Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting
December 15, 2025, 5:30 – 7:30 p.m.
Occurs Every 4th Monday

Meeting Facilitator: Jean Hamilton

Notetaker: Arealles Ortiz

Attendee	Present	Not Present
Board	● Mary Gerisch, NAACP ● Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs ● Mark Hughes, VRJA ● Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity ● Susan Aranoff, Vermont DDC ● Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers	● Emily Carris-Duncan, Vermont Every Town Project ● Alyssa Beauchamp, Liberation Ecosystem Inc. ● Sonali Samarasinghe, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) ● *No active board member*, Pride Center of Vermont ● Zack Hughes, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors ● Abel Luna, Migrant Justice
Board Alternates	● Jaada Longmore, VRJA ● Caitlin Scott, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors ● Samantha Langevin, Liberation Ecosystem Inc. ● Kirsten Murphy, Vermont DDC Staff: Kiah Morris, Tay Margison, Ornella Matta-Figueroa	● Ashley Devereaux, NASW ● Rich Holschuh, VCNAA ● Marita Canedo, Migrant Justice ● Kenneth Martell, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI)

Guests & Public	Ernest Caswell Buster

Agenda

1. **Convene the December 15, 2025 meeting of the LAOB at 5:30pm**
   a. Welcome, Overview
   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. LAOB Board Member & Staff Introductions: Name, Identifiers, Seat and Location (county) – Prompt: Updates you would like to share with the board.

2. Review & Approve Meeting Minutes from 11.17.25

Dan Coutu makes a motion to approve minutes as presented.
Brian Seconds Motion to approved minutes as presented.

Samantha Abstains; Mary Abstain from approving minutes as presented.

<u>Amendments:</u>
Typo: 11.20.25 should read 10.20.25
Grammar: Remove 'Alyssa in the Chat'

3. Board Committee sign-ups and scheduling 5:50 pm	Overview of Sub Committee Signups. We want to make a schedule that works for everyone, create structure around who is a standing committee member, what makes a quorum. Will use the data collected and send out a scheduling poll. We want the structure to be accessible. Let us know if we are missing anything.
4. Resilience Hub Grants Update and Selection Committee 5:55 pm	We want to talk about funding opportunities available, Community Resilience Award Opportunities. One-time funding opportunity to create piloted models of community centered responses to emergent needs. <u>7 awards for up to $50k each:</u>

	(4) Rapid response awards for emergency shelters (2) Awards for community resilience hubs (1) 50k for technical assistance providers for community resilience hubs <u>Goals:</u> Use funds to distribute resources to our communities who are identified with unmet needs, support best practices, build tech assistance programs, establish systems of support for grantees. Defining the term, resilience' from the resilience hub tool kit. Overview of Emergency Shelter Rapid Response Grants -State of Vermont definition of 'Emergency Shelter' <u>Emergency Shelter Rapid shall serve:</u> People with disabilities People of the global majority LGBTQ+ Families Youth in transition Elders Couples without Children Justice Involved Individuals Substance Users People in Recovery And More! <u>LAOB shall coordinate with existing community-based services, providers, peers, neighbors, mutual aid volunteers to offer residents a circle of support that builds on:</u> - 4 pillars of recovery - 10 principles of recovery - 8 dimensions of wellness - 6 guiding principles to trauma informed approach <u>Award Process:</u> Notification of award opportunity

	Submission of a letter of intent Review and scoring applications. Summary of awardees sent to the LAOB Board Presentation and ratification by LAOB board for awarding LAOB will issue contracts and awards to recipients with reporting requirements. Want to say the way we are structured, we may have to use reimbursement. We know that Agency of Agriculture via Working Lands Grants are able to pay 40% down upon signing contract, and then 20% at your first report and then the final 10%, there's spacing based on reports. The final payments are made on the final report. If there are good examples of upfront payments, we will advocate for that. Having solely reimbursement-based contracts and grants is an accessibility problem the LAOB is statutorily mandated to remedy. Comment: I know foodshed capital. They offer 0% interest loans to farmers who receive reimbursement style grants from USDA. They front the farmer money and then receive payment from federal government. They could be an example of accessing reimbursement style funding. Comment: In the conversation about the state's financial management policies regarding upfront versus reimbursement. There's also a difference between "grants" and "beneficiary payments". Any other questions before we move on to our next agenda item. Can we move forward with the publishing of an LOI based on the information provided today? Do we need to bring this back to the board before we put out the LOI? Do you give SFA committee authority to put it out with an understanding it will do what you all just saw? With the expectation the board will decide on full awards. A motion was made to move into a vote & delegate the Shelter for All Committee the ability to move forward with an LOI, understanding the board has the final approval of awards. Samantha Seconds that motion Every primary board member has voted in favor. Question: Is the application process identical for each grant?

