



Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, March 16th, 2021 | 8:00 a.m. | Via Zoom:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82083109940?pwd=WcTtTmJhV2t3MG5kdFhHWfZ0NnR1Zz09>

Agenda

- Call to Order John Casella II, President
- Approval of Minutes from February 16th, 2021 John Casella II, President
(see attached minutes, [pages 2-4](#))
- Committee Reports
 - Real Estate (see attached minutes, [page 5](#)) Nicole Kesselring, Chair
 - Marketing (see attached minutes, [pages 6-7](#)) Steve Costello, Co-Chair
 - Finance (see attached materials, [pages 8-9](#)) MaryAnn Goulette, Co-Chair
 - Business Development (see attached minutes, [pages 10-11](#)) Karen Garrow, Chair
 - Events (see attached minutes, [pages 12-14](#)) John Russell III, Chair
 - Membership (see attached minutes, [pages 15-17](#)) Eric Mallette, Chair
 - Policy (see attached minutes, [pages 18-19](#)) Laurie Mecier-Brochu, Chair
 - Drew Smith, Chair
- Executive Director's Report Lyle Jepson
 - Castleton University Update
 - Heartland Development Update
 - Guest: Mari McClure, President & CEO, Green Mountain Power
- Old Business
- New Business
- Adjournment

Upcoming Meetings:

Marketing Committee – Thursday, April 1st, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Real Estate Committee – Wednesday, April 7th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Events Committee – Thursday, April 8th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Membership Committee – Friday, April 9th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Policy Committee – Friday, April 9th, 12:00 p.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Finance Committee – Tuesday, April 13th, 8:15 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.

Business Development Committee – Wednesday, April 14th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Board of Directors – Tuesday, April 20th, 8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.



**Board of Directors Meeting
Minutes – February 16, 2021 via Zoom**

Members Present: John Casella II, Greg McClallen, Steve Costello, John Russell III, Shana Louiselle, Mary Cohen, Amy Laramie, Drew Smith, Ed Bove, Wayne Wilmans, Mark Werle, Nicole Kesselring, Mary Ann Goulette, Karen Garrow

Guests: Congressman Peter Welch, Rep. Jim Harrison, Rep. Art Peterson, Rep. Terry Norris, Rep. Mary Howard, Rep. Larry Cupoli, Pat Bradley, Gordon Dritschilo, Fauna Hurley

Staff: Lyle Jepson, Penny Inglee, Brooke Rubright, Kim Rupe, Tyler Richardson

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 8:02 am.

Approval of minutes: A motion was made by Steve Costello and seconded by Karen Garrow to approve the minutes of the January 19, 2021 Board of Director's meeting.

Executive Director's Report – Lyle Jepson

Mr. Jepson introduced the Legislators in attendance and welcomed Congressman Welch.

Congressman Peter Welch

- January was very busy in Washington, DC.
- COVID-19 vaccine continues to be distributed. Vermont is doing better at distribution than other states.
- Defense production act continues to be used to produce vaccine quickly.
- COVID-19 relief package is being worked on to include:
 - \$1,400 checks for adults and smaller for children.
 - Vermont should receive about \$960M. One-third of which would go to the towns.
 - There could be specific relief for non-profit venues such as Paramount Theatre.
 - Funds need to be used for COVID-19 related problems.
- Minimum wage increase to \$15 per hour is being discussed with a five year phase in.
- An infrastructure bill is being worked out to help with school buildings, water, sewer, roads and bridges.
- The only role the Federal Government would have in the Vermont State Colleges merger would be in helping with Federal Financial Aid. He is supportive and believes in the value of the state colleges.

Committee Reports

Please review the committee minutes included in the packet for full details.

Business Development: CEDRR has been chosen for the next CORI cohort. The official start is in May. More information to follow.

Real Estate:

- Roof repairs at the Quality Lane building have been completed.
- There is 9,200 square feet available at the building for lease.
- The lease agreement has been completed with Bodycote.

