

Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting
Feb. 27, 2023, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Meeting Facilitator: Pastor Arnold Thomas

Meeting Notes

1. Pastor Arnold Thomas convened the Feb. 27, 2023 meeting of the LAOB at 5:30 pm. Members provided brief introductions to identify/acknowledge who the active representative from each appointing authority would be during the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 pm.

Board Members present:

Pastor Arnold Thomas, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance; Ashley Devereaux National Association of Social Workers (alternate); Kirsten Murphy, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council; Jess Laporte, Vermont Every Town Project; Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity; Raheemah Madany, Pride Center of Vermont; Pacifique Nsengiyumva, U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Vermont; Rev. Mark Hughes (VRJA alternate)

Board Members Not Present:

Samantha Langevin, RELEAF Collective; Karim Chapman, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors; Rich Holschuh, Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs; Naomi Moody, NAACP

VHCB Staff / LAOB Contractors Present: Trey Martin, Bonnie Woodford, Francis Sharpstene; Robert Appel, Esq.

Members of the Public Present:

Malcolm Greene, Ernest (Buster) Caswell, Irmgard Figueroa

2. The Board reviewed the Meeting Notes from the Feb. 6, 2023 meeting and no comments or corrections were requested. Board members can let Trey and Bonnie know if there are any suggested changes after additional review.
3. VHCB provided two brief administrative updates regarding: (1) LAOB Facilitator Job Posting – Process and Next Steps; and (2) an updated version of the Sunrise Report to be recirculated to legislative committees, Board members, and allies.
 - Board members are encouraged to share this [link](#) to the Facilitator job description widely within their networks and communities.
 - If Board members are interested to apply, they are encouraged to do so. To avoid a conflict of interest or the appearance of a conflict of interest, a Board member acting as a contractor would need to step down from the Board, and a new appointee would be identified.
 - The process for submitting an application will be open until March 10, unless filled sooner.

- A new version of the Sunrise Report, with a corrected version of Attachment E, will be circulated to the Board and Committees of the General Assembly.

4. The Legislative Advocacy Workgroup provided updates and opportunities.

- Jess presented a framework for the legislative engagement including budget goals and advocating for the Board to the Legislature.
- Kirsten presented an overview of the legislative budget process.
- One important question that came up had to do with the budgetary ask for SFY'24, which is for a base appropriation of \$1.2 million. Seeding Power and other advocates for LAOB have helped to refine the request to include multiple years of funding. It was discussed that it is both important to position the Board as part of the base budget for State government, and right now it is important to ask that one-time money go to the Board while the State is still seeing historic surpluses and influx of Federal dollars.
- Robert Appel stated that since the budget is just once a year, it does not work well to start and sustain new programs. But expressed that goal would be to be in the base level of funding, that would be part of the base budget for the State going forward.
- Rev. Mark Hughes supported the idea of asking for multiple years of funding in order to have some stability.
- Pacifique stated the Board should stress why funding is needed, in order to accomplish what the Board has been tasked with the Board needs that funding.

5. Public Comment

- Malcolm Greene responded to a comment from Trey Martin about the small amount of the State Budget that is actually “in play” each year, opining that it doesn’t seem right that so much of the budget that is already set; he noted that this needs to be evaluated in order to drive some of that funding to work towards the Board’s goals.
- Buster Caswell expressed the importance of advocacy, talking to all leaders equally on the same mission.