

Vermont Housing & Conservation Board
MINUTES
Monday, July 17, 2023
Zoom
11:00

Board Members: Neil Mickenberg, David Marvin, Emily Wadhams, Seth Leonard, (VHFA), Ryan Patch (designee for VAAF), Nicole Dubuque (designee for AHS); Clarence Davis, Billy Coster(designee for ANR), Amy Richardson (All Board Members called/zoomed in)

VHCB Staff: Gus Seelig, Elizabeth Egan, Anne Duffy, Marcy Christian, Leah Sare, Emily Phillips, Pollaidh Major, Brenda Riddle, Anna Foltz, John Grosvenor; Ariane Kissam

Chair David Marvin called the meeting to order at 11:30 am. He welcomed everyone to the special meeting to consider these resolutions and to update the board on the impact of the flooding around the state.

Public Comment

There was no public comment.

There were flood reports from around the state from board members and staff. Gus spoke about how VHCB could help with the recovery efforts. The Farm and Forest Viability Program will likely be asked to help farmers access funding to help with crop losses. Also in Central Vermont, Downstreet Housing has had properties with damage and the Good Samaritan Haven's shelter and new Hub in Berlin were evacuated. Lamoille Housing Partnership's properties in Johnson and Cambridge were also flooded. Statewide the affordable housing portfolio fared well but we anticipate that homeownership centers will be busy. The Do Good Fest raised over \$1 Million to support Flood Recovery over the weekend.

David asked Gus to review the resolutions that were before the board at this meeting. Gus explained that many of these resolutions are a result of the June 20 veto session where the legislature passed Act 81, 2023 (H.171). This amendment authorizes a number of policies that impact VHCB and our FY 2024 funding. He talked about additional reporting requirements that require staff to report monthly to the legislature on the number of units coming on line before April 1, 2024. Because the legislature was not in a position to alter the budget, the amendment requires that VHCB transfer funds to support other housing programs administered by the Department of Housing and Community Development and the Vermont State Housing Authority. Several of the resolutions authorize these fund transfers.

There was board discussion concerning the requirement placed on VHCB by the legislation to increase units set aside for households exiting homelessness to 30% and to prioritize households exiting the hotel program. Gus pointed out that our partners are concerned about staffing, including high turnover in maintenance and social service staff. There was a conversation about the importance of having social service providers to make these numbers work within projects. There was a brief

conversation about the Manufactured Home Community Infill Development Pool and energy efficient homes that would be used. There was some concern about the increased cost of the Zero Energy Ready Homes and whether their added energy efficiency was enough to justify these costs. Staff will continue to look at this issue and report to the board. There may be some opportunities for energy funding for these units.

Deliberations:

Establishment of Manufactured Home Community Infill Development Pool

Emily made a motion to approve the resolution. Billy seconded the motion. Brief discussion about the criteria process. All voted in favor of the motion.

Roll Call:

Neil Mickenberg - Yes
Emily Wadhams - Yes
David Marvin – Yes
Nicole Dubuque – Yes
Amy Richardson – Yes
Seth Leonard – Yes
Billy Coster - Yes
Clarence Davis - Yes

Authority to award funds to the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program

Neil asked that the resolution be amended to include by reference the three conditions included in the board memo. Clarence made a motion to approve the resolution. Neil seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Roll Call:

Neil Mickenberg - Yes
Emily Wadhams - Yes
David Marvin – Yes
Nicole Dubuque – Yes
Amy Richardson – Yes
Seth Leonard – Yes
Billy Coster - Yes
Clarence Davis - Yes

Authority to award funds to the Vermont Housing Improvement Program

Billy made a motion to approve the resolution. Neil seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Roll Call:

Neil Mickenberg - Yes
Emily Wadhams - Yes
David Marvin – Yes
Nicole Dubuque – Yes

Amy Richardson – Yes
Seth Leonard – Yes
Billy Coster - Yes
Clarence Davis - Yes

Authority to Accept Emergency Rental Assistance Funds and authorize potential transfer of General Funds

