

VLITE Board of Directors Special Meeting
DRM Conference Room and on Zoom, 52 State St., Montpelier, VT
Minutes of August 11, 2025
Approved on September 22, 2025

Meeting called to order at 2:06 PM

In attendance:

Board members: Tony Klein, Larry Lackey, Sarah Hofmann, Amy Shollenberger. Paul Dragon, Jean Hamilton, and Peter Walke (remote).

Vote to Approve Executive Director as Signatory for VLITE Banking

A motion was made by Tony Klein, and seconded by Sarah Hofmann to approve adding Gabrielle Malina as a signatory for VLITE's banking accounts.

All board members present voted in favor.

Board Discussion about VLITE Funding Role in Face of Shifting Federal and State Funding Levels

Amy Shollenberger facilitated the conversation. She noted the framing questions included on the agenda explaining that they should be kept in mind, but that the board would not necessarily answer the questions specifically during the meeting. She presented more general framing questions including, 'does the board want the Executive Director to seek out specific types of grants.' Amy also stated that there is no expectation that VLITE can backfill federal funds.

The board considered how to categorize grants and Tony Klein began by drawing a distinction between projects that directly benefit low and moderate income Vermonters and other types of grants. Sarah Hofmann suggested grants that will keep organizations alive that might otherwise die, although this approach was not resolved by the board. Larry Lackey noted that he does not want VLITE to respond to the "latest crisis" such as Covid-19 or flooding. He said he favored direct action that benefits Vermonters with low and moderate income with their energy needs.

Jean Hamilton wondered whether VLITE should build a louder voice through political advocacy noting that VLITE is "powerful but quiet". Gabrielle pointed to VLITE bylaws which do not allow for advocacy. Sarah Hofmann will review the original Public Service Board MOU to ascertain whether VLITE's originating document says anything about that.

Peter Walke noted that the state should strive to not lose workforce capacity because without it, energy jobs, such as weatherization, will not be available to keep up with demand and VLITE should play a role in that. He posited that VLITE may have a role in supporting OEO's new weatherization training center which does not have sustaining funding. He noted that the availability of ARPA funding allowed 'scaling up' of energy programs – another reason to not lose workforce capacity.

Paul Dragon expressed specific support for VLITE towards home vermiculite removal which is a mandatory activity for Vermonters to get weatherized through the weatherization agencies. Paul and Peter both said that other types of home repair funds related to weatherization were also much needed.

Paul noted that the future of LIHEAP funding is uncertain. He added that CVOEO is always reaching its “crisis fuel” cap. Amy added that VLITE would not be able to make a dent in LIHEAP funding because of the enormity of need compared to VLITE funds. Amy also stated that Vermont is very dependent on federal dollars because the state has been so good at leveraging federal funds.

Jean asked how other funders are thinking about their role during this time. She also pointed out that there are a lot of changes at the federal level other than funding changes. She suggested that outreach to other funders to understand how they are responding would be helpful for VLITE. Gabrielle will communicate with the Vermont Community Foundation.

Board members spoke about leaving room for new opportunities that arise as the federal administration decides where to focus incentives, or other funders may offer funding that VLITE applicants can leverage. Relatedly, members spoke about leveraging other funding tools such as the Treasurer’s Local Investment Advisory Committee (LIAC).

Overall, the board seemed to be leaning towards funding organizations and projects that directly benefit low income Vermonters, and not a broader spectrum of projects, at this time. Board members did not explicitly state whether workforce programs that are not specifically targeted at training underserved Vermonters (Vermont Adult Learning and ReSOURCE both target underserved and under-employed folks) would fall under this category of direct service, or if workforce grants constitute another category of high importance to the board.

Board Identified Priorities and Follow-up Action

1. Provide flexible funding to help families with energy-related needs (e.g., electric bills, heating fuel).
2. Focus on home repair funds necessary for weatherization (e.g., replacing knob-and-tube wiring).
3. Support energy workforce training programs, especially in weatherization.
4. Coordinate with other funders.

The meeting adjourned at 3:37 pm.

Respectfully submitted by Gabrielle Malina, August 13, 2025

25103427.1