

**Land Access and Opportunity Board**  
**Feb. 6, 2023, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.**  
Meeting Facilitator: Samantha Langevin

**Meeting Notes:**

Facilitator Samantha Langevin convened the meeting of the LAOB at 5:30 pm. Board members and alternates present from each appointing authority introduced themselves. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

**Board Members Present:** Samantha Langevin, RELEAF Collective; Kirsten Murphy, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council; Rich Holschuh, Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs; Rev. Mark Hughes, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance (alternate); Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity; Jess Laporte, Vermont Every Town Project

**Board Members Not Present:** Pastor Arnold Thomas, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance; Pacifique Nsengiyumva, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Vermont; Karim Chapman, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors; Raheemah Madany, Pride Center of Vermont; Lynn Stanley, National Association of Social Workers, Vermont; Naomi Moody, NAACP

**VHCB Staff / LAOB Contractors Present:** Gus Seeling, Trey Martin, and Bonnie Woodford; Robert Appel, Esq.

**Members of the Public Present:** Maura Collins, VHFA; Shane Rogers, Seeding Power; Buster Caswell; Isaac Owusu; Malcolm Greene

1. The first order of business was to review Meeting Notes from the January 23, 2023 meeting of the LAOB. No edits or comments were provided. Those notes are posted on the VHCB webpage dedicated to LAOB.
2. The LAOB's Legal Working Group provided an update and Samantha Langevin facilitated a conversation about the following discussion and decision points regarding the Sunrise Report:
  - i. In Section II, Recommendation 2: Are there described duties and responsibilities for the proposed positions that are not listed or clearly articulated for the ED, Assistant, and VHCB?

*Comment from Jess Laporte – really important to capture the networking and external affairs role of the ED. No changes recommended to the language, but this underscores the importance of having two positions, an ED and Administrator.*

- ii. In Section II, Recommendation 2: Is the description of the MOU sufficient to outline the relationship between VHCB and LAOB?

*Kirsten Murphy suggested adding “including but not limited to” language to the MOU overview to retain flexibility.*

*Rev. Hughes asked whether there should be a timeline for the MOU's effectiveness, and how/when it would be revisited. Samantha Langevin suggested that the report should specify that the MOU will have an effective period to be determined by VHCB and LAOB. There should be a timeline for the review of the MOU, updates, etc. This is not language to add to the report, but we should include these notes when the MOU is drafted.*

- iii. In Section II, Recommendation 2: Does the timeline for the transition make sense? *Jess Laporte asked whether the timeline for transition needs to be included in the report? Kirsten Murphy noted that the timeline indicates the seriousness of the Board, and its commitment to independent operations. Xusana Davis noted that actual dates may not be necessary, but including the intention to become fully independent. Samantha suggested that the Legal Working Group finish wordsmithing this section based on the comments and discussion in the meeting.*

- iv. In Section II, Recommendation 3: Do LAOB members agree it is necessary to recommend the use of consultants to supplement and support the work of the LAOB under this recommendation?

*Samantha and Jess both underscored that it's critical to recommend use of consultants to assist with the work under this section of the report.*

*Jess Laporte suggested that the report include language allowing the Board to hire consultants who are also board members. Kirsten Murphy suggested that this is an issue that should be addressed by the Board, but suggested that this does not need to be included in the report. In other words, the question about hiring and resolution of conflicts of interest would be governed in the MOU and other discussions at the time.*

- v. In Section II, Recommendation 4: Do Board members agree with the “both-and” structure to this recommendation, which gives LAOB authority to directly hire TA service providers, and to provide grants to organizations already doing that work?

*No comments or questions from the Board on this recommendation.*

- vi. In Section II, Recommendation 5: Does the path laid out towards implementation of a reparative grants program in the report feel like the right approach? Noting that this approach is reliant on continued legal and consultant support, research and outreach, but moves the LAOB forward towards potential pilot programming.

*No comments or questions from the Board on this recommendation.*

- vii. In Section II, Recommendation 6: For Board compensation, does the proposed hourly rate, and 12 hour-per-month cap, feel like equitable compensation?

*Rev. Mark Hughes asked how 12 hours was selected as the per member / per month cap. Based on the assumption that hours would decrease with hiring staff, this might be okay.*

*Jess Laporte suggested that the number of hours might be workable, but believes that 15 hours might be better in order to capture the Board's work supervising staff, implementing programs, etc.*

*Kirsten noted how foundational this need is – and whether or not full appropriation request is agreed to, this is important to fund.*

*Agreement among Board members to increase the per hour / per month cap to 15 hours.*

- viii. Budget: After reviewing the full set of recommendations, do you think this budget proposed for SFY'24 is adequate; what are your questions / comments / suggestions regarding the overall budget, the breakout, as well as the framing narrative?

*Request to provide more specificity around budget numbers for positions and VHCB admin/overhead.*

*Rev. Hughes requested that more information about how the budget for consulting and outreach – and the specific costs involved. Should these budget numbers be adjusted? Rev. Hughes also noted that the costs should reflect compensation for community members participating in outreach events.*

*Jess Laporte noted that equity based work is often under-compensated. How do we actually factor in the cost to participate and supports needed for community members. She also noted that this budget must be presented as a prelude to a much larger budget in the future.*

- ix. Process to finalize draft: The LWG, VHCB and Robert Appel will meet following the Board meeting to review inputs from the Board and make edits to the Report draft. On Thursday, by close of business, VHCB will circulate the shared document to Board members for any additional review, questions and comments, which need to be submitted to the LWG and VHCB by end of day Monday. VHCB will host working Zoom meetings on Friday, Monday and Tuesday for Board members / LWG members to bring any questions, comments or discussion points, and/or to spend time reviewing the draft. Those meetings will be eligible for Per Diem reimbursement.

### 3. Staffing and Supports

VHCB and Samantha Langevin presented a proposal from VHCB regarding staffing and supports through the end of the fiscal year. That plan will be implemented in coordination with the LWG.

### 4. Public Comment

Malcolm Greene offered a comment in support of the compensation structure proposed in the Board's prospective budget. And he cautioned that the Board should be focused on the end goals of access and equity – not just appropriations. There is risk that the Legislature would lose focus on the end goals, and point to appropriations as having accomplished that work.

Shane Rogers offered a comment that the Board should ask for all of the budget it thinks it needs. H.273 suggested a budget of \$10million, by way of example.