

VMCTA EXECUTIVE BOARD
MEETING MINUTES
Tuesday, August 7, 2018
Barre Town Offices

MEMBERS PRESENT: President Donna Kinville, South Burlington; Past President Lucrecia Wonsor, Killington; 1st Vice President Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Fairlee; Treasurer Audra Girouard, Concord; Secretary Dawn Custer, Hubbardton; Auditor Deanna Robitaille, Montgomery; and Members at Large – Deb Hawkins, Pawlet; Diane Judd, Holland; and Stacy Jewell, St. Johnsbury

OTHERS PRESENT: None

10:30 a.m. – President Donna Kinville called the meeting to order.

REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF June 25, 2018

Stacy Jewell made a motion seconded by Deb Hawkins to approve the minutes of the June 25, 2018 meeting with corrections. All members were in favor. The motion carried.

President Donna Kinville congratulated Dawn Custer and Julie Graeter, Colchester Town Clerk, for completing and graduating from the three-year New England Municipal Clerks Institute & Academy. She thanked them for representing Vermont well.

NEW BUSINESS

A. Possible PV&R (Property Valuation & Review) Collaboration

Deanna Robitaille informed Board members she was recently hired as a District Advisor replacing Doug Ley with PV&R. For now, she may continue as Town Clerk in addition to her new duties. She explained she has spent a lot of time over the past four weeks talking to PV&R about the homestead debacle. A recommendation was made to them to download the homestead declarations as they are received before being vetted because listers vet them as well. She noted she has been talking to them about a possible collaboration with the VMCTA. Georgette Wolf-Ludwig noted having Deanna as a member of the Board gives Board members new insight. Members agreed if Deanna could continue in her position as Town Clerk it would be beneficial to have her as a voice for PV&R on the Board. Georgette added she would like to see PV&R promoting education and it needs to be supported in other departments, the tax department should begin promoting education. Everyone agreed having open communication is a good thing. Lucrecia Wonsor noted she was impressed with the way the tax department took responsibility for the problems with the homestead downloads. Donna Kinville suggested it would have been a little better if clerks or treasurers were made aware of the problem ahead of time. Deanna explained most of the outstanding homesteads were due to a name mismatch. Allowing towns, the opportunity to review them will help to lighten their load. Lucrecia suggested letting clerks and treasurers know that Deanna is our liaison with PV&R. Donna stated VALA (Vermont Association of Listers & Assessors) reached out to VMCTA wanting to be included as part of our Annual Meeting. We, the organizations, are all fighting for the same education dollars. There is only so much in town budgets. Georgette suggested VLCT (Vermont League of Cities & Towns) might be able to do a listers/clerk training noting VLCT used to have town officers' training. It was noted the training is now geared to listers and select boards. Clerks have found listers are not as geared toward education. There has been an upsurge in grievances being appealed to the BCA (Board of Civil Authority). Stacy believed towns don't understand the importance of the grand list. Deanna suggested she reach out to PV&R to ask for a VMCTA/VALA, PV&R training. Georgette suggested the training begin with how the different offices integrate.

B. Education Committee

Donna explained Tracy Borst, Thetford Town Clerk; has her hands full with last minute changes to the Annual Meeting and speakers backing out or not being available. Georgette suggested introducing

VMCTA's Lobbyist Heather Shouldice. Donna reported Chris Pudlinski is presenting, plus there will be Elections, Vital Records and Principles of Banking. Georgette asked who would be speaking for the Legislative Committee now that Karen Richard, former Colchester Town Clerk and Legislative Committee Chair retired. Donna answered Carol Dawes, Barre City Clerk.

