

## Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting

**Sep 18, 2023 , 5:30 – 7:00 p.m.**

Meeting Facilitator: Natanya Vanderlaan WholeHeart Inc. & Jessica Laporte CROs

| Attendee                   | Present  | Not Present  |
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| <b>Board</b>               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Samantha Langevin, VT RELEAF Collective</li> <li>● Shingai Kagunda, Vermont Every Town Project</li> <li>● Arnold Thomas, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance (VRJA)</li> <li>● Pacifique Nsengiyumva, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)</li> <li>● Susan Aranoff, Vermont DDC</li> <li>● Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers (NASW)</li> <li>● Britaney Watson, NAACP</li> <li>● Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs (VCNAA)</li> <li>● Raheemah Madany, Pride Center of Vermont</li> <li>● <i>Vermont Psychiatric Survivors (no active board member)</i></li> </ul> |
| <b>Board Alternates</b>    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Kirsten Murphy, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council</li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Jennifer Morton-Dow, VT Releaf Collective</li> <li>● Ana Mejia, NAACP</li> <li>● Rich Holschuh, VCNAA</li> <li>● Kenya Lazuli, VT Every Town Project</li> <li>● Ashley Devereaux, NASW</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Guests &amp; Public</b> | <p><u>Public</u>: Phoebes Potter (he/him or they/them), Environmental Justice Coordinator at Vermont Agency of Natural Resources; Isaac, VRJA</p> <p><u>Guests</u>: Francis Sharpstene (VHCB)</p>  |  |

1. **Natanya V. to convene the Sept 18th, 2023 virtual meeting of the LAOB at 5:30 pm - 15 minutes**
  - a. Welcome, Facilitator Team Introductions, and overview of meeting
  - b. Touchstones
    - i. *Listen generously. Speak your truth from your heart & mind.*
    - ii. *Make the way we work together an example of what's possible.*
    - iii. *Trust that we all hold a piece of the puzzle & we need each other's pieces to understand the whole picture*
  - c. Board members and alternates to introduce themselves - Name, Identifiers, Organization you are representing

2. Review & Approve [Meeting Notes from August 28th, 2023](#) - No comments on meeting notes - approved.

4. Facilitation Scope of Work Check-in - 15 minutes (Jess and Natanya)

- **Natanya: Last available date for Facilitation - Friday 12/15/23**
  - Limited time for on-boarding of staff depending on start date
  - Contract check-in - TOTALs through end of August
    - 409 hours in 4.5 months
    - \$27,124.72 invoiced
    - Averaging 100 hours per invoice or approx \$9,500
    - If we keep up this pace of spend to bridge before staff - total will be close to \$75,000
- **Jess:** Contract would originally be timed out and was extended through the hiring of staff.
- **Natanya:** We want to name that we're anticipating the last available date for facilitation, December 15, 2023, which isn't far from now. Wanting to name what we see as possible from now until then. We're really leaning into the hiring timeline and anticipating we'll get to hire staff by then. We want to be transparent about what we're trying to do between now and then. If we keep up the pace we're going, we could see ourselves closer to a total of \$75k by the close of our contract. Want to name that we've jumped in and have enjoyed how much we've been able to do with you all since we began.
- **Jess:** In the absence of staff, we knew this role would evolve over time. I wanted to touch base about the scope of work. Ask questions at any point! I'll share my screen and about the scope of work. Facilitation of Board meetings; Facilitation of sub-committees; Preparation for Staff Hiring Process; MOU with VHCB; Outreach, Networking & Learning.
  - *Example of a shift over the coming months:* People are getting in touch with facilitators as a way to get in touch with the board - this needs to shift and we're doing that by inviting folks to the public comment (eg. Rebecca, Phoeb, etc)
- **Samantha:** have you considered providing transition materials to staff?
- **Jess:** yes, we're planning on providing materials to new staff and are thinking about how to make this transition.
- **Samantha:** If you're open to consulting hours after the contract ends, could the Board explore contract work with you to talk over notes and materials with staff?
- **Jess:** I feel confident that our availability will be there from at least one of us but in a limited capacity.
- **Arnold:** would it be less intensive for you if we just meet online and not in-person?

