

**VMCTA EXECUTIVE BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES  
Wednesday, August 18, 2021  
Via Zoom (an online meeting provider)**

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** President Georgette Wolf-Ludwig, Fairlee; Past President Donna Kinville, South Burlington; 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President Tracy Borst, Thetford; 2<sup>nd</sup> Vice President Diane Judd, Holland; Treasurer Susan McNamara-Hill, Essex; Secretary Dawn Custer, Hubbardton; and Members at Large – Charles Degener, Woodstock; Deb Hawkins, Pawlet; Anita Sheldon, Manchester; and Diana Vachon, Shelburne

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Auditor Sue Gage, Brandon

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sandra Pinsonault, Dorset Town Clerk-Treasurer; Bobbi Brimblecombe, Marshfield Town Clerk-Treasurer; and Deanna Robitaille, Property Valuation & Review (PV&R)

9:36 a.m. – President Georgette Wolf-Ludwig called the meeting to order.

**AGENDA REVIEW AND MODIFICATIONS**

Georgette noted the agenda needed to be modified to include Deanna Robitaille discussing online land record concerns.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**A. Municipal Land Records**

Deanna Robitaille noted PVR District Advisor Barbara Schlesinger was helping some listers find land records that were scanned in to NEMRC online. In doing so, it was found there are social security numbers (SSN) still on documents. The documents included Property Transfer Tax Returns (PTTRs), Act 250 permits, Current Use documents and the like. In NEMRC, these files are scanned as PDFs and not TIFs as they are in COTTS and other land record systems. It is being questioned whether the SSNs should be redacted. Jill Remick, Director of PV&R would like to have the social security numbers redacted from all records in the Town Clerks' vaults. Chris Miele, Vice President of NEMRC was called and asked if NEMRC was working toward developing a redaction feature in the software and if there is anything PV&R can do to help. Historical documents have SSNs on them. Megan Wheaton-Book of Vermont State Archives & Records Administration, when asked, noted it is not illegal but suggested, as an Association safeguards may want to be provided. Megan noted towns can legally publish the SSN if it is part of a document for the town's public records. It is up to the individual to ask towns to remove the SSN from the public record. Towns can be encouraged to redact the SSN. Georgette wondered if the Association should send notification to the membership to let members know it is an issue of concern. Deanna asked if the Association would like to create a policy of sorts as to what should be made public. She noted anything PV&R does has to be processed through the legal team before release. Because of the CARES Act and funds available for digitizing records with a very short deadline, there was a rush to get information available online to secure funds for the towns.

Bobbi Brimblecombe joined the meeting at 10:30 a.m. and was asked for her input regarding the SSNs on public records. Bobbi explained it was handled in house in Marshfield. She and her assistances redacted the SSN themselves, only has far back as the records that are indexed online. Act 250 documents used to have the SSN as well as state liens, mortgages and more. She noted she has a hard time permanently redacting documents that are in the vault but can do it online with COTTS software without changing the actual document. She noted she did not know if other land records software had the ability to redact. In the software only the image is being redacted, not the actual document. It was noted everyone was concerned with the December deadline issued to be in compliance with the CARES funds being issued. It was suggested clerks should be told to look for certain features when reviewing document recording software.

There is increased concern because of the records being available online and the SSN still on the records in the vault. It was wondered if the Association should send an email to update its membership about what is happening or if PV&R should be involved even though they must go through lawyers. It was suggested clerks be shown how to redact the images in the software they have. It was suggested the information be released quietly. Georgette noted Bobbi would send an email to all clerks who have land records available online to let them know about SSNs on documents. Bobbi suggested lawyers be emailed as well. They should know there are documents out there with their clients' SSN on them and they should be asked for suggestions on ways to redact the document. It was agreed to begin with Bobbi contacting vendors, lawyers and the clerks who have land records available online.

### **REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF June 23, 2021 MEETING**

Charles Degener made a motion seconded by Deb Hawkins to approve the minutes of the July 14, 2021 meeting as presented. All members were in favor. The motion carried.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Susan McNamara-Hill reported when reviewing the accounts, she became aware the second half of the lobbying expense was not paid in March. That expense plus a reimbursement are on the warrant. Diana Vachon made a motion seconded by Diane Judd to approve the warrant in the amount of \$6,705.97. All members voted in favor. The motion carried. Susan continued reporting noting the financial summary is current as of today. More membership dues and conference registrations will be added. Last year the year to date budget ended at the end of August. She noted this year she wants to have the financial summary up to date as close to the Annual Meeting as possible. Georgette explained she, Diane Judd, Susan McNamara-Hill and Tracy Borst met to work on the FY22 proposed budget. Susan noted there are footnotes at the bottom of the proposed budget which denote the differences. Items such as the decision to put funds away for three years for a new website, scholarship funds being transferred to a reserve fund and an increase in spending for the International Institute of Municipal Clerks to send Georgette to two conferences because the two during her term of office were canceled are explained. There is a possibility all the IIMC funds will not be needed. The expense line for the Annual Meeting mailing was reduced \$250. Income received from vendors and sponsorship was discussed. Donna Kinville made a motion seconded by Anita Sheldon to approve the FY22 proposed budget as presented. All members voted in favor. The motion carried. It was decided the current budget final numbers to present at the Annual Meeting would end as of September 13, 2021.

