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## VLCT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 2020 03-12

Vermont League of Cities and Towns  
Board of Directors Meeting  
VLCT Offices  
Thursday, March 12, 2020

### Minutes

**Members Present:** Vice President Peter Elwell and Members Jessie Baker, Dominic Cloud, Bill Fraser, Mary Ann Goulette, Elaine Haney, Delsie Hoyt, Ken Linsley, Sandy Pinsonault, George Putnam, Charles Safford and Lucrecia Wonsor. President Weinberger attended via telephone.

**Others Present:** VLCT staff members Karen Horn, Abigail Friedman, Jessica Hill, Lisa Goodell, Ione Minot and Maura Carroll.

**Agenda Item #1: Call to order by the President.** Vice President Elwell called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m. and welcomed all to the meeting.

**Agenda Item #2: Additions and Deletions to the Agenda.** On motion duly made by Member Cloud and seconded by Member Baker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the agenda.

**Agenda Item #3: Consent Agenda Items.** On motion duly made by Member Pinsonault and seconded by Member Cloud, the Board unanimously voted to approve the consent agenda.

**Agenda Item #4: Organizational Update.** Maura Carroll offered an update that included work on the database update following Town Meeting Day, preparation for meetings and activities of the Cybersecurity and Emerging Technology Committee, energy efficiency projects and the COVID-19 outbreak and planning. She identified that VLCT is attempting to provide as many resources to members as possible, gaining information from conference calls at the state and federal level, posting links on the website to guidance from state and federal agencies, offering assistance with personnel questions, hiring an attorney to prepare a template for mutual aid agreements and finalizing VLCT's business continuity plan. She announced that VLCT is planning to host a webinar in lieu of the Selectboard Institute on March 21. Once things settle after addressing COVID-19 issues, there will be face-to-face training for new local officials. The Board did not object to that approach.

There was a robust discussion about efforts to prepare for the effects of COVID-19 and Board members

asked for more information about tools that would assist cities and towns asking staff to work from home, such as Zoom and GoToMeeting. In addition, the Board asked staff to continue efforts to engage legislators in discussions about statutes that may need temporary or permanent alteration to allow communities to continue to operate during the outbreak, including the Open Meeting Law, when state guidance is to limit public gatherings. In addition, the Board agreed that VLCT should issue a statement advising towns to get health information from the State of Vermont, outlining the authority of local government in a pandemic or emergency situation and how cities and towns can best address public meetings, including moving selectboard meetings to alternate locations to be able to adhere to social distancing measures. Finally, the Board asked staff to convey concerns to the state Emergency Management Task Force so that they might be addressed in the conference call scheduled for Friday, March 13.

**Agenda Item #5: Local Government Day Debrief.** The Board had a lively discussion about the decreasing attendance at Local Government Day and what strategies might be used to generate greater interest including: changing the format or type of event; moving an activity to Town Fair; offering awards to citizens and/or legislators; scheduling meetings with legislative leadership and the Board; having legislators attend Board meetings during the first four months of the year; creating a “Town Celebration” event in conjunction with Town Fair, highlighting what local governments are doing; implementing strategies to have local officials testify before the legislature every week during the session; creating an event just ahead of Town Meeting Day when all attention is focused on local government; reception for legislators at Town Fair (Wednesday night); asking all who serve on legislative policy committees to commit to testifying on specific issues during the session; gathering information and ideas from the general membership; and creating a descriptive communication outlining what local officials can expect from the VLCT legislative policy process or at Local Government Day. The Board asked that staff put a summary together of the ideas expressed and any additional staff recommendations to help the Board determine a course of action. The bottom line is that VLCT needs a strategy to effectively engage legislators and members on priority municipal issues.

**Agenda Item #6: Law Enforcement Advisory Board.** The Board discussed the role of VLCT in the development of model police policies. There was concern that such policy development should include organizations and individuals that might be affected by such policy implementation. Member Cloud moved, seconded by Member Safford, that VLCT endorse the process of developing model policies that support law enforcement with broad inclusion of ideas that could be reviewed by VLCT in draft form. That motion was withdrawn. On motion duly made by Member Fraser and seconded by Member Baker, the Board unanimously voted to support the following: VLCT supports having uniform policies among all law enforcement agencies in Vermont and encourages the widest possible engagement of stakeholders to protect law enforcement officials and the residents of the state; the Board looks forward to reviewing the final draft of the policies after public comment.

Member Cloud left the meeting at 3:23 and President Weinberger left the meeting at 3:30 p.m.

**Agenda Item #7: 2020 Member Guide/2019 Annual Report.** The Board reviewed the Member Guide and Ione Minot responded to questions from the Board. The VLCT bylaws require the Board to submit an annual report to the membership, but audited financial statements are not available until after the organization receives the audited financials from the Vermont Municipal Retirement System. That does not occur until after July of each year. Accordingly, staff recommends that the Member Guide be a brief update to the membership with a more formal annual report presented around the time of the Annual Meeting. The Board agreed with that approach.

**Agenda Item #8: Updated Fraud Policy.** Staff presented an updated Fraud Policy for the Board's review. On motion duly made by Member Goulette and seconded by Member Haney, the Board unanimously adopted the policy as presented.

**Agenda Item #9: Legislative Update.** Karen Horn discussed a number of legislative issues with the Board, including school capital construction, tax increment financing, Act 250, emergency medical services support, coverage and training, cannabis taxation and regulation, incentives for workforce housing, cybersecurity, the Global Warming Solutions Act and transportation issues. She responded to questions and comments from the Board.

**Agenda Item #10: Other Business.** On motion duly made by Member Pinsonault and seconded by Member Wonsor, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 3:56 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maura Carroll  
Executive Director

**Board or Committee:**

VLCT Board of Directors

**Board Meeting Date:**

Thursday, March 12, 2020

**Resource Category:**

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