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|   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Jess:</b> I do think the most effective option for us right now is for the biweekly meetings to be virtual. Our doors/emails are open, and we're available to have more of these conversations when things come up for you. Our priority will be on hiring staff so that this Board has the support it needs to move forward when our contract wraps up.</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>3. Hiring Process Update</b> - 15 minutes (Natanya)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Member update - Samantha</li> <li>b. Share-out on Hiring Process Tools</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Natanya:</b> we'll give space to Samantha for a board member update and I'll share out about the materials created for the process.</li> <li>● <b>Samantha - Board Member update:</b> The Hiring Committee has been Dan, Jennifer, and myself, and we've been working on creating a realistic hiring process, steps, decision points, and a more specific hiring timeline for two positions that we're hoping to hire by the end of the year. Thinking about how we want to evaluate applications, how we want to conduct interviews, how to build equity into our hiring process (anonymity). Trying to convene the Hiring Committee members who will be doing interviews. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Shingai</b> (in chat): I can be involved in the interviews.</li> <li>○ No further questions or comments</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Natanya:</b> We met with Francis on Friday and reviewed the places where we've asked HR to step in and support the hiring process. We've asked VHCB to support the hiring process along the way, which they're willing to do, and are willing to make this hiring process a priority. The back and forth in turnaround among the Board and the Hiring Committee can take the longest - we're about 3 weeks behind our intended timeline, have been held up by the MOU process, and are eager to jump in. We'll jump in as soon as we can. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Francis:</b> I don't have any concerns looking over what you're laying out in the hiring process. A few timing things - the more the hiring team can be available to keep things running the better; hiring is difficult right now. Thanks for doing great work! It's taken little work on our side to follow along.</li> <li>○ <b>Samantha:</b> the hiring process will significantly impact things moving forward, including our relationship with VHCB. I think it has high potential to get on a good path.</li> <li>○ <b>Britaney:</b> if we can't be involved in interviews, are there other ways for us to participate in the hiring process?</li> <li>○ <b>Jess:</b> We're using time outside of Board meetings to offer feedback. If there are members of the Board who are looking for a working session, please reach out and ask us to set up a time.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Natanya:</b> Yes, we're working on live documents, you can give your opinion and comments in any of those. We'll put you on the email thread and you can share any thoughts there too.</li> <li>● <b>Natanya:</b> We're currently in the process of working on an evaluation template for the interview, for the Hiring Committee to reflect on the interviews. These materials are in your email, which is an opportunity for you to add your input and be part of this process.</li> </ul> |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Materials shared - 1) Application Evaluation rubric, 2) Interview Guide, 3) Interview Evaluation rubric</li> <li>○ <b>Jess:</b> We've been trying not to utilize a rubric model to accommodate the fact that not all Hiring Committee members will be present at all interviews and so we are comparing similar and consistent variables when making decisions.</li> <li>○ <b>Direct comments in the live/sharabledocs will help us gather input from the full board - please make comments!</b></li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>4. Subcommittee Updates - 5 minutes</b></p> <p>a. <b>MOU Update - Jess &amp; Kirsten Murphy</b></p> <p>b. <b>Advisory Powers Sub-committee Update - Jess</b></p> | <p><b>MOU Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Jess:</b> We had a significant revision from VHCB in our MOU, and we're setting up another time for discussion. We hope to be in a confident place later this week or early next to start the recruitment process for hiring or a final MOU to review. Next Steps; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Revisions from LAOB (Robert marking up Trey's draft) sent to VHCB</li> <li>○ LAOB and VHCB meet this week and next</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Kirsten:</b> there are a few things to work out, but we're getting there. Overall very positive.</li> </ul> <p><b>Advisory Powers Sub-committee Update</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Jess:</b> continuing to develop and gather materials for our learning process. Our outreach plan lays out who we hope to reach out to first (leaders, program managers from these institutions) to come and share information at our regular Board meetings. Hopefully next meeting we'll be able to walk through the survey question by question to get feedback.</li> <li>● <i>Documents shared in Chat</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Finalized <a href="#">Introduction letter</a> (1 page) - <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EkLvmEq8p2DrJj2RdxK5TXySrdrPPC_-HukKBQVsnq4/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1EkLvmEq8p2DrJj2RdxK5TXySrdrPPC_-HukKBQVsnq4/edit</a></li> <li>○ <a href="#">1-pager</a> - <a href="https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Ne39GAZAUm3cXIu-NVu-eSFy_cX_4pTWwvnIgU6FTHE/edit#slide=id.g2563ac66aca_0_60">https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1Ne39GAZAUm3cXIu-NVu-eSFy_cX_4pTWwvnIgU6FTHE/edit#slide=id.g2563ac66aca_0_60</a></li> <li>○ Work Draft of the Survey - <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/1658dAZ6QUUpSFAHXmJ0n8kD9wXuo_vKOy_aNwmP_b0Lo/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/1658dAZ6QUUpSFAHXmJ0n8kD9wXuo_vKOy_aNwmP_b0Lo/edit</a></li> <li>○ Outreach Plan - <a href="https://docs.google.com/document/d/18v2XoiNNsxCHeTxwhybJ6KzWc4-1QTF0dhRzSSH393U/edit">https://docs.google.com/document/d/18v2XoiNNsxCHeTxwhybJ6KzWc4-1QTF0dhRzSSH393U/edit</a></li> <li>○ Next Meeting is tomorrow 9/19 @ 11am</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |

