWMD is seeking \$80,981 to provide energy upgrades to the District's new headquarters in Berlin at 300 Granger Road. It will house the administrative offices, additional recycling center (ARCC) and a household hazardous waste depot. The request to VLITE is part of a larger project budget of \$4 million. The State has identified establishing a Household Hazardous Waste facility in Central Vermont as an infrastructure priority and is providing grant funding in support of the project. CVSWMD serves 53,000 residents and 2,500 businesses in 19 member towns.

The new CVSWMD Eco-Depot will improve access to services for the district's constituents, consolidate operations, allow for the development of infrastructure and programs to process electronic waste, and create a permanent home for programs and services.

The energy improvements being funded are a battery backup system, a fleet electric vehicle and Level 2 charger, and electric HVAC, replacing oil. The battery backup system is important for safety at the facility because when processing hazardous waste, power outages could lead to processing interruptions and dangerous exposures.

Capstone Green Heat Grant Application

Kyle McDonald, Capstone's Efficiency Coaching Operation Coordinator presented the grant application. Capstone requests \$200,000 to deliver mini splits and fuel switch heat pump water heaters in homes of clients that are being weatherized by Capstone. Up to 19 heat pump water heaters would be installed with a total lifetime savings projection of \$110,808. Up to 14 mini splits would be installed with a lifetime savings projected of \$45,122. Some homes may get both a mini split and a HPWH depending on need and suitability.

Capstone would first have a coaching visit with the client to gather data, and share information with the client. A contractor would next perform an assessment of the installs and provide estimates. Once approved, the contractor would perform the install. Capstone will follow up with the client with a best practices of operation, controls, filters and utility discounts. Capstone is basing its grant scope on past experience installing mini splits at an average cost of \$6,241 and heat pump water heaters at an average job cost of \$4,091.

Energy Action Network Grant Application

Jared Duval, Executive Director for Energy Action Network (EAN) presented the grant. EAN is requesting \$200,000 for two years to support general operations of the organization. EAN is a Network whose "mission is to achieve Vermont's climate and energy commitments (including those of the Comprehensive Energy Plan) in ways that create a more just, thriving, and sustainable future." EAN is also a nonprofit whose "mission is to ensure that Vermont makes evidence-based energy and climate decisions that are grounded in high quality data and analysis and collaboratively developed for effective and durable progress." EAN lost several of its major funders in recent years with the closure of the High Meadows Fund and the John Merck Fund.

Jared described EAN's core activities and how they further energy goals as set forth in the Comprehensive Energy Plan. EAN convenes energy stakeholders through summit-type gatherings and other educational events; facilitates network action groups in which pertinent and politically diverse stakeholders deep dive on energy issues with the general goal of statewide policy and programmatic applications; and, produces the Annual Progress Report which collates energy data from disparate sources and brings it together in a package that is usable by energy stakeholders including state government and nonprofits.

In response to a question about how EAN has centered low income energy needs in its work, Jared pointed to the work of the Weatherization at Scale Network Action Team which includes work on funding the weatherization of 120,000 homes by 2030 and the Energy Workforce Network Action Team.

Board discussion and votes on grant applications

CVSWMD and Capstone Grants

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Jean Hamilton to approve the grant requests to CVSWMD for energy improvements at its new headquarters and the grant to Capstone for installation of heat pumps and heat pump water heaters in low income homes.

- All board members voted in favor except for Paul Dragon who abstained.

Energy Action Network Grant

The board discussed the request by Energy Action Network, expressing concern about supporting EAN with VLITE funds while there is little connection between EAN's work and centering the energy needs of low and moderate income Vermonters. Board members said that EAN is perceived as a political organization which VLITE should not be seen as supporting. Board members also noted that EAN had sufficient time and warning to replace their lost funding sources.

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Jean Hamilton to fund Energy Action Network with \$100,000 for one year, as bridge funding, and with the following contingency: EAN must write a short proposal for VLITE with details of how EAN can help center the needs and leadership of low income people in its work. Once the proposal is approved by the board, the grant can move forward. EAN need not apply in person again.

Hamilton, Hofmann, Klein, Lackey, and Shollenberger voted in favor of the motion. Paul Dragon abstained. Peter Walke was absent, having left the meeting at 3:30 before the vote took place.

2025 Meeting Dates

The board set quarterly meeting dates for 2025. VLITE Meetings will be held on: March 18th from 4-7pm; June 13th 1-4pm; September 22nd 1-4pm; December 12th 1-4pm.

The meeting adjourned at 3:45 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, December 16, 2024