

**VLITE Board of Directors Meeting
DRM Conference Room and on Zoom, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT
Minutes of March 18, 2025
Approved on June 13, 2025**

Meeting called to order at 4:04 PM

In attendance:

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

Absent: Amy Shollenberger

Others Attending: Gabrielle Malina, Allison Ross, Bonnie Allen, Chris Cole, Cara Robeck, RJ Adler, Greg Mairs.

Approve Minutes of December 12, 2024

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Larry Lackey to adopt the minutes of December 12, 2024.

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 financial position continues to be strong. Total current account assets are \$1,566,398 as of February 28, 2025. The total in grants payable for the same point in time is \$995,561.

Gabrielle reviewed potential future grant applications to gauge board member interest and whether to invite those prospectives to apply to VLITE.

The Veteran's Place Grant Application

Allison Ross, a Board Member of The Veteran's Place and Bonnie Allen, Executive Director presented the application. The Veteran's Place in Northfield has 17 beds and provides : Transitional Housing, Meals and Transportation; Navigating Medical and Mental Health Care; Wellness, Guidance, and Accountability to homeless and struggling veterans.

The Veterans Place is seeking \$75,000 from VLITE is support of a project in partnership with Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory (LBNL). Veterans Place will be a field demonstration site to test a pathway for multifamily buildings to electrify heating and domestic hot water systems in cold climates. LBNL is providing Veteran's Place with \$100,000 of equipment, engineering services, and monitoring. The VLITE funds will cover the installation costs. Currently there is no economical way to fully electrify multifamily buildings due to the domestic hot water loads and the lack of electric technologies to meet the requirements. The heat pump in this project uses R290 – propane – as a refrigerant. Propane has promise as a low greenhouse gas refrigerant but there are no codes in the United States that discuss it. It is widely used in Europe.

The system consists of centralized air to water heat pumps that serve thermal energy storage tanks for each living unit. It will displace fossil fuel use, help to reduce energy costs, and support residents who must have certain health and safety equipment available at all times. It will also allow for cooling in the very hot South-facing rooms. Fossil fuel cost savings will allow Veteran's Place to divert the funds to programs and services for residents to support recovery and transition to independent living.

The system will be installed this summer, studied over the 2025/26 heating season, and a research publication will follow in Fall of 2026.

Community Rides Vermont Grant Application

Chris Cole, Executive Director for Community Rides VT (CRVT; Gopher) presented the application. CRVT provides shared mobility rides in an all-electric fleet, located in Barre City. CRVT was created and incubated by Capstone Community Action to address persistent transportation challenges faced by their clientele. Gopher began EV ride sharing operations in May 2023. CRVT's service fosters a shared mobility ecosystem, and prioritizes low income groups typically underserved by transportation initiatives.

CRVT seeks \$175,000 from VLITE. \$60,000 is towards local match for the VTRANS (federal through state) grant of \$300,000, and the remainder will help sustain operations as CRVT enters the second year of their business plan. In particular VLITE funds will support fleet management software development; electric costs for vehicles; vehicle insurance and maintenance; professional services; vehicle financing and facility lease expenses.

CRVT currently has five electric vehicles and plans to add three more and add more part time drivers to be able to reach the scale needed to sustain business. They have experienced month over month growth in the number of rides provided and zero emission miles traveled. CRVT also plans to introduce market rate ride services which will help cover their costs. In 2024 ridership was 7,040 rides. In 2025 their goal is to increase to 12,630 rides – the equivalent of 16 additional rides a day, which Mr. Cole said was an attainable goal.

WheelPAD L3C Grant Application

RJ Adler Director of Growth for WheelPAD L3C presented the application with support from the project partner, Greg Mairs Operations Director for Counseling Services of Addison County (CSAC). WheelPAD seeks \$75,000 from VLITE to develop the prototype and build and install two units of their new model, modular StudioPAD. StudioPAD is similar to WheelPAD's existing product SuitePAD but with the addition of a kitchen for which WheelPAD has had many requests. CSAC won a \$264,000 grant from the VT Department of Aging and Independent Living to be used for infill housing development for people with disabilities in Addison County.

WheelPAD L3C of Wilmington VT is dedicated to offering people the choice to stay in their home after a change in their mobility or caregiving needs. They combine universal design, accessibility, and craftsmanship that exceed Vermont (VT RBES), national building codes and ADA standards. They use natural materials which is important for people with spinal cord injuries who often have chemical sensitivities.

CSAC is the primary social service provider for Addison County and their housing programs serve the lowest income Vermonters with intellectual and developmental disabilities who lack a stable housing situation. Using the two StudioPAD prototypes that will be built with this grant, CSAC will be able to expand housing options for those on their waiting list. Because they are built on trailers that are moveable, the StudioPADs can be re-deployed several times. VLITE board member Jean Hamilton noted that the state estimates it needs an additional 660 units of DDHI housing.

Discussion with VLITE-designated VELCO Board Members and Formal Nomination

Maura Collins, Karin Chamberlain and Deb Markowitz provided updates on VELCO. Collins began by addressing a question from a VLITE member wanting to know specifically how the three VLITE-designees are bringing questions about low-income folks to the VELCO board. She said that part of the answer lies in VELCO's focus on transmission capital project affordability, advocating for the Vermont ratpayer. VELCO has recently taken on a leadership role in ensuring that transmission capital projects in the ISO New England region are being done in a cost-effective and judicious manner.

Collins, Chamberlain and Markowitz discussed VELCO's "belonging" work, the term the organization uses for initiatives similar to diversity, equity and inclusion work. They pointed to VELCO's low staff turnover rate and positive organizational culture. They noted that having non-utility representatives on the VELCO board brings a useful diversity of expertises and ways of thinking to the otherwise utility-focused board membership.

Markowitz discussed the difficulty for VELCO of managing the grid with many small electric providers. VELCO has good understanding and data on utility-scale renewables but it is difficult to get data on behind-the-meter projects. VELCO has the ability to pay for equipment for some of those small providers to better share data. They noted that it is a priority for the new Public Service Department Commissioner Kerrick Johnson to improve on data sharing from electric utilities for the benefit of the grid.

Peter Walke moved to nominate Maura Collins, Karin Chamberlain and Deb Markowitz, seconded by Sarah Hofmann, to be VLITE designees on the VELCO Board for one more year.

All VLITE board members voted in favor.

Board discussion and votes on grant applications

A motion was made by Sarah Hofmann and seconded by Peter Walke to approve all three grant requests: The Veteran's Place for \$75,000; Community Rides Vermont for \$175,000; and WheelPAD L3C for \$75,000.

All board members present voted in favor.

The meeting adjourned at 6:30 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, March 23, 2025