

**VERMONT STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
ANNUAL & REGULAR MEETING MINUTES  
September 28, 2022**

**PUBLIC HEARING**

**1. Roll Call**

The Annual and Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Vermont State Housing Authority, held via Zoom was called to order at 11:01 a.m. by Chair Alex Farrell; and upon roll call, the following Commissioners answered present: Cory Richardson, Vice Chair; Caryn Feinberg (left at 12:20), Mary Miller, Joann Troiano, and Christopher Trombly. Absent: Aaron Jones.

Staff present: Kathleen Berk, Executive Director/Secretary; Kelly Pembroke, Director of Finance & Information Systems; Susan Kuegel, Director of Property & Asset Management; Ellen Danahy Liptak, Director of HR & Administration; Kelli Robinson, Director of Housing Program Administration; Tyler Mass, Director of Programs and Housing Development; Caprice Hover, VERAP Coordinator (arrived at 11:15); Morgan Ledo, Union Representative (arrived at 11:10); and Robert Abbott, Office Services Coordinator.

**2. Meeting Agenda**

The agenda was changed by Farrell to move up the Executive Session since some board members could not stay for the duration of the meeting. This ensured a quorum for all items that required a vote.

**3. Election of Officers**

Farrell turned over the meeting to Berk who presided over the election. Troiano moved to elect the current slate of officers (Farrell as Chair; Richardson as Vice Chair). The motion was seconded by Feinberg. A unanimous vote occurred without discussion. Berk asked both if they accept their responsibilities. Farrell and Richardson both affirmed their appointments.

**4. Public Participation**

No members of the public were present.

**5. Approval of Minutes**

A motion was made by Miller, seconded by Feinberg to accept the minutes from July 13, August 12, and September 9, 2022. The vote was passed unanimously.

## **11. 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 review and discuss legal advice and matters of contract and WHEARAS premature general public knowledge would clearly put the Authority at a substantial disadvantage; NOW THEREFORE, the Board shall discuss the matters of contract at issue in Executive Session."

Richardson made a motion to go into Executive Session; seconded by Troiano. All voted in favor and the Board entered Executive Session at 11:06 a.m. Note that Kuegel, Robinson, Maas, Ledo, and Hover left the meeting.

On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Trombly clarifying that no action was taken, the Board unanimously voted to come out of executive session at 11:42a.m.

Miller moved to keep Berk as the Board Secretary. This motion was seconded by Troiano. The vote was unanimous.

## **6. Secretary's Report**

Berk briefly discussed a potential government shutdown, which could affect the flow of money to the housing agencies. She highlighted the VERAP Program ramping down and mentioned the state will provide an additional \$20 million to extend the benefits to keep the most vulnerable VERAP participants in the program longer. Staff anniversaries were announced: Susan Kuegel 30 years, Jane Paronto 15 years, and Jason Jeffrey 10 years.

Richardson motioned to accept the report. The motion was seconded by Miller. The Board voted unanimously in favor to accept the report as submitted.

## **7. Finance and Information Systems**

- A. Pembroke briefed the Statement of Revenue and Expenses / Balance Sheet noting the increased money needed for legal actions and insurance, the additional administrative fees to cover a portion of the VERAP program, and the increase of insurance needed.

The motion to accept this document was initiated by Troiano and seconded by Feinberg. The document was unanimously accepted by the board.

- B. Pembroke discussed Write Offs for 2022 as only pertaining to Brightwood House.

- C. Pembroke presented the Draft Operating Budget for 2023 which included the increased fees for legal assistance and consulting services as stated in this year's balance sheet. Pembroke noted that additional changes may be necessary as some changes are difficult to predict.

Richardson motioned to approve the budget and Troiano seconded. The budget was unanimously approved by the Board.

#### **8. Housing Program Administration**

The Family Self-Sufficiency Action Plan was briefed by Robinson.

Troiano motioned to approve the plan, which was seconded by Richardson. The board voted unanimously to approve the plan.

The EHV Operations Policy Resolution was reviewed by the board.

Farrell read: "NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Vermont State Housing Authority Board of Commissioners accepts the Emergency Housing Voucher Operations Policy Addendum to the Section 8 Administrative Plan, as presented."

Troiano motioned to adopt the policy and was seconded by Feinberg. The motion passed unanimously.

The Mainstream Extraordinary Fees Policy was explained by Robinson. Robinson stated that the money from this program could be used to pilot a landlord incentive program which had superior results in New Hampshire.

Farrell read: "NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved that the Vermont State Housing Authority Board of Commissioners accepts the Mainstream Voucher Extraordinary Administrative Fee Policy to the Section 8 Administrative Plan, as presented."

Richardson motioned to accept the policy as presented and this motion was seconded by Feinberg. The board voted unanimously to accept the policy.

#### **9. Property and Asset Management**

Kuegel briefed that the USDA denied rent increases for all requested properties except for two, including Brightwood House. The denials were based upon the fact that the properties because USDA has not required the movement of excess cash to the reserve account in many years, have substantial excess cash. USDA denied all the increases and approved budgets with a projected cash deficit which will use some of the surplus cash and they will request the remainder to be moved post audit review. When it comes to

the FY23 LP budgets they advised that we should, based on the surplus cash there, suit a deficit budget to begin with as opposed to going through all the work of requesting a rent increase that they are going to deny.

#### 10. Other Business

- A. Berk discussed the Strategic Plan and indicated that the managers are working on the vision statement. In particular, Berk is particularly interested in what they come up with on "Staff growth and development is embedded in our culture." Farrell commented he is interested in this as well and Berk said a draft will be ready at the January Board meeting.
- B. Liptak requested approval of updated By-Laws. These changes were discussed at a previous meeting without a resolution. Liptak briefly went over the changes, which were gender related and formalizes that the Chair and Executive Director can change meeting dates as necessary.

Troiano motioned to approve the by-laws and was seconded by Richardson. The board unanimously approved the updated by-laws.

Berk mentioned the State Housing Conference and offered registration to the Board members who might be interested. Farrell and Troiano will be present. Trombly is interested.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:24 p.m. following a motion by Richardson, seconded by Miller, and unanimously approved by the board.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen Berk  
Executive Director/Secretary

/RTA