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| <p><b>5. Public Comment &amp; Board Responses</b></p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <b>Phoebes - Per Diem &amp; EJ Board</b> - supporting the implementation of VT’s environmental justice law, which is unfolding. One of our priorities as an agency as we think about the sustainability of this work is addressing per diem stipends. It’s a thorny issue, but to the extent that our agency will be putting forward an ask to change this to implement meaningful compensation, we want to hear from all of you about your thoughts and feelings about this. I’m coming to plant a seed because the next session will come up quick, but I wanted to invite space to be a collaborator and supporter on this specific issue. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Samantha:</b> it was explicitly in our Sunrise Report that we want to change the per diem compensation, but we know we can’t do it just for the LAOB. Our engagement would support this being changed for all Boards.</li> <li>○ <b>Xusana:</b> they do it for different Boards, there are different per diems for different Boards. Consistency is really important. Government in VT is made up of real people. It’s a difficult position to be in, given the way that Vermont works and is situated. I just wanted to highlight different aspects of this problem.</li> <li>○ <b>Jess:</b> I think you had mentioned the highest compensated Board is \$250 per diem. The LAOB had budgeted for that, and our budget passed at that amount, but we are still not able to compensate at that level. Until this law changes, these funds will actually have to be reallocated. Phoebes, please let us know if there’s any information we can circulate to this Board that would be helpful.</li> <li>○ <b>Susan:</b> Maybe someone from the legislature can bring these requests together. Boards typically want people with lived experience. Sitting on state Boards doesn’t mesh well with lived experience. Paying people well for their lived experience would be a good starting place, and training people so that they can be effective participants is another piece.</li> <li>○ <i>Xusana In chat</i> - Susan's point about the Social Equity Caucus: Coach Christie and Martin LaLonde were thinking of taking this up maybe last session or the session before, so they might be a good place to pick up the thread to see where they ended up.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |
| <p><b>6. Community Engagement Proposal - 15 minutes</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Present concept - Mindy</li> <li>b. Board Approval - Vote to pursue (with Mindy leading on logistics)</li> </ol> | <p><b>Mindy - Community Engagement Proposal (from Facilitators)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● <u>Offer:</u> Logistical support to plan community event this fall with opportunities for Board to help put together the content and discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Food, Location, Supplies for activities</li> <li>○ Accessibility options - translation, transportation, childcare, scheduling, safety</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Purpose</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ This connects to the next legislative session and how to build upon the testimony gathered in the last Legislative Session, circling back with folks who offered testimony</li> <li>○ Gather more information and public perspectives to set LAOB staff up with content and priorities</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <u>Event Focus</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Generate ideas around grant programs for home and land purchases - needs, ideas, resources, etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |

- Wide community support around the creation of this board and funding first round of state appropriations (\$1.2 million)
- Gain a better understanding of land and home access barriers; generate ideas to overcome barriers
- Build connection and momentum for next legislative session
- Event Budget - roughly \$6,000

