

# VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, December 19, 2024

## MINUTES

**VLCT Board Members Present (in person):** Bill Fraser, Mary Ann Goulette, Karen Barber, Ann Lawless.

**VLCT Board Members Present (via Zoom):** Charlie Hancock, Michael Hogan, Mayor Doenges, Julie Hance (departed near 2 p.m.), Delsie Hoyt, Jesse Baker, Mayor Lott, Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak (arrived at 1:49)

**VLCT Staff Present (in person):** Ted Brady, Seth Abbene, Abby Friedman, Jessi Hill, Kelley Avery, Josh Hanford, Katie Buckley, Jeremy Weiss.

**VLCT Staff Present (via Zoom):** Emmanuel Ajanma, Elena Esteban.

**Others Present:** Mark Williams (NIS), Hank Ehram (NIS), Sally McKenzie (Acrisure), Akua Smith (Acrisure), Thom Rugg (Acrisure), Doug Farnham via Zoom (State of Vermont), Irma Esparza Diggs via Zoom (NLC).

### **Agenda Item #1: Call to order by the President**

President Bill Fraser called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. and welcomed newest Board member Karen Barber. Board members and attendees introduced themselves.

### **Agenda Item #2: Additions and Deletions to the Agenda**

No changes to the agenda.

### **Agenda Item #3: Consent Agenda**

Mary Ann Goulette moved to approve the minutes of November 21, 2024, and accept the December Personnel Report and the 2025 Health and Dental Addendum. Mayor Kristine Lott seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Agenda Item #4: Federal Advocacy Update**

Irma Esparza Diggs was not present when agenda item #4 was initially discussed. The meeting proceeded to Agenda item # 6 and then returned to Agenda item #4 when Irma joined the meeting. Irma provided the Board with a federal advocacy update highlighting actions the National League of Cities is taking to address important issues on behalf of municipalities. Irma discussed the potential government shutdown stressing that now is the time for towns and cities to obligate and encumber their remaining ARPA funds. NLC continues to push for additional infrastructure funding in light of the ongoing housing crisis and discussed steps NLC is taking to support and advocate for funding to help economically distressed communities. Charlie Hancock and Bill Fraser asked Irma for clarification about the Trump Administration's interest in making underutilized federal property available for housing development. Irma highlighted the importance of protecting tax exempt municipal bonds and shared ways NLC is looking for opportunities to partner with the incoming administration and brief the transition team on programs that matter to local government. Bill shared Vermont is very much in need of additional funding for disaster recovery and resilience.

### **Agenda Item #5: Impact of Federal Elections on State and Municipal Budgets**

Vermont's Chief Recovery Officer Doug Farnham shared his observations about what impact the elections may have on state and municipal budgets. Discussing ARPA, Doug warned municipalities that if you can take steps to expend funds faster, they should take those steps, to avoid federal claw back of those funds. Specifically, Doug mentioned the use of the revenue loss replacement and the payroll category of the federal rule to recategorize those expenses and spend those federal dollars on eligible expenses allowing for continuation of those programs with general funds. ARPA funds and Inflation Reduction Act programs are likely to be targeted for downsizing or 'cold storage', referring to the practice of an agency or administration taking no formal action or communications on a particular program.

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Thursday, December 19, 2024

Doug expressed the hope that politically there can be some common ground around the country on water and sewer investments and infrastructure funding. Doug is continuing to put recovery issues, ARPA, pandemic, and flooding in front of the Governor's team in the hopes these concepts gain traction and can be included in the budget.

## **Agenda Item #6: Update from NIS and Acrisure Regarding VLCT Life and Disability Insurance Program and Health Insurance Advisory Services**

Guests from NIS and Acrisure joined the Board to provide an overview of their suite of services. Ted discussed the relationship with NIS and Acrisure was a way to get group life insurance and disability insurance, at our members request, generating some non-dues revenue for the League which helps to reduce VLCT dues for members.

## **Agenda Item #7: Organizational Update**

Ted began his remarks by announcing the departure of Joe Damiata as Director of Risk Management Services. Ted provided updates on the launch of the search for the new RMS Director and provided some. Municipal Access Portal stats. Ted announced all VLCT training will be free in 2025. Ted also provided an update on the Equity committee, Municipal Operations Support team, Municipal Assistance Center, Risk Management Services, upcoming trainings and VLCT highlights in the news.

## **Agenda Item #8: Approve 2025 VLCT Work Plan**

Ted provided a walk-through of the 2025 VLCT Work Plan, took questions, and received positive feedback from Board members. Charlie Hancock moved to adopt the 2025 VLCT Workplan. Mayor Lott seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #9: Break**

At 1:56 p.m. the Board took a break. No business was conducted at this time. The Board reconvened at 2 p.m.

## **Agenda Item #10: Child Care Tax Decision**

Seth Abbene shared on July 1<sup>st</sup> the childcare contribution tax went into effect, which is a .44% tax, a quarter of which can be deducted from the employees paycheck. Seth and Ted recommended continuing to instead pay the full tax instead of passing it on to the employees. The budget contemplates this for 2025 which equates to around \$6,000. Mary Ann moved VLCT cover the full cost of the childcare contribution tax in 2025. Mayor Doenges seconded the motion. Jessie Baker suggested childcare continues to be an issue for municipal employees and stated that this is another cost shift to local taxpayers from the state and asked Josh to include this as a talking point for 2025 emphasizing while we greatly support a focus on childcare, increasing cost to local taxpayers is not the ideal way to do it. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #11: Legislative Update**

Josh Hanford provided the legislative update. Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak highlighted wastewater issues in Burlington and the hope there could be more of a state/municipal partnership.

## **Agenda item #12: Building Committee Update**

Ted provided an update and requested the Board approve the Building Committee move forward with investigating the Association Hub concept and charge Betsy with seeking some possible associations to partner with. Charlie Hancock moved to approve the Building Committee continue to investigate the Association Hub Concept. The motion was seconded by Mike Hogan. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #13: Executive Session (If necessary)**

No executive session.

**VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS  
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Thursday, December 19, 2024

**Agenda Item #14: Other Business**

No other business was conducted.

**Agenda Item #15 Adjourn**

Karen Barber moved to adjourn. Ann Lawless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously and the meeting adjourned at 2:48 p.m.

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Jeremy Weiss,*

*Membership and Administrative Coordinator*

*As approved by VLCT Board of Directors January 16, 2025.*

*View Meeting here:*

[https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/Vmu6Bhf9qjr50yVtbSg6EW\\_jPrrVSj1PQltwB0H09z84xgJySJ7mu1OjD0Mz-qZl.pLIBzbhqsACB0jni](https://us06web.zoom.us/rec/share/Vmu6Bhf9qjr50yVtbSg6EW_jPrrVSj1PQltwB0H09z84xgJySJ7mu1OjD0Mz-qZl.pLIBzbhqsACB0jni)