

**VMCTA EXECUTIVE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Friday, January 12, 2024
Via Zoom (an online meeting provider)**

MEMBERS PRESENT: President Diane Judd, Holland; 1st Vice President Diana Vachon, Shelburne; 2nd Vice President Sara Haskins, Auditor Susan Gage, Brandon; Secretary Karmen Bascom, Royalton; Two-Year Members at Large Therese Lounsbury, Wilmington and Sally Ober, Lincoln; One Year Members at Large Charles Degener, Woodstock; John Odum, Montpelier; Past President Tracy Borst, Thetford.

GUESTS: Legislative Committee Member Tim Arsenault, Vernon.

MEMBERS ABSENT: Treasurer Susan McNamara-Hill, Essex Junction City.

9:03 a.m. President Diane Judd called the meeting to order.

AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS

None

APPROVE MINUTES FROM THE DECEMBER 20, 2023, MEETING

With no changes requested, President Diane Judd called for a voice vote to approve minutes. Sally Ober motioned; Charles Degener seconded. Motion to approve carried.

NEW BUSINESS

a) LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Legislative Committee member Tim Arsenault, Vernon updated the board on bills H.541 and 629, both of which he and Legislative Committee Chair Carol Dawes testified at earlier this month. Bill H.541 is an act relating to State education property taxes along with flood related damage. Bill H.629; Charlie Degener asked for a brief synopsis. This is an act relating to change in property tax abatement and tax sales. Arsenault noted that H.629 should be watched carefully. Primary interest would focus on the State requiring deeper documentation of findings of fact, abutter notification and policy standardization for town abatement boards. Arsenault also noted tax sale exemptions might spell out in policy to be extended for 5 years as opposed to one year. John Odum expressed concerns about documenting profound mental or physical disease issues as an abatement board. Bobbi Brimblecombe wrote a detailed letter regarding the potential backlash of such detailed findings. A letter to the Ways and Means Committee noting our concerns might be a viable way to rebut the Legal Aid concerns which are behind much of the current bill. Our card room is secured, and Arsenault suggested we prepare questions for our respective legislatures.

b) EDUCATION COMMITTEE UPDATE

Education Committee Chair Sara Haskins, Morristown reported they have been actively drumming up new locations and speakers; satisfactory results so far with their e-mail poll put out to all VMCTA members. Still looking for venues with several rooms for spring trainings. They are moving ahead with educational seminars starting in February, the first Thursday of every month, at 4 p.m. and will make use of our Zoom account for live and recorded opportunities. Seminars would be a timely topic hosted by a professional to help our many new clerks and treasurers. Discussion ensued on a viewing period made available to everyone for a limited time. Therese Lounsbury noted basic educational needs were common in the surveys and incorporating these seminars into education points would be a clever idea. Education committee was asked to update the points system to better reflect the additional educational offerings and bring ideas back to the Executive Board.

c) CONFERENCE COMMITTEE UPDATE

Theme will be Elections: Red, White & Blue. Last season's sponsor and vendor options have been changed to sponsor forms, condensed for clarity, and now provide the Executive Board with more budgeting latitude. See Star Chapter page for new format. Charlie Degener said that the Executive Board has in the past taken on the role of conference oversight. Tracy Borst noted the vendor/sponsor piece overlapped into the conference and that we should focus on one. Karmen Bascom asked if we could make a motion to form the Conference committee now to free up the Executive Board for oversight of primary projects, recruiting more assorted board members for varying committees of the VMCTA. Sally Ober motioned, multiple seconds. Discussion ensued. Diane Judd called for a vote; the motion was carried unanimously. Ideas should be sent to Diane Judd.

OLD BUSINESS

a) SPONSORS

Sally Ober will be co-chair alongside Dawn Custer for the 2024 VMCTA Annual Conference's Sponsorship Committee. A new sponsorship tier was presented by Ober. It was noted by Tracy Borst that the Secretary of State's office would like to support and become more involved in sponsorship of the annual conference. Discussion regarding how to best offer comped packages, meals, and rooms with limited comp items. Checks for sponsorship payments would continue to be mailed to Susan MacNamara-Hill and the new Municipal or Individual Sponsor List would be mailed to her. Sally Ober motioned, and Charlie Degener seconded to accept the new tier. President Judd called for a vote; motion carried unanimously.

b) STAR CHAPTER COMMITTEE

Sara Haskins has been working with Sally Ober on Star Chapter procedures. Discussion volleying pros and cons about possibility of separating Star Chapter from VMCTA website due to earlier thoughts that perhaps Star Chapter would replace the existing website. Ultimately Tracy Borst summed it up best, with what was lightheartedly dubbed a "real Vermont word", stating that the two would continue to serve us best "glumped" together.

OTHER BUSINESS

Lucrecia Wonser is currently our website chair and responsible for updates John Odum and Sally Ober volunteered to assist/be trained in the workings of either site for the future.

NEXT MEETING DATE

February 14, 2024, at 9:00 a.m. using Zoom format.

ADJOURN

President Diane Judd adjourned the meeting at 10:50 a.m.

Attest: _____

Karmen M. Bascom
VMCTA Secretary