

VERMONT STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY  
ANNUAL & REGULAR MEETINGS MINUTES  
September 25, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER & QUORUM

The Annual and Regular Meetings of the Vermont State Housing Authority was held at One Prospect Street, Montpelier, Vermont, allowing for both in-person and remote attendance via Zoom. The hearing was called to order at 11:00 a.m. by Alex Farrell, Chairperson; and upon roll call, the following Commissioners answered present: Cory Richardson, Vice-Chairperson; Jo Ann Troiano; Mary Houghton; and Bryan Plant II. Absent: Aaron Jones, Linda Joy-Sullivan.

Staff present: Kathleen Berk, Executive Director/Secretary; Kelly Pembroke, Chief Financial Officer; Susan Kuegel, Managing Director of Property and Asset Management; Ellen Danahy Liptak, Director of HR & Administration; Christopher Trombly, Managing Director of Community Development; Liz Whitmore, Managing Director of Housing Program Administration; Robert Abbott, Office Services Coordinator.

Members of the public present: Amber Neddo, VSEA Representative (arrived 11:04 a.m.)

2. MEETING AGENDA

No changes were made to the meeting agenda.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Berk assumed the Secretary's role for the election of officers. She indicated that the current Board positions are:

Alex Farrell, Chair  
Corey Richardson, Vice-Chair  
Kathleen Berk, Secretary

➤ Troiano moved that the same slate of officers be re-appointed. The motion was seconded by Houghton and voted unanimously.

## 5. MINUTES

The minutes for the July 17, 2024, meeting were presented for approval.

- Richardson moved to accept the July 17, 2024, minutes. Seconded by Houghton and voted unanimously.

## 6. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Berk indicated that there is no continuing resolution for the federal fiscal budget as yet. She expects there will be, but that we will be facing this again in December. She mentioned that Gallagher Flynn will be joining the November Board meeting to go over their assessment. Berk felt it was a good report, and the results were enlightening. She expects that the January agenda will concentrate on strategic planning.

Kuegel added that during the HFI Board meeting, she was requested to add notations explaining large drops in collections. She will add those in future Secretary Reports.

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Cory, the Board accepted the Secretary's Report.

## 7. EXECUTIVE SESSION - Collective Bargaining Negotiated Changes and Personnel

Chair Farrell said he would entertain a motion to enter executive session to receive information and deliberate on an employment issue under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(3) of the Vermont Statutes and to receive information and deliberate on the proposed, negotiated changes to the collective bargaining agreement between the VSHA and the Vermont State Housing Authority Staff Federation of the Vermont State Employees Association. Under the provisions of Title 1, Section 313(a)(1) of the Vermont Statutes, in that premature public knowledge of the content of such discussions would clearly put VSHA at a substantial disadvantage.

He invited Berk, Pembroke, and Liptak to remain.

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Houghton, the Board entered Executive Session at 11:10 a.m.
- The board came out of Executive Session at 11:25 a.m. on a motion by Troiano, seconded by Richardson. No action was taken during Executive Session.

## 8. COLLECTIVE BARGAINING CONTRACT RATIFICATION

Farrell read the following resolution for the Board to consider:

**WHEREAS**, the Collective Bargaining Agreement (Agreement) between the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) and the Vermont State Housing Authority Staff Federation of the Vermont State Employees Association (Federation) terminates on September 30, 2024, and

**WHEREAS**, on May 22, 2024, the Board of Commissioners (Board) authorized the Executive Director and/or her designee(s) to bargain on behalf of the Board with the Federation, to reach tentative agreement on the terms and conditions for an agreement between the parties, and to submit the same to the Board for final acceptance and approval, and

**WHEREAS**, on August 6, 2024, the VSHA Management Bargaining Team and the Federation Bargaining Team have successfully negotiated and reached tentative agreement on a new two-year Agreement, and

**WHEREAS**, the Federation Bargaining Team submitted the tentative agreement for a new Agreement, as negotiated, to their membership. The tentative agreement was ratified on September 6, 2024.

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE VSHA Board of Commissioners** that such Agreement, subject to ratification by the Federation, is hereby ratified and authorized by the Board of Commissioners; and further that the Chair or the Executive Director is hereby authorized to execute the Agreement on behalf of the Board of Commissioners.

➤ Richardson moved to adopt the Resolution as presented, seconded by Troiano, and voted unanimously.

## 9. FINANCES

Pembroke presented the financial reports and FY 2025 budget. She explained some of the increases anticipated, specifically workers' compensation, liability, health insurance costs. She also indicated that there were no "write offs" for 2024.

➤ Troiano motioned to adopt the FY2025 budget and accept the VSHA financial report. Houghton seconded the motion, which passed unanimously.

## 10. HOUSING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Whitmore presented the proposed Voucher Payment Standards to the Board which will take effect 01 December 2024. Utility allowances are under final review.

Changes to the Administrative Plan include allowing participants 120 days to search for housing upon issuance, instead of the traditional 60 days. Updates are posted on the company website. HOTMA (Housing Opportunity Through Modernization Act) implementation is delayed by HUD, so Whitmore is implementing changes that she can now, and will address others at a later time.

Due to utilization decreasing, there has been more draws from the waiting list in hopes of issuing new vouchers. Staff has contacted 25 applicants from the Mainstream Voucher list and 175 from the Housing Choice Voucher list. This draw is the first time working with AffordableHousing.com so she is watching that process closely to ensure it runs as smoothly as possible. Berk added the success rate of those issued a voucher actually finding a place and leasing with a landlord is 20%.

#### 11. PROPERTY & ASSET MANAGEMENT

Kuegel reminded the Board of the work her department is doing with the MHU-TT (Mobile Home Utilization Task Team) as HFI's Agent for several mobile home communities. She also stated the difficulties in setting a FY2025 budget as Rural Development has not yet responded to her submission. She is expecting large increases to unit rents effective in June 2025. She feels that in the coming years she will see the necessary increases become a real issue as she attempts to keep the properties affordable.

#### 12. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Trombley commented on the work being done by his team for the Manufactured Housing Improvement and Repair Program and the Landlord Relief Program. They are excited to start up an Eviction Prevention Program which could support rental arrearage. He also talked about the role VSHA plays as a fiduciary to HFI for the MHU-TT.

Discussion followed with positive comments about the speed and cost effectiveness of the MHU-TT, which has a goal of adding 30 new homes this year and up to 75 new homes in 2025.

The Board took a short break at 12:17 p.m. returning to the Board meeting at 12:30 p.m.

#### 13. HUMAN RESOURCES

Liptak presented four policies for the Board's consideration. She indicated that the Confidentiality Policy has been updated to include references, examples of breaches, and reporting a breach. The Sick Bank Policy was revised to reflect changes agreed to in the new Collective Bargaining Agreement. Basically, it opens use of the sick bank with no waiting period as required by the FMLA. This policy now allows for other uses as set forth in the FMLA/VPLA.

The Remote and Telework policies are new although they have been in effect as guidelines since February 2024.

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Plant, the policies were approved as presented.

13. OTHER BUSINESS

Berk distributed information about the new Open Meeting Law that is now in effect. Per Diem stipends were also discussed. Several Board members will receive \$50 per meeting in accordance with VSHA Board By-Laws.

14. ADJOURN

Chair Farrell adjourned the meeting at 12:46 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen Berk  
Executive Director/Secretary

/RTA