Marketing:

- Automated chat system is live.
- Outreach to HR professionals to market their open positions is taking place. CEDRR Jobs Board has more than 75 career positions advertised at this time.
- Fundraising is continuing. The goal is \$125,000, with about \$93,000 committed.
- Lift will present Phase 4 planning for post COVID-19 at the next meeting.

Finance:

- Financials are now fully consolidated.
- The committee has been reviewing a loan application for a childcare center. The other funders involved include VEDA and Vermont Community Loan Fund.

Policy:

- Policy Statement was completed in January.
- Legislative Breakfast was held in February, with a focus on the possible consolidation of the Vermont State College system.
- Mayoral Forum will be recorded on Wednesday, February 17th. The forum will be aired on PEGTV. It will be shared through a special newsletter, social media and on the PEGTV and CEDRR web sites.

Events:

- CEDRR Trivia will begin on March 24th.
 - Ten teams of five players will compete for restaurant gift certificates.
 - Safe fun way to get people together while helping the restaurant industry.
 - Sponsors: Farrell Distributing and an anonymous donor.
- Robo Rhino/CEDRR Rally Rutland Challenge
 - Kick off in April.
 - High visibility people will ask for donations to have them do a “minute to win it” type challenge. That person will then challenge others.
 - Revenue will be split between Regional Marketing and Robo Rhino Team.
- Post COVID Celebration is in the works for the future when we can be mask free.

Membership:

- Two new members since the last meeting.
 - Digital Surgeons
 - Accord Mediation
- Focus is on retention.
- Penny Inglee is calling all members.
- CEDRR is not dropping any members; asking for payment when they can.


Old/New Business

There was no old or new business to come before the Board of Directors.

Adjournment

The meeting was adjourned at 8:57am.

Respectfully submitted,



Penny J. Inglee

Member Services | Events | Office Manager

Real Estate Committee Meeting Minutes | Wednesday, March 3rd, 2021 | Via Zoom

Present: Nicole Kesselring, Mark Werle, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson

The meeting was called to order at 8:00 a.m.

Approval of the minutes was tabled due to lack of a quorum.

112 Quality Lane Leases

Ann Clark Cookie Cutters is interested in leasing around 3,000 square feet of the building, occupying a portion of what is now The MINT. The MINT is proposing expanding into the remaining space (which would be 14,000 square feet total for them). The idea would be to build a wall in the space Ann Clark would move into, to create a shared space setup so The MINT could access the loading docks and second bathroom. A map of the proposed layout has been produced. Ann Clark would move into where the loading docks are. The MINT would sublease square footage to Two Bad Cats in an arrangement they would oversee in their space. For Ann Clark, their lease would be similar to our lease with Bodycote – \$4.32 per square foot NNN for three years, with a CPI-based increase each year, and a one-year notice in April 2023 if there is an intent to vacate at the end of the lease. The MINT board met yesterday afternoon and they’re proposing a gradually increasing rate starting at \$2.25 in 2021, \$2.50 in 2022, and \$3.00 in 2023. This presents a loss to us. It’s important to note there is another interested party in taking the vacant space. Our goal continues to be to get The MINT to market-rate while continuing to support their growth – they still need support, and they’re not ready for market-rate rent yet, and we feel it’s a part of our mission to continue to support them. All tenants are interested in starting on April 1st, so time is of the essence for the committee’s consideration. The committee discussed various rate and term scenarios for The MINT and, due to a lack of quorum, staff agreed to circulate the content of the discussion to the rest of the group with a proposal synthesized from this content for a final vote on lease terms over email.

Adjournment at 8:44 a.m.

At 11:16 a.m., an email was sent to the full committee and a consensus was reached to recommend review and approval by the Finance Committee at their meeting on Tuesday, March 9th, the following leasing arrangement:

- Ann Clark: Three-year lease beginning on April 1st similar to our lease with Bodycote -- \$4.32 per square foot NNN, with a CPI-based increase each year, and a one-year notice in April 2023 if there is an intent to vacate at the end of the lease.
- The MINT: Three-year lease beginning on April 1st at \$2.50 for the remainder of 2021, \$3.00 in 2022, and \$4.00 in 2023 NNN, with the same one-year notice with intent to vacate in April 2023.

