

VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, June 26, 2025

MINUTES

VLCT Board Members Present (in person): Mary Ann Goulette, Julie Hance, Mike Hogan, Mayor Lott, Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak, Mayor Doenges, Charlie Hancock, Karen Godnick Barber, Ann Lawless, Delsie Hoyt, Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, and Tom Leitz.

VLCT Board Members Present (via Zoom): Jesse Baker.

VLCT Staff Present (in person): Ted Brady, Josh Hanford, Seth Abbene, Jessi Hill, Samantha Sheehan, Katie Buckley, Abby Friedman, Jeremy Weiss

VLCT Staff Present (via Zoom): Emmanuel Ajanma, Phil Latvis, Abby Friedman.

Guests Present (in person): Rick DeAngelis of Just Basics.

Agenda Item #1: Call to order by the President

President Mary Ann Goulette called the meeting to order at 12:22 p.m.

Agenda Item #2: Additions and Deletions to the Agenda

Mike Hogan moved to approve the agenda as presented. Charlie Hancock seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #3: Consent Agenda

Delsie Hoyt moved to approve the meeting minutes of April 17, 2025, and accept the June Personnel Report. Karen Barber seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #4: Just Basics Lease Discussion

Just Basics renewed its lease in August but has since faced financial hardship due to reduced charitable donations and the end of pandemic aid. Three months ago, Just Basics requested rent relief. The board approved deferring 50% of their rent through August, with a proposal to consider forgiving that deferred amount (approx. \$8,000). Rick DeAngelis attended the meeting to formally request rent forgiveness. He described the organization's financial challenges, reliance on donations, and importance of the rent deferral to achieving financial sustainability. Just Basics serves around 1,200 people/month and is open three days a week (10 AM–12 PM). The organization receives about \$15,000 annually from the City of Montpelier's Community Fund. Rick expressed appreciation for the board's past support and openness to forgiving the deferred rent. Ted recommended forgiving the deferred rent. He also explained that because the Board approved the lease, they must also approve rent forgiveness. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig moved to forgive the rent. Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #5: Organizational Update

Ted provided the organizational update by summarizing key initiatives and developments including the success of the VLCT golf outing, progress on the Association Hub project, and enhancements to the Municipal Service Scholarship. Updates were also provided on VLCT's legal engagement in the Burlington Short-Term Rental case via an amicus brief, the upcoming launch of the "MuniPal" AI chatbot, and the ongoing IT Services RFP process. Further organizational developments included VLCT's interactions with the State Ethics Commission, investigations into new health insurance options, preparations for Town Meeting 3.0, and participation in the State and Local Cybersecurity Grant Program. Departmental updates were shared from the Municipal

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Assistance Center (MAC), the Municipal Operations Support Team, and Risk Management Services.

Agenda Item #6: Accept Q1 2025 Financials

Seth Abbene presented the Q1 financials. Charlie Hancock moved to approve the Q1 Financials. Ann Lawless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #7: Allocate VLCT Municipal Reinvestment Pilot Finds to Vermont Community Loan Fund

Seth presented the current outlook of the pilot fund and some of the important takeaways on the work happening. Staff recommends rolling over that investment in the next fiscal year. Mayor Doenges moved to approve rolling over the \$250,000 investment plus interest for another year at the one-year rate of 3.5%. Delsie Hoyt seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #8: Adopting 2025/ 2026 VLCT Equity Committee Work Plan

Ted began the discussion and announced that Karen Barber had agreed to serve as the new board co-chair of the Equity Committee, which is co-led by a board member and a member of the Committee. The committee was previously tasked with returning to the Board with a recommendation on how to proceed. Ted reported that the committee now had a proposal that represents a slight pivot from the original direction, focusing on making the work more accessible and engaging for members across the state asking the Board to consider adopting this draft. This shift involves continued partnership with Abundant Sun and expansion to include new collaborators such as the Dignity Index. Karen Barber moved to approve the Equity Work Plan. Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak seconded the motion. Prior to approval, Mayor Emma proposed to amend the proposal by adding language addressing workplace retention alongside recruitment, with the intent to help municipalities “create and maintain inclusive work environments to retain and attract underrepresented populations.” The amendment was accepted as a friendly modification and incorporated into the final motion. The motion, as amended, was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #9: Approve Abundant Sun Contract for governing for All with Skill

The Board was asked to approve the Abundant Sun contract, which included development and licensing for the training sessions at a cost of \$33,000 for the year, with an optional \$12,000 renewal for the second year. This amount fell within the \$100,000 budget allocated for equity work. The Dignity Index speaker fee was under \$10,000 and did not require board approval. Mayor Lott moved to approve the Abundant Sun Contract. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #10: Break

At 1:32 the Board took a break. No business was conducted during this time. The Board reconvened at 1:44.

Agenda Item #11: Legislative Update

Josh Hanford and Samantha Sheehan presented a high-level summary of legislative wins from the most recent session using a “Top 10” format to highlight significant outcomes. They noted that overall, the outcomes were positive for municipalities, citing improved responsiveness from state partners.

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The Community Housing and Infrastructure Program (CHIP) was highlighted as the top achievement. CHIP is the largest public investment in municipal infrastructure and housing in Vermont's history, with a projected \$2 billion in investments over a 10-year period, including \$660 million in state education increment. The bill passed with nearly unanimous support and included provisions to ensure broad municipal eligibility regardless of zoning or Act 250 status. Projects must be primarily housing (60%) but can include other public benefits. Municipalities may retain up to 100% of their increment and use it for a wide array of project expenses. Staff noted that CHIP does not require new appropriations, does not raise municipal tax or water rates, and supports both short- and long-term municipal revenue growth. They emphasized that CHIP developments must prioritize primary residence use, enforceable through local infrastructure agreements, with provisions allowing flexibility in verification. Stakeholders, including the League, will participate in upcoming rulemaking on eligible public improvements under CHIP, with expectations that flood mitigation, brownfields, and non-municipal infrastructure will be included.

Agenda Item #12 2025 Research Project 2:53

The Intergovernmental Relations team offered 2 possible recommendations to the Board to consider the use of the 20K set aside in the VLCT budget for policy work. This included 1) Support the successful use of the CHIP for municipalities across Vermont. 2) analysis of Vermont Municipal Revenue Sharing Authority. Mike Hogan moved to approve option 2. Ann Lawless seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

Agenda Item #13: Municipal Service Awards

Ted asked the board to look at the 3 categories of awards and nominate some people. The application is open on the website now. Historically this decision has come back to the board, ted asked that the executive committee be empowered to make the final decision.

Ted asked Board members to review the Municipal Service Award categories, which include the Municipal Service Award, the Lifetime Achievement Award, and the Legislative Service Award. They were encouraged to nominate individuals using the official form available on the organization's website. It was clarified that simply writing someone's name on paper does not constitute a valid nomination. Since there will be no further board meetings before the selection deadline, and since historically this decision has come back to the Board for approval, Ted asked that the Executive Committee be empowered to review nominations and select the award recipients. There were no objections to this approach.

Agenda Item #14: Executive Session

No executive session was needed.

Agenda Item #15: Other Business

No other business.

Agenda Item #16: Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 3:05.

Respectfully submitted,

Jeremy Weiss,

Membership and Administrative Coordinator

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