Board Members:  David Marvin, Neil Mickenberg, Emily Wadhams, Maura Collins (Executive Director of VHFA), Billy Coster (designee of Julie Moore; Secretary of ANR), Tom Yahn, Diane Bothfeld (designee of Anson Tebbets, Secretary of VAAFM), Alison Harte (designee of Mike Smith; Secretary of Human Services) (All Board Members called in)

VHCB Staff:  Gus Seelig, Elizabeth Egan, Anne Duffy, Marcy Christian, Jen Hollar (In person), Mark Martin, Nancy Everhart, Karen Freeman, Beth Schwarz, Jenny Hyslop, Larry Mires, Beth Schwartz, Martin Hahn, Ron Rupp, Bill Dell'Isola, Kim Foss

Others Present:  Britt Haselton, Adam Piper (Vermont Land Trust); Jane Lazorchak (Vermont Department Fish & Wildlife); Amy Demetrowitz, Michael Monte (Champlain Housing Trust); David Riegel (Vermont Foundation of Recovery); Rick Zamore, Gail Nunziata (Broad Brook Community Center, Inc.); Steve Libby (Vermont River Conservancy); Sam Burr (Farmer)

Neil Mickenberg called the meeting to order at 10:03 am. He explained because the COVID-19 crisis, the board, most staff and guests are participating by phone. Board votes will be done with a Roll Call voice vote. He welcomed everyone to the meeting from around the state.

Board Roll Call:
Neil Mickenberg - Present
Emily Wadhams - Present
Maura Collins - Present
Billy Coster - Present
Diane Bothfeld - Present
Alison Harte - Present
David Marvin - Present
Tom Yahn - Present

Public Comment
There was no public comment.

PROJECT PRESENTATIONS
Gus explained the project presentation process. Staff will introduce each project with applicants giving project updates. Board members may ask questions at any time.
Recovery Housing, Colchester – Champlain Housing Trust
2020-029-001

Champlain Housing Trust originally requested $800,000 and VHCB is recommending a VHCB award of $600,000. Jenny Hyslop introduced the project and reminded the Board that in advance of the Board’s September 2019 meeting, Champlain Housing Trust’s proposal had involved converting three buildings in CHT’s portfolio into Recovery Housing, to be operated by Vermont Foundation of Recovery (VFOR). However, prior to the Board meeting when the recommendation would have been considered, CHT asked that VHCB staff withdraw the recommendation for funding so that they could continue to work with the town of Essex to ensure that the project design and implementation met the needs of the community.

Amy Demetrowitz and Michael Monte from Champlain Housing Trust and David Riegel from Vermont Foundation of Recovery presented updates on the project. Amy explained, after the additional experience of working with the community of Essex, Champlain Housing Trust has come back to us with a proposal that has the same objective – creating 32 beds of recovery housing, in three CHT-owned buildings, with resulting cost savings that are intended to help bring this model to scale throughout Vermont in partnership with Vermont Friends of Recovery (VFOR). She outlined the two important changes that have occurred since September, which are outlined below:

1. Phasing: CHT is now proposing a phased approach to gradually bring the 32 beds online over a one-year period. This approach has been designed to take the concerns of the community into account.
2. Reduction in award recommendation: Another ongoing concern for staff has been the size of the requested award, in that it exceeds per unit awards for similar projects.

Jenny spoke about the housing crisis for people in recovery. This project will create a peer support community and involve an important housing/support organization partnership. This project could be a model for these types of partnerships around the state. Amy updated the board that the project has been awarded $200,000 from the Hale Family Foundation. David Riegel from VFOR explained the process of working on this project has strengthened the relationship between CHT and VFOR.