Our next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 7th, 8:00 a.m.



Marketing Committee Meeting Minutes Thursday, February 4, 2021 | Via Zoom

Present: Bill Ackerman, Chris Bowcutt, Steve Costello, Brennan Duffy, Abby Endres, Mary Ann Goulette, Lyle Jepson, Polly Mikula, Bill Moore, Traci Moore, Kim Peters, Kelley Robinson, Brooke Rubright, Kim Rupe, Jordan Spear, Michael Talbott

The meeting was called to order at 12:02 p.m.

Phase 4 Plans

Lyle introduced Chris Bowcutt and Abby Endres of LIFT. Chris provided the committee a recap of the marketing efforts from the last several phases. Following this recap, Abby provided LIFT's recommendations for a Phase 4 marketing campaign in a three-step action plan; attract job seekers, safely reopen, and restore the community through events and community celebration, and welcome out-of-staters back to Vermont and year-round relocation. Abby and Chris will distribute the outlined action plans and strategic plans with the group following the meeting.

Lead Stats/Update

Kim provided an update on the current leads from November 2020 – February 25, 2021 which is included in the committee packet. This will be provided each month going forward to provide an overview of where we are at with our data. Steve also requested that the data include the size of each family so we can see a full representation of individuals moving to the area. A Google Form has been developed for concierge volunteers to fill out as they have updates on their leads to better track this data. Kim is also working on updating any prior data to provide a full data representation of overall program success.

Automation Update

LIFT continues to send out email to all leads on a weekly basis. Concierge volunteers continue to assist in writing blog content which is also helping generate content for these emails. Chatbot shift are going well and Kim thanked Bill Ackerman for his continued efforts on this.

New Content

Our photography/videography intern, Maxx, has been out taking new photographs throughout the region of people doing things they love in the outdoors so new content is starting to roll in as well. These images will be used on social and our Real Rutland website.

Diversity & Inclusion

Lyle shared with the committee that he is currently working to get the CEDRR board and staff to attend a Diversity & Inclusion training in the near future. A draft diversity statement was included in the agenda to begin this conversation to continue our work in helping make this a welcoming community. Lyle plans to have a finalized statement also included action steps taken by CEDRR of what we are doing to address these challenges.

Other

Lyle shared that funding has been going well and Town Meeting was a success in approving additional funding. Lyle feels we are in a really good place financial and shared his thanks to Kelley Robinson for Casella's recent contribution. Steve thanked CEDRR staff for their hard work in placing this marketing initiative in a great place.

Adjournment at 12:38 p.m.



Tentative Agenda
Thursday, April 1, 2021 | Via Zoom

Review of LIFT Plan

Lead Stats/Update

Funding

Next steps

Finance Committee Meeting Minutes | Tuesday, March 9th, 2021 | Via Zoom

Present: Karen Garrow, Russ Marsan, Scott Dikeman, Mark Foley, Jr., Sarah Furman, Rolf Hirschmann, Chris Keyser, Norm Ladabouche, Deb Quirk, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson

The meeting was called to order at 8:17 a.m.

Motion: Rolf moved to accept the minutes from February 9th, 2021. The motion was seconded by Deb and passed unanimously.

REDC Internal Financials

The committee reviewed the financial reports including the CEDRR P&L, balance sheet, and regional marketing activity. Tyler addressed the difference in Bodycote rent compared to last year, indicating it was based on when the accountants booked the invoice in anticipation of an auditor adjustment – all rent is accounted for. We have \$117,000 in commitments for regional marketing. We are behind \$59,000 in memberships compared to pre-COVID, and we anticipate the pandemic will continue to stress membership revenue at 40%. We are accommodating members and have an interest in keeping them on as members, and ideas were discussed on ways to further accommodate.

