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**Vermont League of Cities and Towns
Virtual Board of Directors Meeting
Virtual Meeting via GoToMeeting and Telephone
Thursday, February 18, 2021**

Minutes

Members Present: President Miro Weinberger, Vice President Peter Elwell and Members Jessie Baker, Dominic Cloud, Bill Fraser, Mary Anne Goulette, Elaine Haney, Lucas Herring, Delsie Hoyt, Ken Linsley, George Putnam, Charles Safford and Lucrecia Wonsor.

Others Present: Commissioner Deb Brighton of the Vermont Tax Structure Commission; VLCT staff members Karen Horn, Abigail Friedman, Jessica Hill, Gwynn Zakov, Ione Minot and Maura Carroll.

All attended via GoToMeeting or by telephone.

Agenda Item #1: Call to order by the President. President Weinberger called the meeting to order at 12:22 p.m. and welcomed all to the meeting.

Agenda Item #2: Additions and Deletions to the Agenda. Member Putnam asked that two items be added to Other Business. On motion duly made by Member Putnam and seconded by Member Baker, the Board unanimously voted to approve the agenda as amended.

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

Agenda Item #4 Tax Structure Commission Report. Commissioner Deb Brighton, a member of the State's Tax Structure Commission, attended the meeting to discuss the results of the Commission's study as published in the report. She focused primarily on the work done regarding education funding and explained what concerns the Commission took into account and how it came to the recommended conclusions. She answered questions posed by the Board. Following the presentation, the Board discussed next steps and whether further action was needed. Given the existing policy adopted by the membership and the vote the Board took at its January meeting to support the Commission Report, the Board determined that no further action was needed at this time.

Agenda Item #5: Organizational Update. Maura Carroll offered an update to the Board about organizational activities, including helping communities prepare for Town Meeting; continuing to pursue assistance with identifying IT needs of member municipalities and working with Champlain College; providing COVID updates and other important time sensitive information to members; preparation of the VLCT 2021 Member Guide; and a brief update about the work with the National League of Cities to shepherd direct federal aid to cities and towns.

Agenda Item #6: Equity and Inclusion Issues. Committee Chair Elaine Haney reported on the activities to date, including the framework/plan for the VLCT Equity Committee and sending a letter requesting grant assistance from the Vermont Community Foundation. There were a number of questions and comments from the Board, including the need to use common definitions of terms when describing the equity work. A concern was expressed that the focus of the work is misdirected in that it treats people according to group classifications instead of as individuals, which is incompatible with the role of government. In addition, there were comments about the importance of undertaking the work, while at the same time being respectful of contrary opinions or perspectives. On motion duly made by Member Cloud and seconded by Member Baker, the Board voted 12-1 to support the framework proposed by the Committee Chair and staff. The Board voted as follows: President Weinberger, Vice President Elwell and Members Baker, Cloud, Fraser, Goulette, Haney, Herring, Hoyt, Linsley, Safford and Wonsor voting in the affirmative and Member Putnam voting in the negative.

Agenda Item #7: Legislative Update. Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, Karen Horn, and Municipal Policy Advocate, Gwynn Zakov, updated the Board about activities during the ongoing 2021 legislative session. They reported on transportation funding, local option taxes and sales taxes, law enforcement, broadband, COVID-19 legislation and firearms in government buildings.

Agenda Item #8: Search Committee Update. Announcements were made to the membership and the public that Ted Brady will be the next VLCT Executive Director. On motion duly made by Member Goulette and seconded by Member Linsley, the Board voted unanimously to direct the Executive Committee to review the final draft of the new executive director's contract and to designate President Weinberger to sign the contract.

Agenda Item #9: Other Business. c. Member Initiatives. Member Putnam acknowledged that staff had provided an outstanding webinar on Wednesday, February 17, providing guidance for those communities preparing for Australian Ballot Town Meeting this year. He recommended that the Board vote to commend staff for a job well done. On motion duly made by Member Cloud and seconded by Member Safford, the Board unanimously voted to commend the Municipal Assistance Center staff for their work.

Member Putnam also asked whether the recording for the previously mentioned webinar could be made available at no cost to all communities using Australian Ballot that did not have a chance to attend the webinar. Municipal Assistance Center Director, Abigail Friedman, responded that we would do our best to make it available. Maura Carroll reminded the Board that part of the budget is built around the potential to develop non-dues revenue and VLCT relies on members participating in training sessions and paying a fee for them. If we can provide this at no cost, this should be considered an exception rather than the rule.

On motion duly made by Member Safford and seconded by Member Linsley, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn at 2:25 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Maura Carroll
Executive Director

Board or Committee:

VLCT Board of Directors

Board/Committee Meeting Date:

Thursday, February 18, 2021

Resource Category:

- Minutes
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