Tom Yahn asked how long it would take to replicate this model in other areas of the state. David explained that they are working with partners throughout the state. Additional financial resources will be needed for the success of this work. Maura Collins voiced her support of the project as a resident of Essex. Alison thanked the partners for their work on the project and asked about affordability for very low income clients. David explained that this project will serve very low-income clients but wanted to leave it open for people of higher incomes. They anticipate that about 75% of their clients are eligible for Medicaid and they want to leave room for people to work and have an income. Clients are required to volunteer or work to contribute towards their living expenses. VFOR is collaborating with local businesses for these opportunities. David explained the mission of VFOR and services offered. The program supports people in their recovery by providing a safe, supportive living environment. Participants need to be active participants of their own recovery. The organization began in 2013 and they operate six homes and serve 43 individuals.
The Broad Brook Community Center, Inc. (BBCC) has requested $60,000 in funding to help with the costs of interior and exterior restoration of the former Grange hall in Guilford, and $7,500 for Preservation Trust of Vermont for associated historic preservation easement and stewardship costs. Karen Freeman explained the community center has been owned by BBCC since 2015. BBCC, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, was created for the purpose of purchasing and renovating the building and grew out of a 2014 Community Visit by the Vermont Council on Rural Development. Rick Zamore and Gail Nunziata from Broad Brook presented updates on the project. Guilford currently lacks a centralized, accessible and inclusive space for social, civic, educational and recreational activities. The Broad Brook Grange hall is adjacent to the town library, meeting house and historical society, and is a short walk from the town offices and the Guilford Central School and provides a much-needed “center of gravity” in town.

Phase 2 of the renovations are scheduled for 2020 and will include an elevator to the second floor auditorium (currently inaccessible to people with mobility issues), a sprinkler system, insulation, interior and exterior paint, window restoration and weatherization and floor refinishing. The total cost of Phases 1 and 2 is estimated at $1,450,000 and the BBCC has raised over $1 million in grants, historic tax credits, and individual contributions and pledges.

Rick said that this is the most beloved building in town and the project will make it much more useable. Gail noted that the property has been put into new uses during the coronavirus situation with the public accessing free broadband from the parking lot and the property a pick-up site for school lunches. There was a brief discussion about parking and Rick assured the board that there is ample parking on site. Emily commended the group for their fundraising efforts and responsiveness to meeting community needs during this time of self-isolation.

Vermont River Conservancy has requested $50,000 in VHCB funds with VHCB staff recommending an award of $25,000. Mark Martin presented the project. The Dorset Quarry Swimming Hole is an historic resource that is listed on the Vermont State Register of Historic Places. It is the oldest marble quarry in the United States, opening in 1780 as the Norcross West Quarry, and closing in 1921. Since that time, it has been a very popular swimming destination, with up to 300 people a day visiting in the summer. In 2016, VHCB conserved the Gettysburg Quarry Property as a Town Forest for Dorset, which is located less than a mile from this project. Protecting the Dorset Quarry would greatly contribute to the recreational opportunities for the community.

Steve Libby from the Vermont River Conservancy provided updates on the project. One of the primary purposes of the Vermont River Conservancy is to protect important, popular swimming holes throughout the state. Dick and Kirsten McDonough, who approached VRC in 2019 after decades of providing free public access, currently own the quarry. Since VRC accepted the offer, the McDonough’s and VRC have developed a plan where the property would be donated to Vermont
Riverlands, LLC, and the Vermont River Conservancy and VHCB would co-hold a conservation easement.

Mr. McDonough is currently working on an agreement to sell a 3.25-acre parcel abutting the quarry to Ryan Downey. Recently, a 100 space parking area for the swimming hole was constructed on this site. Mr. Downey intends to charge a parking fee to pay for the acquisition as well as to offset the costs of site development and management costs. VRC, the McDonough’s and Mr. Downey are developing a comprehensive management plan that would ensure public access, protect the historic nature of the quarry, be mindful of neighboring property owners and provide long term financial support to VRC for ownership expenses and management costs.

Billy Coster had several questions about zoning permits and Act 250 requirements. Steve explained that the permits were obtained and the project did not need Act 250 review. There is parking for about 50 cars on Route 30, which is walking distance to the quarry. There was a brief discussion about the Vermont River Lands LLC, which was created for this type of project because of liability issues. Diane asked about the future of the parking lot and Steve explained that VRC has the right of first refusal to purchase if necessary in the future. The issue of affordability of the parking spaces was discussed. There will be a $10/car fee charged for parking with be several free spots in the off-season and the parking along Rte. 30 is free as well. The town would also like to have free access to local residents and veterans. Tom mentioned that winter use for skating is as high as summer use on a water body in his area and he asked the group to think about managing that potential demand.

