

# VERMONT LEAGUE OF CITIES AND TOWNS BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Thursday, April 17, 2025

## MINUTES

**VLCT Board Members Present (in person):** Mary Ann Goulette, Mayor Doenges, Charlie Hancock, and Tom Leitz.

**VLCT Board Members Present (via Zoom):** Julie Hance, Mike Hogan, Mayor Lott, Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak, Jesse Baker, Karen Godnick Barber, Ann Lawless.

**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, Kelley Avery.

**Guests Present (via Zoom):** Sarah Thayer, Northeast Delta Dental.

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

President Mary Ann Goulette called the meeting to order at 12:20 p.m. and welcomed the newest VLCT Board member Tom Leitz.

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

Ted Brady recommended that the Board amend the agenda by moving agenda item “7: VLCT Equity Work/ Discussion About Implications of Federal Climate on Municipal Equity Work” to before Agenda item #6: “Review and Re-Adopt Existing Board Policies and Adopt New IT Policies”. Charlie Hancock moved to approve the agenda, as amended. Tom Leitz seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

Mike Hogan moved to approve the minutes of March 20, 2025, and accept the April Personnel Report. Mayor Doenges seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously with Tom Leitz abstaining.

### **Agenda Item #4: Northeast Delta Dental**

Sarah Thayer from Delta Dental and Kelley Avery presented the renewal package for review. Charlie Hancock moved to approve the renewal for 2025-2026. Mayor Doenges seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously. Thereupon, Charlie Hancock moved to approve the Marketing and Administration Agreement. Tom Leitz seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

### **Agenda Item #5: Organizational Update**

Ted provided the April Organization update covering the 2025 workplan, Burlington Short-Term Rental Amicus Brief, Ethics Commission visit, health insurance investigations, Town Meeting Day updates, and the launch of the Town Careers Website. He also shared updates from the Municipal Assistance Center, RMS and the Municipal Operations Support Team.

### **Agenda Item #6: Review and Re-Adopt Existing Board Policies and Adopt New IT Policies**

Ted presented proposed policy changes including a new IT policy that contains seven different new policies. The language was recommended by VC3, edited by Emmanuel Ajanma and the VLCT Leadership Team, and brought to the Board for approval. Mayor Doenges moved to readopt the existing Board policies and adopt the new changes. Mike Hogan seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

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## **Agenda Item #7: VLCT Equity Work/ Discussion About Implications of Federal Climate on Municipal Equity Work**

Ted asked the Board to share their perspectives on how VLCT should approach assisting members with equity related technical assistance in light of the Trump Administration's recent executive orders and actions connected to diversity, equity and inclusion. He explained that though no federal funding is used to conduct the equity work, VLCT must certify that it is complying with federal laws when receiving federal money. Ted shared that he is concerned that the Trump Administration may disagree with any organization's certification that it is complying with federal civil rights laws if the organization does equity work. Karen Barber shared that various parts of the State have been asked to certify they are complying with the Administration's ban on diversity, equity and inclusion work, and that there is not a standard response across all state agencies yet. After a debate about what this could mean for VLCT's ability to receive future federal funding, various Board members suggested tasking the Equity Committee with recommending how VLCT should proceed with helping members engage all citizens and treat all citizen fairly. Ted also asked the Board to consider how VLCT should communicate the possible risks of doing equity work at a municipal level with municipal members who are dependent on federal funding. Ted suggested it might be premature to approve the 2025 Equity workplan in light of the conversation.

Jessie Baker moved to update the website with a statement indicating VLCT is doing research on how federal laws are impacting both VLCT and member towns related to the equity work they have done or wish to do in the future, to charge the equity committee with reevaluating VLCT's equity work, and remove outdated information about VLCT's past equity work from the website. Karen barber seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #8: Break**

At 1:43 the Board took a break. No business was conducted at this time. The Board reconvened at 1:53 p.m.

## **Agenda Item #9: Reconsider Reinstating Fees for VLCT Training Program**

Due to the federal funding uncertainty, the Board previously voted to reinstate all training fees that would have otherwise been subsidized by USDA funding. Ted informed the Board that since that vote, the grant funding has been reinstated. In addition, he shared that through Q1 of 2025, training attendance has been up 30-40 percent at some of our trainings, suggesting the free training has successfully engaged more members. He also said the finance team estimated re-instating fees was only going to raise about \$10,000. As a result, even if the grant had not been reinstated, Ted suggested reverted to the free training was a low risk, high reward opportunity for VLCT. that even if the grant were to be cancelled, Mayor Doenges moved to re-instate free training for 2025. Tom Leitz seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #10: Authorize Executive Committee to select a Real Estate Advisor for Vermont Association Hub**

Ted shared that two vendors responded to the real estate advisor RFP. He updated the Board that the Building Committee had met and reviewed the responses, and recommended that the Board provide the VLCT Equity Committee with the authority to sign a contract with one of the two vendors for up to \$100,000. Ted proposed to reconvene the Building Committee to make a final recommendation to the Executive Committee on which vendor to select. Mike Hogan shared that he felt the proposal from Architects was particularly responsive to the RFP. Mike Hogan moved

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to allocate the authority to the Executive Committee to authorize the Executive Director sign a contract for this project not to exceed 100K. The motion was seconded by Mayor Doenges. The motion was approved unanimously.

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

Josh Hanford and Samantha Sheehan provided the legislative update providing highlights on Local Option Tax, the flood bill, funding status of the Municipal Technical Assistance Program, Tunbridge trails court case, and three-acre permit reform.

## **Agenda Item #12 VLCT Executive Director Evaluation**

The Board Immediately moved to Agenda Item #13 before acting on the Executive Director's annual evaluation.

## **Agenda Item #13: Executive Session**

At 2:40 p.m., Tom Leitz moved that the VLCT Executive Committee enter into executive session to discuss the appointment or employment or evaluation of a public officer or employee in accordance with 1 V.S.A. § 313(a)(3) and invited the Executive Director to participate. Charlie Hancock seconded the motion. Motion was approved unanimously.

At 2:43 the Board came out of executive session. Tom Leitz moved to increase the Executive Director compensation by three percent effective on the anniversary hire, March 29, 2025,, and to grant the Executive Director a four-week paid sabbatical to be used within three years (subject to 90 days advance notice and a comprehensive operations plan in place). Charlie Hancock seconded the motion. The motion was approved unanimously.

## **Agenda Item #14: Other Business**

No other business conducted.

## **Agenda Item #15: Adjourn**

Charlie Hancock moved to adjourn. Tom Leitz seconded the motion and the meeting was adjourned at 2:46

*Respectfully submitted,*

*Jeremy Weiss,*

*Membership and Administrative Coordinator*

**View Meeting here:**

<https://us06web.zoom.us/join/JamRMjLWHOpO0AvL9yj6CkKpyXusbZ31Y3aQE-R0MD7vjU-4xLVGIItEkysyIS7rQob87AdtinRuQBg.j3PFFNO7Ft6BjcXa>