Revolving Loan Fund

All payments are current and we have a lot of money to lend. The application for Misty Acre Childcare is put on hold, as the appraisal came in significantly under the project budget. The applicant is working with Let's Grow Kids to identify funding to bridge the gap, and discussions are ongoing with the lenders involved.

112 Quality Lane / MINT Update

Ann Clark Cookie Cutters is interested in leasing around 3,000 square feet of the building, occupying a portion of what is now The MINT. The MINT is proposing expanding into the remaining space, which includes the vacant space (which would be 14,000 square feet total for them). The idea would be to build a wall in the space Ann Clark would move into, to create a shared space setup so The MINT could access the loading docks and second bathroom. A map of the proposed layout has been produced. Ann Clark would move into where the loading docks are. The MINT would sublease square footage to Two Bad Cats in an arrangement they would oversee in their space. For Ann Clark, their lease would be similar to our lease with Bodycote – \$4.32 per square foot NNN for three years. The MINT board met yesterday afternoon and they're proposing a gradually increasing rate starting at \$2.25 in 2021, \$2.50 in 2022, and \$3.00 in 2023. This presents a loss to us. It's important to note there is another interested party in taking the vacant space. Our goal continues to be to get The MINT to market-rate while continuing to support their growth – they still need support, and they're not ready for market-rate rent yet, and we feel it's a part of our mission to continue to support them. All tenants are interested in starting on April 1st, so time is of the essence for the committee's consideration. The CEDRR Real Estate Committee met and recommended \$2.50 in 2021, \$3.00 in 2022, and \$4.00 in 2023. The committee discussed lowering 2023 to \$3.50.

Motion: It was moved by Mark to approve the following leasing arrangement:

- Ann Clark: Three-year lease beginning on April 1st similar to our lease with Bodycote -- \$4.32 per square foot NNN, with a CPI-based increase each year, and a one-year notice in April 2023 if there is an intent to vacate at the end of the lease.
- The MINT: Three-year lease beginning on April 1st at \$2.50 for the remainder of 2021, \$3.00 in 2022, and \$3.50 in 2023 NNN, with the same one-year notice with intent to vacate in April 2023.



The motion was seconded by Chris and passed unanimously.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training

Lyle is engaging with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainer on a proposal for training for the CEDRR board and committees. If we truly support growing the diversity in our community, we need to model what we expect of our community and develop strategies to support this. This would include ways to add diversity to the CEDRR board and committee membership. We may propose for this to come out of the GMP fund, as this supports workforce growth. The committee suggested identifying matching funding opportunities and partnering with larger member businesses to reduce the cost burden. Lyle will bring more information back to the committee for review.

Old Business

None.

New Business

Chris reported he is the Treasurer of the Vermont Farmers Food Center, and they're putting together a business plan to upgrade their facilities and capabilities. CEDRR, the RRA, and the DRP have been meeting with the VFFC to assist them, working to potentially repurpose the Lynda Lee building or another unused site in cooperation with this work.

Lyle encouraged the committee to attend a presentation by Heartland Development on Thursday at 6:30 p.m. to hear an update on the ongoing work of repurposing the CSJ campus.

The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, April 13th, at 8:15am.

Adjournment at 8:55 a.m.



Business Development Committee Meeting Minutes | Wednesday, March 10, 2021 | Via Zoom

Present: Mike Doenges, Rick Gile, Jerry Hansen, Bernie Krasnoff, Russ Marsan, Greg McClallen, Mark Werle, Ed Bove, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson

The meeting was called to order at 8:01 a.m.

Russ moved to accept the minutes from Wednesday, February 10th, 2021. The motion was seconded by Mark and passed unanimously.

CORI Update

We have finalized and signed the contract with CORI, and the core of the work will begin in May. They will be forwarding us additional information on the process. The committee discussed focusing on particular sectors of the digital economy, particularly healthcare as that is a growing field. As we go through the process with CORI, it will become self-evident which sectors to pursue. We had a meeting with EDA and they spoke highly of CORI's work.

