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[Home](#) > VLCT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 2018 03-15

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## VLCT Board of Directors Meeting Minutes 2018 03-15

### Vermont League of Cities and Towns Board of Directors Meeting Thursday, March 15, 2018

#### Minutes

**Members Present:** President Cloud, Vice President Weinberger and Members Beckett, Cadwell, Elwell, Fraser, Goulette, Pinsonault, Safford, Simmons, and Wonsor. Member Whittaker attended via telephone.

**Others Present:** VLCT staff members: Karen Horn, Gwynn Zakov, Mike Gilbar, Jessica Hill, Abigail Friedman, Garrett Baxter and Maura Carroll.

**Agenda Item 1: Call to order by the President.** President Cloud called the meeting to order at 12:25 p.m. and welcomed all to the meeting. Member Whittaker welcomed Member Fraser back to the Board.

**Agenda Item 2: Additions and Deletions to the Agenda.** Member Elwell asked to bring an item to the Board under Member Initiatives, regarding mandatory binding arbitration. On motion duly made by Member Safford and seconded by Member Cadwell, the Board unanimously voted to approve the agenda as amended.

**Agenda Item 3: Consent Agenda Items.** On motion duly made by Member Cadwell and seconded by Member Pinsonault, the Board unanimously voted to approve the consent agenda item with the February minutes amended to add a specific reference to the definitions regarding an agricultural current use designation.

The paragraph now reads “Member Whittaker addressed this additional agenda item as a follow-up to the discussion at the December Board meeting about agricultural land in current use. The Board discussed the definition of agriculture and the oversight of land in that current use category. Member Whittaker serves on the Current Use Advisory Board and explained that each landowner must file an annual statement with the Tax Department certifying that the landowner has met the minimum statutory requirements to remain in the program. For the specific definitions of “agricultural land” and “farmer” for purposes of current use designation, see 32 V.S.A. Section 3752. Based on discussions at the Current Use Advisory Board meeting, the Department will be reviewing the list closely for compliance, since listers are not considered to be enforcement officials relative to current use status. As a result of 2015 legislation, the Department has done audits of six municipalities to date to determine whether the listers have

assigned appropriate values to properties in current use. Ludlow, Isle LaMotte, Salisbury, Shelburne, Fletcher and Landgrove have all been audited and the Department has not found overinflated values.”

**Agenda Item 4: Organizational Update.**

Maura Carroll thanked Board members who attended Local Government Day on February 15 and gave a brief update about her attendance at the NLC Board meeting and Congressional City Conference, providing copies of a research document entitled “Bridging the Urban-Rural Economic Divide.” She also stated that staff is working on the 2017 VLCT Annual Report and preparing an employee survey to receive feedback from staff about a number of items.

**Agenda Item 5: Annual Meeting Rules.** The Board discussed various issues regarding the structure and conduct of the Annual Meeting. Staff presented some suggestions, including adopting general municipal legislative policies biennially rather than annually, focusing Annual Meeting discussion about policy matters on broad policy issues rather than detailed wording edits, vesting the Moderator with the authority to determine what is wordsmithing and what is policy and limiting specific policy items to those not covered in the Municipal Guiding Principles. The Board asked staff to suggest specific changes to the Procedure for Adoption of Municipal Policy and the Annual Meeting Governing Rules and to bring those back to the Board for further discussion.

**Agenda Item 6: 4th Quarter Financials.** Mike Gilbar presented the fourth quarter financial report to the Board. The financials are unaudited and do not include GASB 68 adjustments, since they will not be available from the State until May. On motion duly made by Member Pinsonault and seconded by Member Beckett, the Board unanimously voted to accept the report as presented.

**Agenda Item 7: Amicus Request.** Senior Attorney Garrett Baxter provided background on Skiff et al. v. South Burlington School District and the reasons for recommending that VLCT submit an amicus brief in the interlocutory appeal. He explained that although the case involves a school district, the issue is one of concern to all municipalities in the state and could provide greater clarity about when a selectboard or council must place an advisory question on the warning for Town Meeting or School District Meeting. On motion duly made by Member Weinberger and seconded by Member Cadwell, the Board unanimously voted to support the filing of an amicus brief in this case.

**Agenda Item 8: Legislative Session Update.** Karen Horn and Gwynn Zakov provided the Board with updates on education funding proposals, short term rentals, a long-term rental housing registry, lease lands, and the Clean Water Fund Board. They responded to inquiries from the Board and there was considerable discussion. After vigorous discussion following an update on legislation dealing with background checks, the Board unanimously voted, on motion duly made by Member Weinberger and seconded by Member Cadwell, to support expansion of background checks and the new extreme risk legislation, further authorizing staff to engage in discussions around these issues in the interest of promoting local public safety.

**Agenda Item 9: Listening Sessions.** Maura Carroll reported that the first scheduled Listening Session in Fayston was cancelled due to inclement weather. The next Session is scheduled for Thursday, March 22 at 5:30 in Stowe.

**Agenda Item 10: Other.** b. Member Initiatives: Member Elwell asked for feedback from the Board about the statute governing mandatory arbitration in collective bargaining situations. Board members discussed the experience in their communities and it was suggested that there be further conversation

with mayors and managers about the issue.

On motion duly made by Member Beckett and seconded by Member Wonsor, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the meeting at 3:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,  
Maura Carroll, Executive Director



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