Land Access and Opportunity Board
Special Board Meeting: FY26 Budget Meeting
May 27, 2026, 9:30-10:30 AM

Meeting Facilitator: Jean Hamilton

Notetaker: Arealles Ortiz

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

Agenda

1. **Convene the May 27, 2026 virtual meeting of the LAOB at 9:30 AM**
   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)

2. Agenda Items:	-Check In: Name, Identifiers, Seat, and Location -Overview of FY26 Budget and Adjustments
3. Discussion	Update: We were informed by our Finance Team at VHCB that there will be a blackout period starting from June 17th, possibly through August 24th. We will be meeting with our CFO Christopher to find out if this period means a pause in all transactions, including contracts and payroll. This is a new process for our organization and means this will impact our budget in terms of what we can commit to spending. We have the budget we're working on to share with the group. There will likely be some shifts leading up to our June Board Meeting. Comment: The reason we were trying to lock down contracts was to argue in favor of our carryover. Is a blackout period considered a legitimate complicating factor? Comment: Wondering if we should flag in our yearly MOU review with VHCB whether the blackout timeline was reasonable for LAOB to work with. Comment: For the purposes of our meeting, we should think about what could realistically be submitted for processing before June 9th, so we have a better sense of how much we are then shifting to carry forward. Comment: We are actively putting together that plan. Hiring secure housing coaches feels unrealistic (to spend funds) at this time. We could reallocate those funds to contracts for the Small-Scale Developers Community of Practice, Resilience Hub Grants, and contract with subject matter experts for the secure housing coach program to create wrap around case management for housing services.

	Comment: Should we be concerned that showing a high carryover mean it will not get approved? Comment: We've been told by VHCB that the more funds under contract and allocated, the better off we'll be for our funds not to be reverted. We are trying to be clear of our budget line items, so whoever sees our budget knows it's all going somewhere. Comment: Curious to look at the original FY26 budget, and what we were planning to commit to in terms of spending down through the end of June. Thinking about how we could accelerate a spend down in a 2-week period. Comment: We were planning on executing contracts instead of transacting before June 30th. Wanted to clarify that 'contract' means how we have proven we are obligating funds for a particular purpose which could include hiring. Overviewed LAOB Staffing and Fringe Costs. Comment: We were in the process of posting positions for 3 secure housing coaches as we heard about the blackout period. Now, we are not posting the positions anymore, recognizing that the timeline is very tight. We wouldn't be able to obligate funds in the form of a hire letter before blackout period. Question in the chat: Wondering if being mid-hire, combined with the extended black out, is enough of an "obligation"? Question in the chat: Is that $500K that we might pivot to other expenses embedded in the approved budget for the next fiscal year? Would we still be able to hire the same number of staff after blackout if this money is spent now? Response: Yes, we will still have money to hire those positions in FY27 because we have those positions budgeted for our Base appropriation ($1.68M) that includes those positions. Question: Can we get details about what to expect and learn if there is any flexibility when it comes to carrying forward from our finance analyst at Department of Finance and Management? Are we able to get an extended spending period if funds will be committed? Comment: We were hopeful of obligating funds to a CRM software and grants management platform.

	Question: Could a quote from any of these software providers act as an example of documentation to obligate funds instead of a signed contract? Question: What's the procedure during the blackout period? Will the state not pay an invoice? Can we still submit an invoice anyway? Response: Typically, all invoices and contracts are halted until start of next fiscal year. Comment: It would be good to get an estimate of what the backlog will look like once the blackout is over? Do we need to be thinking further ahead than what we are currently talking about?
4. Public Comment & Board Responses:	No members of the public were present.
5. CONSENT ITEMS	●
6. ACTION ITEMS	● If being mid-hire, combined with the extended black out, is enough of an "obligation"? ● Can we get details about what to expect and learn if there is any flexibility when it comes to carrying forward from our finance analyst at Department of Finance and Management? Are we able to get an extended spending period if funds will be committed? ● Could a quote from any of these software providers act as an example of documentation to obligate funds instead of a signed contract? ● Would be good to get an estimate of what the backlog will look like once the blackout is over? Do we need to be thinking further ahead than what we are currently talking about? ● Flag: In yearly MOU review with VHCB whether the blackout timeline was reasonable for LAOB to work with.
7. Meeting Adjourned: 10:30 AM	