

VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, February 16, 2023
MINUTES

VLCT Board Members Present (in person): President Jessie Baker, Bill Fraser, Julie Hance, Mary Ann Goulette, Joe Major, Lucrecia Wonsor; **(via Zoom):** David Allaire, Charlie Hancock, Delsie Hoyt, Ann Lawless, Ken Linsley, Miro Weinberger, and Georgette Wolf-Ludwig

VLCT Staff Present (in person): Executive Director Ted Brady, Seth Abbene, Jessi Hill, Karen Horn, Gwynn Zakov **(via Zoom):** Katie Buckley, and Abby Friedman.

Others Present (in person): Jill Remick, Vermont Department of Taxes, Director, Property Valuation and Review (departed at 1 p.m.); Katie Buckley, Abby Friedman, Karen Horn, Gwynn Zakov; **(via Zoom):** Elena Esteban and Garrett Baxter (12:55 – 1:45).

Agenda Item #1: Call to order by the President

President Jessie Baker called the meeting to order at 12:22 p.m. She noted that this was Ken Linsley's last board meeting as he has decided not to seek re-election to the Danville Selectboard. The Board expressed its appreciation for Ken's five years of service to the VLCT Board of Directors.

Agenda Item #2: Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

Mary Ann Goulette moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Lucrecia Wonsor seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #3: Consent Agenda

Julie Hance moved to adopt the consent agenda, including the minutes from January 19, 2023, and the February Personnel Report. The motion was seconded by Mary Ann Goulette. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #4: Re-Evaluating Vermont's Reappraisal Process

Jill Remick was not present to begin her presentation. Ted began his organizational update. No action was taken on the organization update, and the Board returned to the reappraisal discussion upon Jill's arrival. Jill provided an overview of the anticipated spike in reappraisal orders (165 municipalities out of 254) this year due to the across-the-board increase in property values statewide. Jill also noted that communities are struggling to find timely reappraisal services and that current reappraisal contracts are scheduling for 2027. Jill also provided an overview of legislative efforts to address the challenge, including proposals to put a moratorium on reappraisal orders, efforts to change the state's reappraisal process to a scheduled process, opportunities to empower towns to band together to conduct reappraisals at the same time to reach scale that attracts contractors to bid, and proposals to create a statewide reappraisal approach. Jill shared there are other proposals to expand the types of taxation applied to different non-homestead and homestead properties. Jill said the Tax Department was primarily interested in moving to a scheduled reappraisal process this session. Karen Horn said VLCT and the Tax Department were aligned in this desire. Several board members asked questions about various legislative proposals.

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Agenda Item #5: Organizational Update

Ted Brady provided an overview of operations and policy considerations at VLCT. He asked board member to help raise awareness of a survey coming March 8th to all members for Town Meeting changes and shared updates on: the delayed implementation of the new association management system to March 30th, a proposal to demo a new benefit portal to larger members, the plans for convening the nominating committee to consider a replacement for Ken's seat, PACIF's certification from AGRiP, the record number of municipal inquiries received in January, PACIF and VERB audits, the Federal Funding Assistance Program, and the State Ethics Commission interest in municipal ethics issues.

The Board took a 10 minute break, from 1:30-1:40 p.m. because members couldn't hear reliable audio from the board room. The audio issue was fixed.

Agenda Item #6: Town of Newbury Request for VLCT Amicus Brief

Ted explained that the Town of Newbury has requested that VLCT submit an amicus brief in support of the town's case of *In re Vermont Permanency Initiative 22-AP-324*. Ted summarized that the case revolves around state laws requiring towns to consider group homes a single-family residence, thus restricting a town's ability to place restrictions on how and where such facilities are built. The town contends the facility is not a group home, but a juvenile detention facility. Ted explained he had asked the staff attorneys in the Municipal Assistance Center to prepare a case analysis and make a recommendation to the Board on how to proceed. That case analysis recommended against filing an amicus brief with the Vermont Supreme Court in this case, and Ted said he agreed with this recommendation. Municipal Assistance Center Senior Staff Attorney Garrett Baxter fielded questions about the case analysis and the recommendation. Several board members expressed concern about the ability of the state to pre-empt a community's land use laws to site a state facility. Garrett stated that the policy question of pre-emption in this case is one best addressed by the Legislature, as the pre-emption for group homes is clearly written into law. The analysis also stated that disputing the definition of group home based on the fact that residents were justice involved was unlikely to succeed. Mayor Allaire said he was frustrated with the state's approach to housing high-need populations in areas without adequate services and supports – such as the hotels in Rutland City.

Mary Anne Goulette motioned that the VLCT Board take the recommendation of the MAC Attorneys and the Executive Director to take no action on the request to submit an amicus brief. Bill Fraser seconded the motion. A rollcall vote occurred. The vote was 12 to 1 in favor of the motion. The motion passed. See the attached rollcall tally.

Agenda Item 7 (break) occurred before item 6.

Agenda Item #8: 2023 Equity Work Plan

Joe Major motioned to approve the VLCT 2023 Equity Work Plan as proposed. Mary Ann Goulette seconded. The motion was approved unanimously.

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Agenda Item #9: Legislative Update

Karen Horn and Gwynn Zakov shared updates on housing legislation, transportation funding in the Budget Adjustment Act, law enforcement legislation, and project-based tax increment financing. Mayor Weinberger stated that several communities are working to build a proposal to delegate Act 250 authority to municipalities.

There was no other business and no need for an executive session.

Agenda Item #10: Executive Director Evaluation

Ted proposed a schedule and process for conducting the 2023 Executive Director Evaluation.

There was no other business and no executive session.

Lucrecia Wonsor motioned to adjourn the meeting. Bill Fraser seconded the motion. The motion was adopted unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 2:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Ted Brady
Executive Director

As adopted by the VLCT Board of Directors on March 16, 2023

**Motion that the VLCT Board take the recommendation of the MAC
Attorneys and the Executive Director to take no action on the request to
submit an amicus brief.**

Name	Muni	ROLL CALL (Y, N)
CHARLIE HANCOCK	MONTGOMERY	Y
DELSIE HOYT	FAIRLEE	Y
GEORGETTE WOLF-LUDWIG	FAIRLEE	Y
HON. MIRO WEINBERGER	BURLINGTON	Y
JESSIE BAKER	SO BURLINGTON	Y
DAVID ALLAIRE	RUTLAND CITY	N
JULIE HANCE	CHESTER	Y
KENNETH LINSLEY	DANVILLE	Y
ANN LAWLESS	WHEELOCK	Y
LUCRECIA WONSOR	KILLINGTON	Y
MARY ANN GOULETTE	WEST RUTLAND	Y
WILLIAM FRASER	MONTPELIER	Y
JOE MAJOR	HARTFORD	Y