RRPC Asset Mapping

Ed discussed the RRPC's work with regional asset mapping, a project funded through a municipal planning grant. The goal is to create an online interactive map that guides people to area assets that have cultural or recreational significance. This work can be cooperative with the CORI process asset mapping as well as the Regional Marketing Initiative, as the ongoing RMI project is collecting these assets, as well. LIFT is working on software that will allow communities to input local assets, and this engagement will create buy-in throughout the towns. The RRPC has representatives from each town serving on their board and this is helping to inform the asset mapping, as well. The RRPC and CEDRR through the regional CEDS project are creating a SWOT analysis that has elements of asset mapping. All of these projects working cooperatively will support one another.

MINT Update

The MINT will be expanding into additional space at 112 Quality Lane starting in April, effectively doubling its footprint to 14,000 square feet. This has been vetted thoroughly through the MINT board, MINT Ops, and various CEDRR committees. We will continue to subsidize a portion of their rent, but the three-year lease agreement will include annual increases in rent to get them closer to market rate. The additional square footage will allow them to expand their offerings, and with the added two staff positions fundraising and membership engagement will increase. Membership has remained steady throughout this previous year. The expansion is the next logical step for the growth of the MINT.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training

Lyle is engaging with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainer on a proposal for training for the CEDRR board and committees. If we truly support growing the diversity in our community, we need to model what we expect of our community and develop strategies to support this. This would include ways to add diversity to the CEDRR board and committee membership and support the business community looking to engage in this topic. The committee discussed the importance of being a leader in this effort. Lyle will bring more information back to the committee for review.



Old Business

None.

New Business

We have been meeting with EDA and the Northern Borders Regional Commission representative to learn more about grant funding opportunities for transformative area projects.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, April 14th, at 8:00am.

Adjournment at 9:04 a.m.

Tentative agenda for April 14th:

CORI update – if needed

Heartland Development – update

Incubator discussion - 112 Quality Lane

Other



Events Committee Minutes

March 11, 2021

Attending: Jessica Anderson, Mary Ann Goulette, Sarah Furman, Lyle Jepson, Russ Marsan, Steve Costello, Eric Mallette

Call to order

The meeting was called to order at 8:03 am.

Community Celebration/Whoopie Pie Guinness Book World Record

- Possibly Indigenous Peoples Day Weekend in October (Columbus Day) 2021.
- Possibly head up by Paramount Theatre and CEDRR.
- Whoopie Pie Guinness Book of World Records
 - Maine and Pennsylvania hold Whoopie Pie festivals.
 - Pennsylvania claims the biggest Whoopie Pie at 1,100 pounds, but not certified by Guinness Book of World Records.
 - Need to find someone that has oven big enough. Possibly Westminster Crackers.
 - Cost involved in getting Guinness here to certify.
- Have several groups/organizations host events throughout the weekend.
 - Wonderfeet Kids Museum, Come Alive Outside, Downtown Rutland Partnership etc. Each running their own event/fundraiser under the umbrella of the event/festival, headed up by organizer(s).
 - 5K Race to include eating a whoopie pie at the halfway mark.
 - RRM Green Street Challenge.
 - Tie in CEDRR Annual Meeting/Awards.
- Newlywed game at Paramount Theatre to benefit food shelves on Saturday night.
- Include celebration of front-line workers.

- Regional Partners to bring on board/interested include: Community Health, Rutland Regional Medical Center, Cape Air, Killington Resort, Casella Waste Systems.
- Next steps
 - Steve, Eric, Lyle and Penny will meet next week and report back to the committee at the next meeting.

Rally Rutland Challenge

- Forward movement has been slow due to timing.
- Possibly start mid-April instead of beginning of April.
- Brooke working on “sell” sheet.
- Action Item
 - Penny will contact Karen about having the Robo Rhinos start to work on the instructional video.

