

VERMONT STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY
REGULAR MEETING MINUTES
NOVEMBER 17, 2021

1. Roll Call

The Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Vermont State Housing Authority, held via ZOOM, was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Chair Alex Farrell; and upon roll call, the following Commissioners answered present: Cory Richardson, Vice Chair; Caryn Feinberg, Jo Ann Troiano, Chris Trombly and Aaron Jones. Mary Miller was absent.

Staff personnel present: Kathleen Berk, Executive Director/Secretary; Kelli Cheney, Director of Housing Program Administration; Kelly Pembroke, Director of Finance and Information Systems; and Susan Kuegel, Director of Property and Asset Management.

Jonathan Bond, Executive Director, The Housing Foundation, was also in attendance.

2. Meeting Agenda

There were no changes to the Agenda.

3. Public Participation

Kendra Albertson and Renee Carpenter.

Albertson joined the meeting as a landlord participating in the VERAP program, looking for a resolution on an issue with the VERAP program.

Carpenter joined the meeting out of curiosity, to express appreciation for the Section 8 Rental Assistance program.

4. Minutes – Public Hearing & Annual & Regular Meeting – September 22, 2021 and Special Meeting – October 29, 2021

Jones moved to approve the Minutes. Trombly seconded. All voted in favor. The minutes are approved.

5. Secretary's Report – November 2021

Berk presented updates to the Secretary's Report.

In the seven months of operation, VERAP has paid and obligated an average of almost \$5.5 Million per month, assisting Vermont 6,486 households. Projections have the program spending the full \$110 Million allocated for the program by the September 30, 2022 deadline. VSHA is hopeful that the state will grant additional funding from the ERA 2 budget, to not only add additional months of assistance to households already participating in VERAP, but to extend the program to December 31, 2025. ERA 2 assistance will extend VERAP through September 30, 2025 and provide an additional three months of rental assistance benefits to households who have reached their 15-month benefit eligibility under ERA 1.

With the departure of the Authority's Director of Human Resources and Administration, VSHA is outsourcing their benefits administration and higher-level Human Resource functions to NFP Solutions, Inc., effective November 1, 2021. NFP met with VSHA staff on November 15th & 16th to review the Authority's benefits and answer any questions about the open enrollment process. NFP is also collaborating with VSHA to recruit for the Executive Assistant/HR Coordinator position.

Richardson made a motion to approve the Secretary's Report. Feinberg seconded. All voted in favor. The Secretary's Report is approved.

6. Finance & Information Systems

Pembroke provided updates to the recent networking and security updates with Resilient Networks.

Phases 1 and 2 of the updates have been completed. Phase 3 should be started in the beginning of 2022.

A zero-finding audit with KBS was just completed last week.

Pembroke went over the Financial Report.

\$1.3 Million more were collected in administrative fees this year than were budgeted for, this includes \$773 thousand from the RHSP, which was paid out and transferred in FY 21. \$70 thousand was received for the Emergency Housing Voucher Program, although the program will not be starting up until December 2021. Pembroke adds that she is seeing the highest HUD admin prorations in many years, at around 82%.

Salaries are over budget, which is mainly related to the VERAP & RHSP temporary staff, and the overtime paid to those positions. Travel, postage, and printing ended under budget. Advertising was overspent due to the open positions. Benefits ended in \$116 thousand under. The Workmen's Comp budget for 2021 was also under. Boiler and AC unit updates needed to be done at the One Prospect Street location have been put on hold through 2021.

The total amount of money moved through VSHA in 2021 is over \$100 Million.

The total net position is \$1.6 Million, directly related to the income statement.

Troiano moved to approve the Financial Report. Feinberg seconded. All voted in favor. The financials are approved.

7. Housing Program Administration

Cheney provided Housing Program Administration updates.

As of November 12, 2021, there are 4,082 Vermont Families currently being assisted. There are 209 vouchers out for families seeking an affordable unit. The HPA Intake Division continues to seek and meet the goal of leasing 500 vouchers by the end of the calendar year.

There has been an increase in the Fair Market rents across most of the Vermont Counties, with the exception of the Burlington & South Burlington MSA. The Executive Director has submitted a formal request to HUD to reevaluate the FY2022 Fair Market Rents for the Burlington-South Burlington MSA. The FY2021 Fair Market Rents will remain in effect for the Burlington-South Burlington MSA until the reevaluation has occurred.

Jones moved to approve the HPA updates. Troiano seconded. All voted in favor. The motion passes unanimously.

8. Property and Asset Management

Kuegel gave an update on the sale of the Green Mountain Apartments.

Kuegel is going to make one final email attempt to the USDA Underwriter to push for a closing date. In the email, will include, letting the Underwriter know that if there is not a closing date scheduled, within the next few days, the next step will be to reach out to Senator Leahy's office asking for his assistance with moving this deal forward.

There are now over 300 VSHA residents participating in the VERAP program.

The Property and Asset Management Department will start using the PHA-Web software platform by March 2022.

No motion needed.

Albertson left the meeting at 11:57 a.m.

9. Executive Session

Farrell read the following Resolution to go into Executive Session, "I move that the Board adopt the following resolution: WHEREAS, the Board needs to discuss a certain contractual relationship; and WHEREAS, premature general public knowledge would clearly put the Authority at a substantial disadvantage; NOW THEREFORE, the Board shall discuss the contractual relationship at issue in Executive Session."

Richardson made a motion to adopt the Resolution to go into Executive Session. Troiano seconded the motion and the Board, joined by Berk, Pembroke, Cheney and Kuegel, entered executive session at 11:57 a.m.

Trombly made a motion to exit Executive Session. Richardson seconded. The Board came out of Executive Session at 12:31 p.m. No action was taken.

10. Strategic Planning – Next Steps

Farrell hopes to make the Strategic Planning an essential part of each Board meeting.

The 4 commitments are:

- Ensuring a strong financial position and improved operational systems
- Being the best place to work
- Leading and housing policy discussions
- Creating programs and adapting to changing housing needs

Commissioners shared their opinions and ideas on how to move forward with strategic planning and what they believe the structure of Board Meetings should look like moving forward.

Berk suggested for the January Board meeting, VSHA staff will provide a comprehensive Secretary's Report to the Board of Commissioner's for review before the meeting, which will include the financials. In that Agenda, time will be reserved for a strategic planning goal.

11. Other Business

There was no other business.

Farrell called for a motion to adjourn the meeting. Troiano moved to adjourn the meeting. Richardson seconded. The meeting was adjourned at 12:59 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Kathleen Berk
Executive Director/Secretary