C. Lobbyist

Donna informed the Board it is time to renew the contract for our lobbyist if the Board so chooses. She informed the Board she didn't know what we could have done without our lobbyist this year. She was everywhere. She asked the clerks to pull back on some items so we would not be caught in partisan politics. The contract includes assisting the VMCTA with prioritizing legislation, assist in key legislation, monitor testimonies, monitor hearings, and arrange meetings with committee chairs. There has not been an increase in the contract price since 2014. This year a 3% increase is asked for, \$13,250 for a one-year contract. Lucrecia noted Heather is very useful and earned her money this past year. She is an ear for us when we can't make it to Montpelier. It is nice to have someone there, who knows the process, looking out for clerks. Lucrecia Wonsor made a motion seconded by Diane Judd in favor of Donna Kinville signing the one-year contract renewal with VMCTA Lobbyist Heather Shouldice. All members were in favor. The motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer Audra Girouard reported the warrant for \$401.23 consisted of two checks, desk nameplates and reimbursing Heidi Racht, Huntington Town Clerk, for expenses incurred. Lucrecia Wonsor made a motion seconded by Deb Hawkins in favor of approving and signing the \$401.23 warrant. All members were in favor. The motion carried. Audra reported the insurance premium has been paid. The only remaining item in question is the IIMC (International Institute for Municipal Clerks) yearly contribution which Lucrecia was researching. Lucrecia reported she sent an email to Carol Anderson, our former Region I Representative and has not had a response. Audra noted Sandra Pinsonault, Dorset Town Clerk and one of our new Region I IIMC Representatives said the check should be sent. The Board was holding its decision based on the fact the check was not sent last year. Lucrecia considered the lack of response to the email could be because of the change in Region I representation. It was suggested Sandy be called to find out what the money is for, and if it is to support the cost of the Region I Annual Meeting are the other state organizations contributing. It was agreed the money should be given if the other organizations are contributing as well. It was also suggested an invoice be sent to VMCTA for the contribution.

OLD BUSINESS

A. Scholarships

Donna explained she discussed with Sandy about how to proceed with the Annual Meeting scholarship, awarded for next year's attendance, to be presented to one of this year's attendees. It was suggested the drawing be at lunch on the second day of the Annual Meeting. Attendees should be reminded at the end of education sessions to sign up. A question was presented, is the scholarship transferrable within the winning town. It was agreed that would be a good idea. The door has been opened to extend scholarships to the IIMC conference which is more expensive. If there are too many requests the amount of money given can be capped. Georgette noted scholarship winners must be members of VMCTA. Deanna asked if VMCTA could have raffles at TOEC (Town Officers Education Conference) and VLCT's Town Fair. Stacy noted not many clerks attend Town Fair. Scholarship money not used by the end of our fiscal year will swept into a reserve account for future use.

B. Card Room at the Capital

Donna asked the Board if the brochure was completed. Lucrecia noted she had it as a .pdf file and would forward it. Donna explained there is an increase in next year's budget which includes the increase in the lobbyist fee and our day in the Card Room. We will have brochures, pins and more. It was discussed if the increase in the budget for use of the Card Room would be included in the Miscellaneous or Other line items.

C. Fees

Donna reported clerks' and treasurers' fees are now part of the three-year cycle. Our fees are being reviewed this coming year, 2019. The data needs to be compiled to get the fee figures needed. A possible new sub-committee to look at all fees, not just recording fees was discussed. Data is needed to justify the increase for each fee. Stacy noted towns can increase their dog fees. Postage and tags are clerk expenses. Donna asked if VMCTA was looking at increasing the cost of certified copies. Lucrecia suggested it is best to focus on land records but look at all fees, maybe present all fees for review and note we are only seeking to change land records.

D. Annual Meeting

Donna reminded Board members the Annual Meeting is at the Hampton Inn in Colchester. The vendors' tables will be around the outside of the room. The library will hold 40 and rooms can be moved around at no additional cost if attendance in a session varies. Stacy suggested the coffee mug be given out at the business meeting and the play dough at Friday's lunch. Everyone agreed.

OTHER BUSINESS

Donna noted the next meeting is the Annual Meeting. Karen Richard retired and her spot on the Board is currently vacant. She suggested waiting until the Nominating Committee replaces her and letting her finish out her term. Deanna asked when the financials needed to be audited. Audra suggested the audit be done through the end of August.

The next E-Board meeting will be set after the Annual Meeting.

Adjourn: Lucrecia Wonsor made a motion seconded by Stacy Jewell to adjourn at 12:17 p.m. All members voted in favor. The motion carried.

Attest: *Dawn Custer*
Dawn Custer
VMCTA Secretary