CEDRR Trivia Challenge

- Restaurants
 - Committed: Roots
 - Possible Taso’s. Jay is interested.
 - Recruitment help needed.
 - Lyle: Little Harry’s
 - Russ: Rutland Country Club
 - Sarah: Hop N Moose
 - Penny: The Palms
- Teams
 - Idea: Allow people to buy a ticket to watch.
 - Committed: Carpenter & Costin, Team Russ, Heritage Family Credit Union.
 - Probable Teams: Rotary Club of Rutland (Will Gormley), Stafford Technical Center, Frank Webb Home
 - Recruitment help needed.
 - Penny: Drew at GE, Rutland Regional Medical Center
 - Lyle: Rutland Young Professionals, Casella Construction, Castleton University, Ann Clark
 - Russ: VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region

Puzzle

- Pricing/sizing information was shared.
 - Order at the 500 or 1,000 bulk pricing mark.
 - 500 piece puzzle.
- Use several images of Rutland County or Peter Huntoon watercolor images on one puzzle instead of each town having an individual puzzle.
- Allow some organizations/companies to special order puzzles.
- Sell through towns and retailers.
- Action items
 - Eric will speak with Peter Huntoon to see if he is interested and the cost involved.

Agenda – April 8, 2021

1. Rally Rutland Challenge
2. Community Celebration/Whoopie Pie World Record
3. Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Education
4. Trivia Progress
5. Other



Membership Committee Minutes March 12, 2021

Attending: Laurie Mecier-Brochu, Amy Laramie, Lyle Jepson, Penny Inglee

Call to order

The meeting was call to order at 8am.

Membership Outreach

- February member contacts were shared.
- Businesses contacted are grateful that we are touching base with them and giving them an outlet to talk about their challenges during the pandemic.

Internship Grant

- CEDRR is submitting a grant that would help connect paid interns with local businesses.
- Grant is a \$50,000 grant that would require a matching \$50,000.
- The goal would be to encourage retention of these interns in Rutland County.
- CEDRR is considering bringing the current part time position to full time under this grant. The position would include managing the intern program and CEDRR membership and product sales.

Membership Renewals

- CEDRR sent out a letter to members who have not been able to pay. The letter addressed:
 - What CEDRR is continuing to do for businesses and the community.
 - CEDRR understands what they are up against during the pandemic.
- Another letter will go out in late March or early April encouraging payment plans and asking how we can help.
- **Action item:** Penny will send a copy of this letter to the committee.

Membership Drive

- Discussion should start soon regarding a strategy for a membership drive when we are able to post COVID.
- Membership revenue is down for the year to date.
- Revenue overall is expected to be down by 40% by the end of the fiscal year.

Diversity Equity & Inclusion Education

- CEDRR is planning on a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion education.
- CEDRR has a proposal from Nikki Fuller.
- Suggestion to reach out to Kyle Dodson from Burlington who has been working Burlington Police Department on their policies. He works for the Boys & Girls Club/YMCA.
- CEDRR will be reaching out to Vermont Community Foundation for funding of this training/education.
- Nikki fuller, proposal, \$30,000 for 9 month strategy. Give us revised plan. \$5000 plan.

New Members

- Accord Mediation
- After Hours Cleaning Service, Inc.

Upcoming Events Update

- Rally Rutland
 - Joint project with Robo Rhino robotics team.
 - Area “celebrities” will be asked to do a Minute To Win It type challenge.
 - They would encourage their friends/families/co-workers to make a donation, once donations reach \$500, they will do the challenge on video, then challenge someone else to participate.
 - Funds raised will benefit Regional Marketing Initiative and Robo Rhino robotics team.
- CEDRR Trivia Challenge
 - Currently have seven of the ten teams.
 - Great opportunity to get people together safely for some fun.
 - Teams will win restaurant gift certificates.

Other

Regional Marketing

- Fundraising is going well.
- Planning is underway for phase 4 where we will go back to inviting people to come visit, when it’s safe to do so.
- Focus is on careers that are available here.