**Fitzgerald, Colchester – Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife 2020-056-001**

Vermont Department of Fish & Wildlife (DF&W) has requested funds of $459,290 grant to help fund the fee acquisition and restoration of 124 acres of farmland in Colchester along the Winooski River. Nancy Everhart presented the project. She explained this former dairy is located entirely in the floodplain, and much of the property is subject to regular flooding. The owner, Pat Fitzgerald, sold the dairy herd about two years ago, due in part to the lack of manure management infrastructure, and the extraordinary estimated expense, and permitting hurdles, of siting a manure pit in a floodplain and/or floodway. The tillable land will gradually be restored to floodplain forest and wetlands, and the property will be managed as a Wildlife Management Area (WMA).

Jane Lazorchak from DF&W provided updates to the project. She explained a primary goal of this project is to improve water quality in the Lake Champlain Basin through natural processes – permanent conservation and restoration. There is a diverse group of stakeholders including; VT Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAFM), The Nature Conservancy (TNC), DF&W, UVM Extension (business planner) and VHCB. This group has been working for several years with the Fitzgeralds. The buildings will be removed from the property as part of the restoration. Jane explained that the Pine Island area has several other projects that may add to the Wildlife Management Area in the years to come.

**Langmaid Farm, Danville (2018-055-001) – Vermont Land Trust**
Vermont Land Trust has requested $298,000 in VHCB funds. Nancy Everhart presented the project. The farm is located in scenic North Danville and is in the midst of a transition. Owners Don and Dianne Langmaid sold most of their dairy herd in 2018. Their son Jake now lives at the farm, tending a growing herd of beef cattle, and managing the farm’s sizable woodland acres, selling firewood and lumber cut in his portable sawmill. Don and Dianne’s plan is to sell the development rights likely facilitating an intergenerational transfer to Jake. He has been strongly encouraged to enroll in VHCB’s Farm & Forest Viability program, for help in business and transfer planning.

Britt Haselton from Vermont Land Trust gave updates to the project. He explained that the two generations have not yet worked out the details of this transfer. If the Langmaid family has not agreed upon a transfer before the easement closing, a condition requires a written lease of at least 3 years between them (or with another farmer) to meet the requirement that a farm to be conserved will remain in active operation.

Billy asked about the timeline of the project and wondered if more time was needed to work out the details of the transfer. Britt explained that Don and Dianne want to move forward on conserving and selling their farm now. They want the land conserved and to be kept in farming but need to plan their retirement as well. If they cannot work out a transfer with their son, they have asked VLT to help them find a farm buyer.

Burr Retro OPAV, Monkton (1989-100-005) – Vermont Land Trust

Vermont Land Trust has requested $130,000 in VHCB funds to purchase a retroactive Option to Purchase at Agricultural Value (OPAV) on the Last Resort Farm in Monkton. The farm is currently owned by the Burr - Doyle family. Mark Martin presented the project. He explained that Sam Burr and Eugenie Doyle conserved the Last Resort Farm in 1991. At the time it was conserved, it was a dual goal housing and agricultural project. The housing component created twelve lots, four of which are affordable single-family homes, currently owned by Addison County Community Trust. In 2017, Sam and Eugenie entered into a lease to sell agreement with their son Silas Doyle-Burr. After being away from the farm for several years, Silas returned to Last Resort Farm and has worked there for the last 6 years. Under the lease to sell agreement, Silas became the owner and manager of the farm’s LLC (Last Resort Farm, LLC) and will own the land and infrastructure as Sam and Eugenie phase out of the business. Silas has worked with the Vermont Farm and Forest Viability Program.

Adam Piper from Vermont Land Trust and Sam Burr provided updates on the project. Adam pointed out that this project was one of the first conserved farms in our portfolio. The project has been evaluated for water quality issues and buffer zones have been added. Sam Burr talked about the importance of the ecological protections. He also talked about the issue of family transfers. His family has made use of both the Viability Program and the farm mediation program. In face of the current crisis, they have many visitors coming to farm to get their produce. Neil thanked Sam for his service.

