



# Winooski Valley Park District

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## **Minutes for July 21, 2020 Board of Trustees Meeting for Winooski Valley Park District**

The meeting began at 4:36PM. Meeting was held via conference video call (Zoom) due to the current situation regarding the coronavirus, COVID-19. WVPD offices are closed until further notice.

**Present via conference call:** Sonja Schuyler (Jericho), Susan Gilfillan (Colchester), David Crawford (South Burlington), Aaron Keech (Burlington), Erin Dupuis (Winooski), Nick Warner (WVPD Executive Director), Lauren Chicote (WVPD Programs Director). **Guests:** Fred Wiseman, Brian Pine.

**Absent:** John Nittler (Williston), "To be Named" Essex Trustee.

**Public Comment Period:** No public was present at the time.

**Agenda Changes:** No changes were made to the agenda.

**Review and Approve minutes from June 16, 2020 board meeting:** Minutes from the June meeting were approved and accepted unanimously with the correction of several minor typos.

**Financial Reports for WVPD/Ethan Allen Homestead Museum:** WVPD presented their preliminary FY20 year-end budget summary. Fiscal Year 2020 ended June 30, 2020, and WVPD ended with a deficit of -\$16,550.37. This deficit is mainly due to WVPD not receiving the expected budgeted income due to several factors: not operating the S.O.L.E. Camp program for summer 2020, not receiving the full budgeted allocation amount from the City of Winooski, and forgiving the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum (EAHM) rent for 2019 (due in 2020 per MOU) and the cancellation of shelter rentals for the 2020 season due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This amount does include the net income from WVPD's contracting services with the City of South Burlington, Town of Williston, and City of Winooski, along with the income of the 8% administrative fee WVPD receives from being the fiscal agent for Burlington Wildway. WVPD overspent budgeted expenses by \$10,406.24, mainly due to the increased cost of health insurance for adding Remy Crettol (not considered when budget was originally created), increased fuel cost/usage, and unexpected plumbing upgrades in the Ethan Allen Homestead (EAH) Education Center. WVPD will be working to close out the FY20 budget over the next month and final numbers could change as expenses move from the operating budget to capital expenses or grant funds. Susan made a motion to accepted the WVPD financial report, seconded by Erin; the report was accepted unanimously.

The Treasurers report from the EAHM was presented to the board for review. This is a new format of reviewing the EAHM financials as the Museum's Treasurer is now compiling reports

instead of the bookkeeper due to COVID-19. Several questions were asked about the line items presented and WVPD will follow up with the Museum's Treasurer for clarity.

### **Discussion with Fred Wiseman on Alnôbaiwi at EAHM and Cultural Competency Training**

**Opportunity:** Fred Wiseman, a leader of the Alnôbaiwi Abenaki, shared information on a Cultural Competency training he is offering. The goal of the training is to inform and increase understanding of Vermont's implicit bias concerning its indigenous population, so there is no question as to the legitimacy of the Abenaki in Vermont. The training is originally designed as a weekend long, in-person course, but due to the current situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic and constraints of people's time/availability, Fred is seeking input on how best to structure/design the training that would meet the needs of the board. He is currently working with other groups in Burlington to design and offer the training. The board discussed with Fred the importance and significance of the training, and that a critical part of the training is the discussion/questions and answer aspect, along with other resources and reading materials for participants to review and explore on their own that would help support the training in the shortened format. Fred will write up a proposal with an outline of the format for the board to review to decide on when best to schedule the training. WVPD staff and EAHM board and staff will also be participating in the training.

The Alnôbaiwi and Vermont Indigenous Heritage Center (VIHC) have been operating at the Ethan Allen Homestead in coordination and support with the EAHM and WVPD over the past year. VIHC has used an area to create an Abenaki village for cultural and living history demonstrations, and to hold ceremonies. Before the pandemic, these events were open to the public. With the increasing presence of the VIHC at the Ethan Allen Homestead and the desire to continue to host events and ceremonies, the need for some form of agreement between VIHC and WVPD has become apparent. The agreement, as either a lease, MOU/MOA, or other form, would give site control to the VIHC. The board discussed with Fred what should be included/covered in the agreement included, but limited to, liability insurance coverage, maintenance responsibilities of grounds/area, shared space and relationship with EAHM, and Land Water Conservation Fund requirements for the property. Nick and Fred will work with WVPD's attorney, Ed Fitzpatrick, to draft an agreement to be presented to the board for approval at a future meeting.

**Discussion and Updates with Consultant Brian Pine:** Brian Pine has been conducting an analysis of the operating costs for the Education Center (also known as the Barn) at the Ethan Allen Homestead. Brian presented a memo with his current analysis. The goal of the analysis is to give the WVPD a better understanding of the overall costs to operate the Education Center to inform discussions and negotiations with the building's tenants, the Burlington Forest Preschool (BFPS) and EAHM, on rent prices and lease agreements going forward. The goal for rent amounts would be for WVPD to cover the costs of operating the building with a slight surplus to be set aside for future capital improvements to the building to avoid incurring any debt to make any needed upgrades or cover unexpected costs/maintenance. Brian will be making a recommendation of rent costs as he completes the operating analysis. Brian recommended next steps would be to discuss/negotiate updated lease agreements and rent amounts with both the BFPS and EAHM, with a timeline to phase in the increased amounts. Brian will continue to provide updates and information to inform these discussions with WVPD staff. Susan expressed

gratitude for taking on this much needed project.

**Adjournment:** The meeting adjourned at 6:08PM.

**Next Meeting:** The date for the next meeting will be August 18, 2020 at 4:30 PM via Zoom.

Meeting Minutes prepared by:

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Lauren Chicote, Programs Director