**Discussion**

- **Arnold** - Interested in this idea and want to make sure that Natanya and Jess don't get overburdened in the follow through
  - A few meetings ago, a member of Board asked about the role churches can play in land transfer and affordable housing
  - Update - On 9/9/23 the United Church of Underhill purchased a tract of land (10-15 acres) and will work with Habitat for Humanity, VHCB and Bernie Sanders' office to develop 8 affordable housing units in the Underhill area
  - People in the project mentioned how taxing it was to coordinate with various agencies - LAOB could learn from them and they could work with us to see how a process like this could be made easier in the future.
- **Xusana in the chat** - The office of racial equity is holding a conference in Stowe on Oct 26-27 and if the LAOB wanted to save the \$, we could make this one of the sessions. Absolutely no pressure at all--I don't want to overshadow the LAOB and the Board can afford it so I don't mean to imply the \$ is an issue.
- **Samantha** - Important time to engage the public. Sometimes in conversation, I've heard surprise that the LAOB is still around. If this happens this could be looped in, brought out to events and/or advertized through events.
  - Can it be made hybrid for more to participate?
  - Use as blueprint for future events instead of just a one off.
- **Mindy**
  - Is there a preference for having a stand alone LAOB event vs. integrating into existing events?
    - **Samantha in the chat** - I think both are best - collaboration and independent. It feels representative of how our work will go.
    - **Xusana in the chat** - i like a standalone event and threading it thru other spaces where we have overlaps.
    - **Samantha in the chat** - and really consider follow up - how will attendees be updated after? How can we build some community relationships?
  - **Jess suggestion in the chat** - Maybe one in-person event and one virtual event separately?
- **Brian** - Do this as a pilot then follow-up with more participation in other spaces.

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|                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Frustration - government calls for more community engagement, then when advocates push for it to be resourced they are told “it’s happening’ - this is an important step.</li> <li>○ See it as an experiment in how the government engages the public and offer it up to replicate</li> <li>○ Assessment of needs - hear about what the government is and is not doing → could be duplicated from questions for agencies</li> <li>● <b>Pacific</b> - We are doing a lot as a board at the same time. Thankful for those who have been able to work on the subcommittees to accomplish projects. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Engagement and advocacy is important but want to make sure that we don’t over stretch ourselves. Remember hiring people to staff this Board, they will be able to pick up on this.</li> <li>○ Transparency is a big opportunity through this event.</li> </ul> </li> <li>● <b>Arnold</b> - focus on where there is already energy and interest in order for the LAOB to push for further progress. Through collaboration/partnership our work would be less exerting.</li> <li>● <i>Samantha (in chat)</i>: I am wondering also about personally inviting folks who offered testimony during budget appropriations to this event.</li> <li>● <i>Pacifiuqe (in chat)</i>: Are there any other opportunities for LAOB to share with the public about the work we do? I'm thinking using news outlets and press releases as other avenues for us to share and engage the public.</li> </ul> <p><b>Inviting Board to vote on Mindy moving forward with proposal with board input (Jess)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Votes - 6 yes’s 0 no’s 2 abstaining</li> <li>● Will plan to vote on the budget at next meeting on 10/2</li> </ul> |
| <p><b>7. Board Announcements</b></p> | <p><i>Xusana in the chat</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Designation 2050: Equity and Opportunity in Vermont’s Designation Programs Zoom Focus Group<br/>Weds. Sept. 27, 6:30 - 8:00 PM <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ RSVP for Zoom link:<br/><a href="https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrcOGhrzIpEtSMEtqG4p4g5Dpkn_f-RGvA">https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZUrcOGhrzIpEtSMEtqG4p4g5Dpkn_f-RGvA</a></li> <li>○ \$25 Participation Stipends Available.</li> <li>○ Description: Join an informal focus group conversation to share your ideas about how to increase equity, opportunity, and accessibility of Vermont’s downtown, village center and other “designation” programs — or how to reform and reimagine them altogether. Bring your thoughts, ideas, and experiences on increasing access to land and opportunity for BIPOC Vermonters, rural residents, and others underrepresented in property ownership; ways to make growth, development and housing more equitable; and ideas for making it easier for people to access state programs and benefits.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>  |

**8. Meeting Adjourned at 7:00pm**