Consent Agenda
David made the motion to approve the Consent Agenda. Billy seconded the motion. Anne pointed out a correction to the resolution for the Homeland Project (2002-068-000); the correct award amount is $188,652 with four homes. All voted in favor of the motion.
**Roll Call**
Alison – yes  
Maura – yes  
Billy – yes  
David – yes  
Emily – yes  
Tom – yes  
Diane – yes  
Neil - yes

The Consent Agenda consisted of:

1) Red Clover, Brattleboro (BHA) (2014-091-002)  
2) Lamson Pond Fen, Brookfield (TNC) (2020-055-001)  
3) Groundworks Collaborative Supplemental Award, Brattleboro (GC) (2019-074-001)  
4) Proposed changes to Federal Housing Policies  
5) ’20 Funds for Homeownership Pool (2000-068-000)  
6) Hedding Drive Loan Modification (RACDC) (1989-095-001)  
7) FFVP Authorizations  
8) Authorization to apply for NRCS for ACEP and RCPP-ALE Funds  
9) Decommitments

**Lead Program Update**
Ron Rupp presented the update. He gave a brief overview of the program. He highlighted changes to policies and priorities. He also gave an update on staffing. Matthew Hill has been hired as the Lead Director and they are about to offer the Lead Project Manager position to an excellent candidate.

Emily made the motion to approve the resolution regarding changes to the policies and priorities of the Lead Program. Diane seconded the motion. All voted in favor of the motion.

**Roll Call**
Alison – yes  
Maura – yes  
Billy – yes  
David – yes  
Emily – yes  
Tom – yes  
Diane – yes  
Neil - yes

**Staff's Report**
Gus had updates to his written report to the Board. Gus thanked everyone for participating on the phone meeting. He explained that almost all VHCB staff is working remotely at this point. Huge thanks to Bob Zatzke for his tireless work in this area. There are challenges but people are working hard through those challenges. Several employees are losing childcare, which will make working more difficult. Management team is meeting daily by phone.
Gus provided testimony before Senate Appropriations Committee. It is unclear how COVID-19 crisis will effect state funding. VHCB is working with our partners to address various needs. Harbor Place will be repurposed for the homeless population who are vulnerable to illness. We will continue to work throughout the state to provide support where we are needed. He welcomed three new employees: Matthew Hill, our new Lead Program Director, Bill Dell’Isola, the new Conservation Analyst and Kim Foss, our new Legal Assistant. In addition, as Ron mentioned, the Lead Program is about to hire a new staff member for the lead team. Rick DeAngelis’ job has been posted as well. Emily asked about staff working at home and Gus explained that everyone except Laurie are working remotely.

Financials/IT Report
Anne talked about staff working remotely. Our new database and the addition of our electronic document system have made this move much more doable. There have been some bumps in the road but overall things are good. There may be impacts on the budget with staff working at home. Marcy reported that staff have just completed a tech survey and the results will help assist tech team in determining staff needs. Neil asked if the first phase of the database project is now complete. Marcy explained that Phase 1 has been completed and the survey and current conditions will help to identify needs for Phase 2.

Minutes
Alison moved approval of the minutes from the January 24, 2020 board meeting. Emily seconded the motion. There was no discussion. All voted in favor.

Roll Call
Alison – yes
Maura – yes
Billy – yes
David – yes
Emily – yes
Tom – yes
Diane – yes
Neil - yes