Gus informed the board that VHCB has heard from the Agency of Administration that it no longer plans to transfer these funds to VHCB. Gus recommended that the board take up a resolution that authorizes the Special Committee of the board to accept the funding and authorize a corresponding transfer of General Funds should this again be necessary, noting that this is highlight unlikely. Seth made a motion to approve the resolution as amended. Emily seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Roll Call:

Neil Mickenberg - Yes
Emily Wadhams - Yes
David Marvin – Yes
Nicole Dubuque – Yes
Amy Richardson – Yes
Seth Leonard – Yes
Billy Coster - Yes
Clarence Davis - Yes

Water Quality Restoration Formula Grants Awards Process

Emily made a motion to approve the resolution. Neil seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

Roll Call:

Neil Mickenberg - Yes
Emily Wadhams - Yes
David Marvin – Yes
Nicole Dubuque – Yes
Amy Richardson – Yes
Seth Leonard – Yes
Billy Coster - Yes
Clarence Davis - Yes

Other Business

Neil asked about staff capacity to support the work to manage all of this funding. There was a discussion about staffing needs for the upcoming year and Gus informed the board that there may be recommendations to address additional needs at the September Board Meeting.

David commented that he would like VHCB to continue to balance the need for additional housing units with the need to mitigate climate change. He emphasized that, in light of the recent climate change related flooding, VHCB should continue to take into account energy saving and renewable

energy building technics as it invests in housing. He also expressed concern that a number of the other initiatives funded through VHCB as a result of the fund transfers mandated by the legislature do not have elements of permanent affordability. He emphasized wanting to see VHCB continue to adhere to this tenant moving forward.

The meeting adjourned at 12:02 pm.

Respectfully submitted,
Marcy Christian

Resolutions

[Act 81, 2023 \(H.171\)](#)

Resolution for the establishment of a Manufactured Home Community Infill Development Pool:

To create a set-aside Manufactured Home Community Infill Development pool in order to carry out the requirement established in Section 9 (a)(1) of Act 81, 2023 for VHCB to allocate \$10,000,000 to filling vacant and available lots in manufactured home communities. The Board shall delegate authority to the Special Committee of the Board to approve the program structure and authorizes staff to make awards out of the pool. The staff will address the following questions:

- 1) Should we simply assist in the purchase of energy star homes, which likely have a cost of \$80,000 per unit, or should we include in the mix of homes the new Zero Energy Ready Homes that have a much higher cost (\$150,000 per unit which includes solar).
- 2) While the initial intent is for these units to be occupied by renters, if, after some period of time renters depart, should we allow the conversion of these homes to homeownership.
- 3) In parks not owned by a nonprofit but rather by a cooperative or a for-profit owner, who will be the owner of the home and what security will be sought; and if after a reasonable period of time the home is to be sold, what level of repayment should be required and what affordability restrictions should stay with that home.

Resolution to award funds to the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program:

To authorize staff to enter into a grant agreement awarding \$4,000,000 to the State Housing Authority and the Department of Housing and Community Development to support the Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program in accordance with Section 9 (a)(2) of Act 81, 2023. The Department of Housing and Community Development shall act as the program manager and the Vermont State Housing Authority shall act as the program administrator in keeping with the current program structure established by Act 182, 2022. The grant agreement shall require VHSA to ensure that investments prevent homelessness as required by Act 81 and shall report to VHCB on how the investments meet this requirement.

Resolution to award funds to the Vermont Housing Improvement Program:

To authorize staff to enter into a grant agreement with the Department of Housing and Community Development to provide \$5,000,000 of General Fund dollars appropriated to VHCB for affordable housing development to support the Vermont Housing Improvement Program in accordance with Section 9 (a)(3) of Act 81, 2023.

Resolution accepting Emergency Rental Assistance funds and authorizing potential transfer of General Funds:

To authorize staff to enter into a grant agreement with the Vermont Agency of Administration to accept federal Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) funds to support the development of affordable rental housing for very low-income households. In addition, the Board authorizes staff to provide a grant of General Fund dollars to the State of Vermont of up to the equivalent amount of ERA dollars received in the event that the Agency of Administration requires such a swap to occur as authorized by H.494 (FY24 Budget).