

FINAL - Draft Posted December 12, 2023
VHFA Board of Commissioners Meeting

Vermont Housing Finance Agency
Board Room
164 St. Paul St., Burlington VT
December 11, 2023

VHFA Board Members Present:

Commissioners: Katie Buckley (Chair), Lindsay Kurrle, Emily Kisicki (designee for Kevin Gaffney), Mike Picciak, Fred Baser, Gus Seelig, Tom Leavitt, Marie Milord-Ajanma and Jeanne Morrissey (attended electronically)

Staff Present:

Maura Collins, Seth Leonard, Chris Flannery, George Demas, Jacklyn Santerre, Megan Roush, Josh Slade, Alyssa Peteani, Olivia LaVecchia, Chad Simmons, Kim Roy, Alejandro Flores-Howland, Michelle Baird

Guests:

Cindy Reid (Cathedral Square), Elizabeth Nickerson, Miranda Lescaze and Javier Garcia (CHT), Kathy Beyer, Ben Sturtz and Jess Neubelt (Evernorth), Julie Iffland (RACDC), Becky Masure (RuralEdge), Peter Paggi (WWHT), Joe Tait (RaymondJames), Chris Cochran and Amy Tomasso (DHCD), Charles Jones

BOARD MEETING

Ms. Buckley called the Board meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

Staff confirmed that a Notice of this meeting was provided to the requesting parties and was posted on the Agency website and with State Department of Libraries, and that the Agenda for this meeting was provided to the requesting parties and posted on the Agency website, all within the statutory time requirements.

Staff confirmed that Minutes to all prior meetings had been posted on the Agency website not less than 5 days after the meetings as required.

Ms. Buckley asked if anyone had any changes to the Agenda, and Staff noted that because of timing requirements, the LIAC requests would be presented prior to the other Community Development projects.

Ms. Buckley confirmed that the Commissioners attending by electronic means could hear the conduct of the meeting and be heard throughout the meeting by the other attendees. Ms. Buckley noted that Commissioners would have to vote by roll-call since there were Commissioners participating by electronic means.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Buckley opened the meeting to public comments, and there were none.

BOARD MINUTES

Ms. Kisicki moved that the Board approve the minutes of the November 13, 2023 Board meeting. Mr. Baser seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

CONSENT AGENDA

Mr. Seelig moved that the Board approve the proposed resolutions authorizing \$100 million each of single family and multifamily bonds for the coming year. Mr. Leavitt seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Bay Ridge Bond, Shelburne

Ms. Peteani reviewed the project memo regarding the proposed financing for the project, and Ms. Neubelt responded to certain questions related to project costs. After a general discussion, Ms. Kisicki moved that the Board approve the proposed resolution for the project. Ms. Kurrle seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Newport Crossing, City and Town of Newport

Mr. Slade reviewed the project memo regarding the status of the project and the proposed VHIF loan. After a general discussion, Mr. Seelig moved that the Board approve the proposed resolution for funding the project. Ms. Kisicki seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Post Apartments, Burlington

Ms. Peteani reviewed the project memo regarding the status of the project and the proposed financing. Ms. Lescaze responded to certain questions related to services to be provided by the VA. After a general discussion, Mr. Leavitt moved that the Board approve the proposed resolution for funding the project. Ms. Kurrle seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by roll call vote, except that Ms. Morrissey abstained.

Prospect/Forest Homes, Randolph

Ms. Roy reviewed the project memo regarding the status of the project and the proposed additional advance. Ms. Roy noted that Staff expected that there would be a request for a full recapitalization of the project in 2024. After a general discussion, Mr. Seelig moved that the Board approve the proposed resolution for funding the project. Ms. Milord-Ajanma seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

Reid Commons, St. Albans

Ms. Peteani reviewed the project memo regarding the status of the project and the proposed increase in tax exempt bond financing. After a general discussion, Ms. Kisicki moved that the Board approve the proposed resolution for funding the project. Mr. Seelig seconded the motion, which was approved unanimously by roll call vote.

At this point, the Board was significantly ahead of its agenda schedule, and had sufficient time before the DHCD Presentation to review the Staff Report, the Cost Review and the Executive Session.

STAFF REPORT

Ms. Collins directed the Board's attention to the single family mortgage production statistics in the Report, noting that volumes were significantly higher this year and the program was drawing interest from a number of new lenders both because of interest rate benefits and the First Generation grants. Ms. Collins also reported on an email phishing scheme that had resulted in the Agency making a payment on a fraudulent invoice, noting that the amount was not material to Agency operations but provides a lesson for the Agency and Agency Staff that will result in process improvements to limit the risk of the situation being repeated.

COST PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION

Mr. Leonard reviewed a presentation on project costs and trends. He noted that Staff was continuing to implement strategies suggested in connection with its 2019 cost containment study and was looking at further steps this year in connection with updates to the Qualified Allocation Plan. Mr. Leonard also noted that cost analysis needed to include not only initial construction costs but also ongoing costs of operation and maintenance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

At 10:50, upon motion duly made and seconded and unanimously approved, the Board entered Executive Session to discuss issues affecting contracts and labor agreements. Ms. Collins and Mr. Demas were requested to remain with the Board during this session.

At 11:45, the Board exited Executive Session, and resumed the public meeting.

DHCD PRESENTATION

Ms. Tomasso provided a presentation on the Vermont Homes for All Tool Kit that was being developed in connection with efforts to encourage small developers to build 1-8 unit properties that would be suitable for Vermont's smaller towns. Mr. Cochran reviewed efforts by various stakeholders across the state to develop further regulatory reforms.

The Board then paused its meeting from 12:10 – 12:30 for a lunch break.

FULCRUM FELLOWSHIP SUMMARY/BIPOC TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Mr. Leonard provided a presentation describing his work in connection with the Fulcrum Fellowship and developing a technical assistance program to provide technical assistance to small developers from BIPOC and other marginalized backgrounds. In connection with such a program, Mr. Leonard noted that Staff proposed that \$100,000 of Agency contribution funds that would otherwise be used for VHIF be used instead for the technical assistance program. After a general discussion, Mr. Seelig moved that the Staff proposal for funding the development of a technical assistance program to small developers from BIPOC and other marginalized backgrounds be approved. Mr. Baser seconded the motion, which was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOAL 2 REVIEW

Mr. Leonard reviewed his memo regarding Agency efforts in regard to the Agency's Strategic Plan Goal #2 which involves the Agency's work with others in planning and expanding affordable housing resources. Ms. Collins noted that the Agency Strategic Plan is now in its third year, and a new 3-year plan would be adopted for the fiscal year starting July 1, 2024.

POLICY DISCUSSION


The Commissioners then engaged in a general discussion regarding various issues associated with housing development and housing costs. Energy systems (upfront costs v. ongoing maintenance), infrastructure costs (roads, sidewalks, sewer and water line extensions), soft costs (professional fees, developer fees), and encouraging condominium development and the development of smaller (less than 1,000 sq. ft.) houses, were all identified as possible issues for further discussion.

Ms. Buckley confirmed with Staff that Minutes of the meeting had been kept and would be posted to the Agency's website within five days.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion made by Ms. Kisicki, seconded by Mr. Baser and unanimously approved by roll call vote, the meeting was adjourned at 1:45 p.m.

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true copy of the Minutes of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency Board of Commissioners meeting held on December 11, 2023. The Minutes were approved at a lawful meeting of the Commissioners held on January 11, 2024.



Maura Collins
Executive Director and Secretary
Vermont Housing Finance Agency