Policy Issues: Water Quality Services, Lower Winooski and Other Watersheds
Gus discussed the memo that was sent to the Board about supporting Act 76 and the surface waters of Vermont. After several meetings between ANR and the Department of Environmental Conservation staff are exploring different roles VHCB might play in the clean water realm, including applying to be a service provider. Gus proposed that that staff work on this project and report to the board at our next meeting. Many of our partners have expressed strong support for us being involved at some level. At the same time, the Regional Planning Commissions also have a strong interest in being service providers in the regions that they serve. Billy added that ANR thanked Gus and staff for being willing to be involved in these discussions. Board members had questions about liability issues, the financial impact on VHCB, and if this work would take away from the staff’s focus on our core mission.
Maura wondered if it might necessary to have a board meeting in the month of April to address this and several other issues dealing with the current Covid-19 crisis. VHFA has been talking about providing grant support to our partners. Housing organizations are dealing with property management expenses, difficulties with rent collection, providing more support to the elderly. There may be construction delays that will delay development fees. Organizations are also being asked to do things that involve risks such as, Champlain Housing Trust’s work at Harbor Place, which they hadn’t anticipated before this crisis arose. There was a board discussion about the current crisis and its effects around the state. David Marvin talked about the stress to his employees of running his business right now. They are having trouble keeping up with the demands of the public. Diane talked about just of few of the issues facing farmers: the loss of food service orders, farmer markets being closed, and continuing stresses for already struggling dairy farmers. Alison reported about human services struggles including helping the homeless population. Front line staff are feeling anxious as well. Billy talked about ANR and how they are looking at permit processing issues and how they may be able to help. Karen reported that our conservation partners are helping to promote outside learning basics for kids while parents are homeschooling. They are concerned as many of their fundraising activities have been cancelled and these events often provide much-needed funds for their work around the state.

**Deliberations:**

**Housing Projects**

**Recovery Housing 2020-029-001**

Diane made a motion to approve the Recovery Housing resolution. Emily seconded the motion. Alison said the Agency of Human Services had the following significant issues with the project. Affordability of the site for residents and income limits might be too high and the potential for eviction and resulting homelessness were concerns, as well as, concentrating the population on the site. As a result, she could not support the project. Initially Maura had some of same concerns but explained she has learned that there is a scholarship fund to cover the $140 weekly fees until the individuals can earn the money themselves. This fund goes long way to help with those who cannot afford the fee. Jenny explained that in addition to the scholarship fund, case management and transition plans help residents. Residents are not kicked out of housing on a Friday afternoon. There is coordination with local providers and people sometimes leave but can be admitted back in to the housing at a later date. VFOR is committed to recovery and they do not want people to be homeless. There was a brief discussion about the concentration concern with this many units in one location. Peer support is a very important piece of the recovery puzzle. There is also a cost savings to having this number of beds in one location. This project with this number of units may work in Chittenden County but may not be appropriate in other areas of the state. The phasing approach to this project will also help staff see if this number of units is an issue. Alison said that the Agency is concerned with stigma rather than safety. Jenny explained that this is transitional housing and people will move on from this site. Neil thought this project worked because of the location being part of a larger community. The motion passed.

**Roll Call**  
Alison – no  
Maura – yes
Billy – no
David – yes
Emily – yes
Tom – yes
Diane – no
Neil - yes

Conservation Projects

<table>
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<tr>
<td>Broad Brook Community Center</td>
<td>2020-052-001 &amp; 2020-052-002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dorset Quarry Swimming Hole</td>
<td>2020-054-001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fitzgerald</td>
<td>2020-056-001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Langmaid Farm</td>
<td>2018-055-001</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burr Retro OPAV</td>
<td>1989-100-005</td>
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David made a motion to approve the above listed resolutions as a block. Alison seconded the motion. Billy had concerns about the parking situation and wanted to have more discussion in the future if this situation comes up with other projects. Gus assured him that we would be mindful of these situations. Tom had some concerns about the family transfer situation with the Langmaid Farm and hoped that the young farmer would take advantage of resources available through the Viability Program. All voted in favor of the motion. Emily & David abstained from the Preservation Trust of Vermont Stewardship award for the Broad Brook Community Center, Billy abstained from Fitzgerald project.

Roll Call

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<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alison</td>
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<td>Maura</td>
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<td>Billy</td>
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<td>abstained from Fitzgerald project</td>
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<td>Diane</td>
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<td>Neil</td>
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Other business:

There was no other business.

The meeting adjourned at 12:48.

Respectfully submitted,
Marcy Christian