	Response: No, we will still need to make some adjustments. It will likely have an LOI (letter of interest), there will be an application process that will be different and the selection committee will be broader. Question: We are only talking about rapid response emergency shelter right now? Response: Correct
5. Evaluation Committee Report 6:15 pm	When the Evaluation Committee was formed, we agreed to report to the board of the process. <u>Overview of process:</u> This year was the creation of this structure for the LAOB - initiated by Heath Tending, then taken on by ad hoc Evaluation Committee to finish the process and conduct evaluations. There was a lot of documentation. Feedback solicited from: 3 designees each, coworker to coworker, entire board We heard from 16 people in total. Met at least 12 times, with a final evaluation conversation tomorrow, and at least 2 future ones around staff goals. Summarized and presented to each co-director in individual conversations. Contact and follow up with VHCB HR as well - in process with final materials for documentation. Final stage - coworker to coworker conversation, happening Tues, 12/16. Any questions about our process? Did any other evaluation committee members want to add anything? We asked our staff for feedback. One of the areas was feedback for the board. We received information we haven't figured out what to do with yet. The final piece we wanted to report out to the board was that we received feedback around language and racism on the part of the board. Evaluation Committee would like to report back to the board after we have met, discussed, and investigated more with the staff to have a more robust conversation. Any final thoughts, questions, or concerns from board members? Question: Can you answer if the information was raised by someone that was internal?

	Response: Yes, we can say the information was raised internally. Comment: This is an arduous process. I wanted to give a board member a huge shoutout. This is a major accomplishment & I wanted to acknowledge the work of the co-directors. Privileged to work with them. We should take away from this process the importance that groups are accountable to one another and function.
BREAK: 6:38-6:43pm	
6. 2026 Legislative Platform Planning 6:43 pm	In the last board meeting, we talked about Policy committee compiling and proposing a legislative agenda. Staff and policy committee will advocate for that legislative slate that is approved by the board. <u>Staff recommendation on policy slate:</u> https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1YaI32yorOW37LJ5Xa0MbaGpIooWZLQmylOtR285uBGM/edit?usp=sharing <u>Overview of raise up justice initiatives:</u> -Equal protection constitution amendment in the form of an article, PR4. -Civil rights bill, prohibiting discrimination in housing and public accommodation, unfair housing practices, discrimination, hate crimes. The bill proposes to make amendments to the laws against discrimination, civil rights coordinating council, and a civil rights/equal protections special fund. -Civilian oversight and Law enforcement policy, H361, H59 -Other Policies: Economic Justice, Health Equity, Justice Data Transparency, Divestment & Reinvestment in community-based safety, Reparations, and Independence of the Office of Racial Equity.

	Next Steps: We can bring staff recommendations and other presented information to Policy Committee and decide what we would like to incorporate in LAOBs Legislative platform to present on Januarys Board Meeting. LAOB Board appointing orgs submit legislative priorities via this form or set up time with staff/policy committee to discuss legislative priorities. https://forms.gle/zGVAZrucWzv3vA5h6
7. Board Discussion: LAOB Bill (aka "Brian's Bill") 7:00	https://drive.google.com/file/d/1VIghOSnNYmeyzaV-J7lnP1k5m6JnCJkV/view?usp=sharing This bill was called LAOB Revolving Fund. We have the ability to give testimony in HOUSE, GENERAL & HOUSING COMMITTEE. In the policy committee, we talked about editing language in this bill. Why introduce a LAOB Bill? It gives us an opportunity to produce comprehensive housing first policy we can move on into the future. We are hoping to ask for a study to explore the impacts of Act 250. We want to connect the dots between the Department of Health report that has named housing as a number one priority. Make requests about conversations around shelter. Improve Coordinated care. What are the next steps needed for development such as zoning? Do you have concerns about moving forward with an LAOB Bill? No comments. I think title would be: An act related to the maintenance and development of the affordable housing infrastructure. Short name could be: AHA We will be articulating existing work, policy intentions, and how grants can tie into the fund. The housing programs that were mentioned, (mutual aid, tool banks, labor pools) we will want to carry forward, refine and align with our existing work. Want to keep the study on tax penalties and incentives.

	Policy Committee agreed to cut out surcharge and how to raise money for the fund. We will let legislature determine where the funds come from. Flag: We did cover policy but did not get it all unpacked. Can we revisit at Policy Committee?
8. Public Comment and Board Responses 7:15 pm	Public Comment: How are we going to accomplish food security without addressing farm worker housing? Vermont needs an updated farmworker housing needs assessment. There are no recommendations on taxes credits, non-profits, private sectors, or cooperatives to build homes off the farm. In Vermont there is the farmworker housing law. If the farmworker loses their job they lose their home. Farmers are seeking employees, but the biggest roadblock is housing. We are supposed to address land access and housing needs for everyone in Vermont. What if we developed off the farm housing, start their own farms, and a place to call home. There is a lack of dialogue, reports, and data. LAOB can grant technical support to farm worker housing data. Our migrant communities are overcrowded, lack privacy, and heat requirements. Board Responses: Migrant Justice has data that Buster was talking about. Migrant Justice is now part of our board. They are able to speak into priorities for their organization, I'm curious about our beginning developer program as a place to think about how it relates to farm worker housing. Your words gave me ideas for the bill, creative projects on how it relates to Busters' comments.
9. CONSENT ITEMS	
10. ACTION ITEMS	Send links in the chat to the board.

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Meeting Adjourned: 7:30PM	

Submitted by: Arealles Ortiz