Land Access and Opportunity Board Meeting
August 31, 2026 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 Rutland ● Dan Coutu, VT Commission on Native American Affairs ● Susan Aranoff, Vermont DD Council ● Zack Hughes, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors ● Andre Comandon, Office of Racial Equity ● Mark Hughes, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance ● Abel Luna, Migrant Justice	● Brian Cina, National Association of Social Workers, VT Chapter ● Emily Carris-Duncan, Vermont Every Town Project ● Alyssa Beauchamp, Liberation Ecosystem, Inc. ● *No active board member*, Pride Center of Vermont
Board Alternates	● Samantha Langevin, Liberation Ecosystem, Inc. ● Kirsten Murphy, Vermont DD Council ● Jaada Longmore, Vermont Racial Justice Alliance	● Ashley Devereaux, National Association of Social Workers, VT Chapter ● Rich Holschuh, VT Commission on Native American Affairs ● Caitlin Scott, Vermont Psychiatric Survivors ● Xusana Davis, Office of Racial Equity ● Marita Canedo, Migrant Justice ● Kenneth Martel, US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, Vermont
Staff	Arealles Ortiz, Tay Marigson, Ornella Matta-Figueroa, Kiah Morris	

Guests & Public	Sonali Samarasinghe

Agenda

1. **Convene the August 31, 2026, virtual 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) (10mins)

2. Review & Approve DRAFT Meeting Minutes from 8.3.26:

Zach Hughes makes a motion to approve 8.3.26 as presented.
Mary Gerisch seconds that motion.
Edits: "Personelle" to "Personnel"
Samantha Langevin abstains due to absence.
All were in favor.

3. Agenda Items:	- LAOB Strategic Planning Discussion - Break - FY27 Budget Vote - Executive Session: Co-Directors Compensation - Board & Committee Announcements - Public Comment
2. LAOB Strategic Planning Discussion:	Overviewed current draft of the LAOB Board Development and Organizational Strategic Plan:

	LAOB Board Dev & SP Overview 2026 - Google Slides Three key areas of concentration: -Infrastructure: Internal processes, tools, and plans such as board policies, community engagement plan, and guidelines for contracting experts. -Board Development: A clear and explicit framework for answering important questions about the governing body of the LAOB and the way it functions. -A Strategic Plan: A roadmap for our next 5 years focusing on Six Strategic Priorities: 1. Mission-Centered Governance and Independence 2. Community Power and Accountability 3. Equitable Capital, Grants, and Direct Support 4. Land and Housing Pathways 5. Policy, Data, and Systems Transformation 6. Organization and Financial Sustainability Short Term Adoption Sequence: - September 2026: Accept the plan for discussion and approve the 100-day short term agenda. - October 2026: Conduct a board retreat focused on mission, decision rights, committee design, and strategic priorities. - November 2026: Validate the plan with LAOB staff, appointing authorities, program partners, grantees, and compensated community participants. - December 2026: Alight the FY27/FY28 financial forecast, policy platform, and staff work plans with the strategic priorities. - January 2026: Adopt the final plan, annual governance calendars, performance dashboard, and first-year implementation budget. Board members will review in more detail the latest draft of the LAOB Board Development and Organizational Strategic Plan.

	Mark Hughes makes a motion that Hearth Tending committee will continue to work on current draft of the LAOB Board Development and Organizational Strategic Plan. Zach Hughes seconds that motion. All were in favor.
BREAK: 6:30-6:35pm	
3. FY27 Budget Vote:	Overviewed FY27 Budget DRAFT. Comment: Our FY27 Base Funding will cover our internal costs for all of the infrastructure and staff. It does not cover programming. Programming is being covered by carry forward monies. We will need to come up with sustainable program funding. Question in the Chat: Are there any areas that you anticipate costs reductions? Response: We don't anticipate cost reductions at the beginning of the fiscal year. There may be areas that are underspent such as board stipends and VHCB staff time. Question in the Chat: Could you share why the marketing line item is budgeted for $64k? Response: This line item entails a consultant who has been doing a lot of community engagement and building a strategic communications plan for LAOB. Comment in the chat: I am also curious about anticipated fundraising plans to address the program costs that are one-time funds. Response: The Finance Committee will be working on the FY28 strategy next week. We have been deepening our relationship with Department of Finance and Management (DFM) and our Budget Analyst, Codi. We have started to pull together different threads of strategy and then will be planning how we communicate to the state the importance of our programs.

	Question in the chat: Can the board size ever be more than 12? Or is there a limit set by statute? Response: Our limit is set by statute, the 12 appointing authorities that are named. We could change that number through a legislative amendment. Zach Hughes makes a motion to approve FY27 for $1,680,529. Samantha Langevin seconds the motion. All were in favor.
4. Executive Session: Co-Directors Compensation	Susan Aranoff makes a motion to move into executive session to discuss a personnel matter and bring Jean into the discussion for the first 5 minutes for a separate personnel matter. Zach Hughes seconds that motion. All were in favor. Samantha Langevin makes a motion to exit executive session at 7:39PM. Zach Hughes seconds that motion. All were in favor. Board members voted in favor of supporting the cost-of-living increase plus $1,500 bonus for our co-directors. Kirsten Murphy will let Francis at VHCB know of this approval. Board members voted to seek board members or alternates who are interested in attending the Race Forward Conference in the place of Sonali who has resigned from the board as of this meeting.
5. Board & Committee Announcements:	Zach Hughes makes a motion to convene an Ad-Hoc Securities Committee to meet with Jessica from Purepoint International who is building a safety and security plan for the LAOB and consult security and safety issues from the board's perspective. Susan Aranoff seconds that motion. Samantha Langevin requests a simple charter for the full board so they can understand the work they are doing and the timeline. All were in favor.

6. Public Comment & Board Responses:	No members of the public were present.
7. CONSENT ITEMS	
8. ACTION ITEMS	• Schedule a Special Board Meeting in the coming weeks to revisit the LAOB Board Development and Organizational Strategic Plan Discussion.
Meeting Adjourned: 7:39 PM	