### **NEW BUSINESS (cont.)**

#### **B. Membership Committee Description Update**

Diana Vachon reported there have been 121 responses to membership renewals. Twenty-seven payments have been received. Seven towns pledged as gold members and seven as silver. We are off to a good start and it has only been a couple of weeks. The list of members is updated on Google as the forms come in. The Membership Committee met to create talking points about the benefits of membership. She noted some benefits are, connecting with clerks from similar sized towns, educational development, updates on legislative changes, the listserv and the Association has a lobbyist. There is a top ten list of reasons to encourage membership. Associate members need to be recruited as well. It was suggested select board members could be encouraged to pay their clerk and treasurer's membership by informing them there is a lobbyist that works on their behalf. It is also good to note the educational opportunities may work to save the town from litigation. Many clerks and treasurers receive their best ideas at conferences and on the listserv. Raising the cost of membership was discussed and offering a reduced rate to spring trainings for members.

## OLD BUSINESS

### A. 85<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting and Educational Conference – September 23 – 24, 2021

#### a. Vendor Update – Sandra Pinsonault, Chair

Sandy reported she is waiting to hear from several vendors. There have not been many responses. She noted she will reach out again. Kofile, Mascoma Bank and the Vermont State agencies have not responded yet. Another email will be sent to vendors who have not responded. The Connecticut clerks' conference being held on the same dates makes it hard for some of the out of state vendors.

#### b. Sponsor Outreach

Georgette reported things are going well. The TD Bank contribution of \$3,200 was lost because the Association does not have liability insurance. They will donate \$1,000. There will be \$6,000 - \$7,000 in monies from sponsors.

#### c. Awards Committee Update

Tracy Borst reported applications have been received and the final choices need to be made. There is a total of seven applications, The Honorary members will be honored and plaques will be ordered. Everything is just about ready.

#### d. Annual Meeting Online Registration

Tracy Borst reported it is going well. It is a little confusing with all registrations going on at once. It would be nice if everything can be done online including payment. One issue was a person entered their email incorrectly and never received the email confirmation. So far there are 80 who have registered. Georgette thanked Tracy and those who helped her get everything working for online registrations so quickly.

#### e. Education Committee

Diane Judd noted people were wondering if there could be different dates for materials to be received for certification. A date of December 31<sup>st</sup> was suggested. The reason being some may have all but one or two points needed for certification by the July deadline and would still like the opportunity to receive certification during the calendar year. It was noted there needs to be more clarity between Spring Training and the VMCTA Annual Conference regarding certification. Some did not know there was a difference. The application for certification used to have the names of the required classes listed. The application for certification also does not ask for proof of membership in the VMCTA. It was suggested the application be changed and proof of payment for membership in the VMCTA be provided. The Board decided to not change the dates for required materials needed for certification. All certification materials will continue to be due at the end of July. Diane reported all speakers and classes for the Annual Conference are set.

#### f. Back-Up Plan for Annual Meeting-Education Classes

Georgette reported Lake Morey Inn has sanitizing stations and will help with social distancing. Clerks and treasurers may wear masks if they choose to. There is currently no back up plan in place if the conference is shut down. She suggested Zoom classes as a possibility if the conference is unable to take place. There are thoughts about recording course offerings but the question of certification comes in to play. Is there a way to verify everyone watched? It was suggested mandatory courses be made available via Zoom even if the conference is held. Discussion followed about the pros and cons of making a live event available via Zoom. The guest speakers may not allow themselves to be recorded. Their presentations are their intellectual property which they may not want to have recorded. It was decided to move forward with the conference as intended.

#### g. Banquet Invitees, Conference Gift, Lake Morey Inn Visit

Georgette informed Board members, Governor Jim Douglas cannot attend the conference. He is

the speaker at another event at the same time. Deputy Secretary of State Chris Winters will attend. The remaining members of the Secretary of State's office, John Cushing, former Milton Town Clerk-Treasurer, Governor Phil Scott, and Lieutenant Governor Molly Gray have not replied to the invitation.

The conference pin will be handed out at the registration desk with the packet. Auction International is providing the Annual Meeting gift. Sandy Pinsonault is helping with the banquet gift. Sandy explained the colors for an 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary are navy and wine. The banquet gifts will be burgundy or cobalt. The Board and volunteers will string and bag the gift the night preceding the banquet.

August 26, 2021 at 11:30 a.m. is the Lake Morey Inn walk through. Rooms for conference sessions, breaks and dinner will be reviewed and various items finalized.

**h. Packets for Registration Table and Membership Tags**

The packets will contain the conference agenda, rooms, a Lake Morey Inn map, list of attendees, workshop descriptions, next year's proposed budget, last year's Annual Meeting minutes and this year's Annual Meeting agenda. Anita Sheldon and various volunteers will assemble the packets. Donna Kinville will work on the membership tags.

**OTHER**

Scholarships received for the conference were discussed.

The next E-Board meeting was set for September 8, 2021; 2:30 p.m. via Zoom.

**Adjourn: President Georgette Wolf-Ludwig adjourned the meeting at 11:53 a.m.**

Attest: \_\_\_\_\_  
Dawn Custer  
*VMCTA Secretary*