Post COVID Celebration

- CEDRR and Paramount are in discussions regarding a post COVID Celebration on Indigenous Peoples (Columbus) Day weekend.
- Possibly including a Whoopie Pie festival and world record Whoopie Pie.
- Include other organizations holding events throughout the weekend.

Puzzle Project

- Puzzle will use a collage of several Rutland County towns.
- Talking to Peter Huntoon about possibly using his prints. There would be a royalty cost to this.
- Option of individuals to do a personalized puzzle at the bulk rate.
- Sell through towns and retailers.

Killington Pico Area Association

- There are currently three part time staff members.
- Welcome Center is open seven days per week.
- Evaluating what events can happen to raise funds.

Agenda – April 9, 2021

- Membership Outreach/Retention
- Membership Drive
- New Members
- Events Update
 - Rally Rutland
 - CEDRR Trivia Challenge
 - Post COVID Community Celebration
- Other



Policy Committee Meeting Minutes | Friday, March 12th, 2021 | Via Zoom

Present: Drew Smith, Ray Ault, Brennan Duffy, Caprice Hover, Wayne Wilmans, Ashley Bride, Patti Komline, Lyle Jepson, Tyler Richardson

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m. The minutes were tabled due to lack of a quorum.

Patti Komline, Downs Rachlin Martin

Patti from DRM joined us to give us an overview of where we're at in the legislature as we head into cross-over. Patti gave an overview of legislation pertinent to our organization and the business community. Project-based TIFs legislation is moving forward with an increase to 15 project and \$5 million caps. Patti reviewed the economic development bill, which has money for tech-based businesses, tourism, downtown tax credits, and other items. The legislature is moving forward passing an expedited budget which includes money for gap funding for businesses who haven't received relief as well as money for brownfields cleanup, but this process has been snagged by considerations around the federal stimulus money we're expecting. There is a lot of money coming in from the federal government for a wide variety of priorities and, although the deadline to spend this money is pushed out to 2024, there is still a scramble to figure out the spending around this and could result in a session in the Fall. The committee discussed legislation around higher education spending and the VSC reorganization, as well as money for housing. The committee discussed at length the issue for businesses of the increase in UI costs as the UI trust fund gets depleted and the costs get shifted to the businesses to repay the fund, which will result in more than double the employer costs of UI for each employee. This will put a tremendous strain on nearly every business. It has been suggested to freeze the current UI rates for a year and increase next year to less dramatic levels, but the legislative committee overseeing this bill disagrees with this approach. This will also affect a business's ability to compete for employees when it pays more to remain unemployed. To add to these frustrations, the legislative committee has circumvented the proper process and disallowed testimony on this topic. It is hard to gain traction on this topic with the legislature over Zoom. DRM and other organizations, including the RDCs, will be meeting to strategize an approach for outreach. We will wait to hear from Fred at the RDCs before drafting a letter and doing outreach of our own – multiple organizations need to write letters to every Senator to affect this legislation, which will be decided upon next Friday. Going forward, Tyler will distribute DRM's weekly reports to the committee.

Castleton University / Vermont State College System Update

We've asked Cheryl Hooker and Josh Terenzini to carry questions forward to the Education Committee and the VSC Chancellor to address issues of accountability in the restructuring of the system. We will continue to do what we can to ensure Castleton University's continued success is not affected by these changes.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Training

Lyle is engaging with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainer on a proposal for training for the CEDRR board and committees. If we truly support growing the diversity in our community, we need to model what we expect of our community and develop strategies to support this. This would include ways to add diversity to the CEDRR board and committee membership and support the business community looking to engage in this topic. The committee discussed the importance of being a leader in this effort. We will want to align our strategies with other organizations. Lyle will bring more information back to the committee for review.

Old Business

None.

**New Business**

Ashley Bride, the new Executive Director of the United Way, will be a part of this committee in Caprice's absence.

The next meeting will be Friday, April 19th, 2021 at 12:00 p.m.

Adjournment at 12:53 p.m.

Tentative agenda for April 19th:

UI letter update

CU / VSC update

Federal spending update

Other