

Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting
May 1, 2023, 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.
Draft Meeting Notes

Meeting Facilitator: Trey Martin, VHCB; Jess Laporte, CROs; and Natanya Vanderlaan, WholeHeart

Trey Martin convened the May 1, 2023 meeting of the LAOB at 5:30 pm: brief introductions and acknowledgement of who the active representative is from each appointing authority. The meeting adjourned at 7:03 pm.

Board Members Present:

Kirsten Murphy, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council ; Samantha Langevin, Vermont RELEAF Collective; Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity; Shingai Kagunda, Vermont Every Town Project; Ashley Devereaux, NASW (Alternate); Rev. Mark Hughes, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance (Alternate); Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers (NASW); Pasifique Nsengiyumva, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants; Raheemah Madany, Pride Center of Vermont

Board Members Not Present:

Pastor Arnold Thomas, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance; Rich Holschuh, Vermont Commission on Native American Affairs; Britaney Watson, NAACP; Vermont Psychiatric Survivors

LAOB consultants / VHCB Staff present:

Natanya Vanderlaan, Jess Laporte, LAOB facilitators; Trey Martin, Bonnie Woodford, Francis Sharpstene, VHCB staff; Robert Appel, attorney to the Board

Members of the Public present

Shane Rogers, Buster Caswell, Malcolm Greene, Ana Mejia, Christine Hughes, Hazel Adams-Shango

Agenda

1. Trey Martin convened the May 1, 2023 meeting of the LAOB at 5:30 p.m.
 - a. LAOB Facilitators Natanya Vanderlaan and Jess Laporte introduced themselves
 - b. Board members and alternates introduced themselves in response to prompt: Today is May Day! What is one thing you are looking forward to with the onset of spring?
2. Guest Introductions

Malcolm Greene – What good is it if we keep participating in the same way that we have versus moving in a new direction.

3. Meeting Notes from April 17, 2023 meeting. Members of the Board are welcome to send Bonnie or Trey comments.

Samantha had a comment about Ana's public comment wanted to ensure that the notes included her expressing disappointment in the lack of compensation for testimony. – Bonnie to update the notes

4. Legislative Process Updates and Opportunities

- a. Report out from Senate Government Operations on [H.125](#)

Jess gave a brief explanation of the bill which is focused on compensation for state per diems for boards and commissions. Jess wanted to highlight that the compensation for LAOB members won't be able to be raised until the legislature looks into addressing per diems.

Rev. Hughes asked about the Board's appropriation

Kirsten shared that unless the statute changes the \$50 is the cap for board per diems.

Jess shared that in the Board's budget there is \$90,000 dedicated to Board compensation.

Brian shared that this is a bigger discussion about how the government engages folks to make boards, commissions, legislature more accessible.

Xusana agreed and shared that there are challenges with how things are funded in Vermont.

- b. Upcoming advocacy opportunities / update from Seeding Power

Shane stated that testimony continues to be needed in the senate Ag committee.

Malcolm Greene asked if the Senate knows that the 4.8 budget is intended to stand up the Board and is not necessarily for programming.

Shane shared that there was language in the House budget and the Senate budget just includes the one year appropriation

Trey shared that we are anticipating the Governor to veto the budget and will go back to the budget committee.

- c. [H.126](#) and the Vermont Conservation Strategy Initiative

Trey shared a brief update and that he will send the slide deck out to folks and maybe this will need to be a sub-committee.

5. Board Discussion of Facilitator Priorities

- a. Jess and Natanya gave overviews of CROs and WholeHeart
- b. Roles, Goals and Intentions

Natanya discussed intentions for the Board:

Intentions - Listen generously. Speak your truth from your heart & mind.
Make the way we work together an example of what's possible.
Trust that we all hold a piece of the puzzle & we need each other's pieces to understand the whole picture

- c. Questions and Discussion Points

Subcommittee's – Are there subcommittees that are hoping to continue meeting

Jess shared a future meeting schedule.

Jess and Natanya asked the Board members to think about: What's one outcome that you would like to see in the next two months? And to email or prepare to share at the next meeting.

6. Public Comment II

Ana Mejia shared that she wanted to talk about the compensation for testifying, and requested to figure out how agencies can fund testimony with their own funding. Ana shared that in the Sunrise report the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund is called out as a partner and feels that there are other non-profits that would be better suited.

Buster Caswell shared that he is going to send a video about farmworkers, wants to highlight that farmworkers are essential.

Malcolm Greene asked at what date do we foresee people of color connected to the land? Do we have a plan for that? A bill several years ago proposed increasing taxes for the top 3% of Vermonters to cover pensions and that was not passed, he expressed concern about where state funds are being committed.

Ana Mejia on the conservation topic: Trey asked the question whether WE are doing work in conservation that is equitable and inclusive. And my response is that it depends on who you mean by WE. If you mean the state/state agencies then NO. But if you mean WE as some of the people on the board then yes. Every Town is doing this work. Amber & Naomi from SUSU who were on this board before were doing this work. We have experts on doing this well. Give them recognition and the \$\$\$\$

Rev Hughes reflected back that the legislature is allocating resources to fix the problem that they created.

Meeting Adjourned by Trey Martin at 7:03 PM