

VERMONT STATE HOUSING AUTHORITY
ANNUAL & REGULAR MEETINGS MINUTES
November 20, 2024

1. CALL TO ORDER & QUORUM

The Regular Meeting of the Vermont State Housing Authority was held at One Prospect Street, Montpelier, Vermont, allowing both in-person and remote attendance via Microsoft Teams. 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; Elizabeth Bacon, Managing Director of Housing Program Administration; Robert Abbott, Office Services Coordinator.

Guests: Michael Smith, Elena Spensley, Gallagher Flynn & Company (11:30 a.m.)

Members of the public present: None

2. MEETING AGENDA

No changes were made to the meeting agenda.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4. MINUTES

The minutes for the September 25, 2024, meeting were presented for approval.

- Houghton moved to accept the minutes without change. Seconded by Plant and voted unanimously.

5. SECRETARY'S REPORT

Berk informed the Board of her activities in the Vermont mobile home community. She is pushing to expand the use of mobile homes as affordable housing and to dispel the stigma of living in mobile home parks which has evolved over the years. Berk has been interviewed by

three news agencies about the role of VSHA and the Rapid Response Mobile Home Infill Program (MHIP).

Berk discussed the status of audits of the VERAP program. Currently VSHA is not being audited. However, many states around the country are, with the expectation they would return fraudulent funds. There has been pushback from the states on this request.

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

6. FINANCES

Pembroke detailed the FY23 audit, explaining that VSHA hosts several programs, each with different funding sources. KBS will be at the next meeting to present their findings to the Board. The financials are still in a draft status, but Pembroke does not anticipate any changes. She congratulated her staff for their hard work preparing for the audit.

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Houghton, the Board approved the financials.

7. HOUSING PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION

Bacon presented the results of her team's SEMAP (Section 8 Management Assessment Program) certification. They were scored as a "Standard Performer" for the second year in a row. Traditionally, they had scored "High Performer". Bacon attributes the score to the staff turnover, and inexperience of her newer staff members. She already has a plan in place to improve in certain areas.

Farrell then read the following resolution to accept the SEMAP Annual Certification and to authorize the Chairman of the Board to execute the Certification on behalf of Vermont State Housing Authority:

"Whereas, HUD regulation 24 CFR sec 985.101 requires that Public Housing Agencies administering Section 8 tenant-based assistance program submit an annual SEMAP Certification within 60 days after the end of its fiscal year; and

Whereas, the information from the PHA concerns the performance of the PHA and provides assurance that there is no evidence of seriously deficient performance; and

Whereas, HUD used the information and other data to assess PHA management capabilities and deficiencies, and to assign an overall performance rating to the PHA; and

Whereas, the PHA has completed the annual SEMAP Certification and requires that the VSHA Board of Commissioners accept the SEMAP Certification as presented; and

Whereas, it is the desire and intent to the Board of Commissioners to comply with HUD regulations,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of the Vermont State Housing Authority hereby accepts the SEMAP Certification as presented and authorizes the Chairperson of the Board to execute the Certification on behalf of the Vermont State Housing Authority on this 20th day of November 2024.”

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Plant, the Board unanimously accepted the SEMAP Certification.

Bacon then explained the utilization report and spending. She discussed options for removing families from programs if there were to be insufficient funding in the future. Berk further explained that VSHA is operating within a Continuing Resolution opposed to an approved budget, with probability of even-funding or reductions in the future. Discussion followed on possible public relations issues surrounding budget cuts and how to best educate the public on VSHA policies.

8. EXECUTIVE SESSION – Gallagher Flynn Executive Assessment

Farrell read the following:

“I invite a motion that the Board adopt the following resolution:

“WHEREAS, the Board needs to discuss contractual relationships and legal matters;

and WHEREAS, premature general public knowledge would clearly put the Authority at a substantial disadvantage;

NOW THEREFORE, the Board shall discuss the contractual relationships and legal matters at issue in executive session.”

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Plant, the Board entered Executive Session at 11:44 am.

All Executive Staff were invited to stay. Michael Smith and Elena Spensley were also present. Abbott left the meeting and returned at 12:56 pm.

- The board came out of Executive Session at 12:44 p.m. on a motion by Richardson, seconded by Troiano. No action was taken during the Executive Session.

Farrell called for a 10-minute recess. The Board returned at 12:56 pm.

9. PROPERTY AND ASSET MANAGEMENT

Kuegel presented the Board with budgets for Green Mountain Apartments and Brightwood House. Despite the rent increases, Kuegel expects the properties to lose money due to the increases in staff expenses resulting from the recently approved Collective Bargaining Agreement.

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Richardson, the budgets were approved unanimously.

10. COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Trombly highlighted the four programs that his department administers and oversees: Manufactured Home Improvement and Repair Program (MHIRP), Landlord Relief Program (LRP) with the Eviction Prevention feature of that program, and the Rapid Response Mobile Home Infill Program (MHIP). MHIP applications opened on November 1 to flood-impacted families and opened to everyone else on November 15.

11. OTHER BUSINESS

Farrell shared the meeting calendar for 2025, and Berk briefly talked about the need for a larger discussion about strategic planning at the January meeting.

12. EXECUTIVE SESSION

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- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Houghton, the Board entered Executive Session at 1:12pm.

- On a motion by Troiano, seconded by Richardson, the Board exited Executive Session at 1:16pm with no action taken.

12. ADJOURN

Chair Farrell adjourned the meeting at 1:17 pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Kathleen Berk
Executive Director/Secretary

/RTA

