Land Access and Opportunity Board: Shelter for All

February 5, 2026, 12:00PM-1:00PM

Meeting Facilitator: Arealles Ortiz, Jean Hamilton

Notetaker: Arealles Ortiz

Attendance:

Mark Hughes, VRJA

Staff: Ornella Matta-Figueroa, Jean Hamilton, Kiah Morris

Guests: Chad Simmons, Grey Berreda

Not Present:

Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers

Jaada Longmore, VRJA

Mary Gerisch, NAACP

Susan Aranoff, Vermont DDC

Sonali Samarasinghe, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants

Zack Hughes, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors

Agenda:

-Check In: One word for your day so far?

Co-design agenda for every meeting:

-Welcome Chadd from HHAV. SFA-HHAV alignment discussion
-Public Comment

Minutes:

Shelter For All Committee did not achieve a quorum so we will revisit Minutes Review (12.19.25, 1.9.26, 1.29.26) next Shelter for All Meeting.

Welcome Chadd from HHAV. SFA-HHAV alignment:

Curious to hear more about this committee's work and what is going on in the state around homelessness.

Shelter for All Committee Milestones:

-Community Engagement- Public meetings in the park for impacted community members to weigh into the committee.

-Emergency Shelter Tents: Everyone Sleeps

-2024 Housing Conference Case Study

-Advisory Powers Grant- End Homelessness Vermont

-LAOB Emergency Shelter Guidelines: https://docs.google.com/document/d/1ZBJfvKw7kmhmUWp763ojLZzYePK3t5_BPq-QrNhLeDw/edit?tab=t.0#heading=h.oqndr76e7nci

-Emergency Shelter & Resilience Hub Grants

-Beginning Developer Community of Practice

Resilience Hub Took Kit Overview:

2025 Resilience Hub Toolkit w Templates_V

Discussed LAOBs new grant program; Resilience Hub Grants for community-based response to create solutions.

Letter of Intent:

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSdByTx8na9ySzeD7LJLhZ9-O_n89Vm7rrApp3IayDyKORwhbA/viewform

We have allocated $200k to emergency winter shelter grants, 8 awards at $25k each.

For the resilience hub grants, we have allocated $150k in our current budget. The Budget Adjustment Act will give us another $250k so we will have a total of $400k.

Question: How are you all connected with other efforts to address shelter across the state?

Response:

-Via Board members, Chadd at HHAV, Frank, and Kiah have been going to the Chittenden Country Homelessness Alliance Meetings and currently funding 8 shelters.

Question: How does the LAOB interact with the shelter systems?

Response: Finding root causes, advising zoning decisions, and tax laws are ways LAOB interact with shelter system.

Response: What is the extent? What is the nature of these relationships? The extent is broad reaching by the relationships cultivated. Nature is awkward, inherent, and the reason why the LAOB was created. Sometimes the work can be challenging and complex.

Comment: Excitement to continue to work together. I think it would be important for LAOB to help shape the input of the current piece of legislation that House Human Services is working on around emergency shelter and homelessness response.

Response: Can you please remind them to invite us in to give testimony? We need people like you to be saying LAOB, here's where you need to be, and be vocal in the committee room and ask, did you get LAOB in on this? Lastly, would you stay for public comment?

Public Comment:

This reminded me how LAOB is helping triangulate our voice. It moves us from a feeling that we exist, to actualizing it. They center our voice. Echoing it's an awkward place to be because of the 'mirror' authenticity that is being brought forward. It's creating an urgency to create more transparency. We are pushing the edge and creating an environment for growth.

Response to Public Comment:

Wanted to acknowledge your persistence in coming.

Next Steps:

-Emergency Shelter Grant Updates, Contract Updates, Resilience Hub Grant Updates.
-Staff can discuss and communicate with the committee about the request that came in for urgent funds and create procedure to go about it.

-Open Meeting Link:
https://aoa.vermont.gov/sites/aoa/files/Boards/VCC/Vermonts%20Open%20Meeting%20Law%20VCC%2011-20-20.pdf

-Consensus on SFA meetings (Weekly, Thursdays Noon-1PM)

-Revisit spending down the funding allocated to 'housing for all' subcommittee

Meeting Adjourned at 1:00PM

Submitted By: Arealles Ortiz