

# Minutes

## VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

March 21, 2016  
10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Board Room, VSAC Offices  
10 East Allen Street  
Winooski, VT

**Committee Members Present:** Martha Heath (Chair), Dennis O'Brien, Pam Chisholm, Katharine Hutchinson and Dave Larsen

**Committee Members Absent:** Sarah Buxton

**Other Members Present:** Dodie Mitchell

**VSAC Staff Present:** Scott Giles, Tom Little, Marilyn Cargill, Patrick Leduc, Mike Stuart, and Kristi Rocheleau

**Others:** NA

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Chair Martha Heath called the meeting to order at 10:07 a.m., and a quorum was established. Prior to taking up the first order of business, the agenda was amended to incorporate an action item for the Basic Incentive Grant discussion that the Committee would review during the Operations Update.

### Approval of Minutes

*Upon a motion made by Pam Chisholm and seconded by Dennis O'Brien, the Committee voted unanimously to approve the Programs & Services Committee record of January 11, 2016, as presented.*

### Operations Update

Marilyn Cargill provided an operations update.

- The current grant funding for FY '16 was reviewed and discussed. Marilyn reminded members that there would need to be a special meeting in mid-April to set grant levels. This timing then allows for the full Board to review and act on the item in time to award prior to the annual May 1 cutoff date.
- VSAC soft-launched the parent loan in early February to test the process before an official launch in May for the 16-17 academic year. As a result of the favorable interest rates and loan attributes, VSAC has received Requests for Information (RFI) from colleges who will be including this loan on their preferred lender lists.
- All Board Members are invited and encouraged to participate in the Scholarships Day review process, scheduled for Thursday, April 14 and Friday, April 15. Please contact Marilyn directly if you are interested.

The Committee then transitioned to the Basic Incentive Grant topic. Chair Heath summarized the January 11 discussion. Marilyn responded to Committee questions. After ascertaining consensus, Martha entertained the following:

*Upon a motion made by Katherine Hutchinson and seconded by Dave Larsen, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the proposed recommendation to increase the Basic Incentive Grant from \$700 to \$1000 for the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year, as presented.*

**Grant Policy – ongoing annual review:**

The Committee reviewed and discussed the background of three policies.

- **Income Cutoff** – The current policy requires the VSAC Board of Directors to act on the income cutoff for determining eligibility for a Vermont grant. The proposed change recommends that VSAC use an income cutoff for the 2016 – 2017 school year of \$160,000. Any family, regardless of size or number in college with an income over \$160,000 would not be eligible for a Vermont grant. This cutoff amount will be reconsidered and approved on an annual basis by the VSAC Board.

*Upon a motion made by Katherine Hutchinson and seconded by Dave Larsen, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the recommended Income Cutoff of \$160,000 for the Fiscal Year 2016 – 2017, as presented.*

- **VSAC Grant Program** – This policy establishes the maximum family contribution that a family can have and still receive a Vermont state grant. Each year, a student/parent contribution is calculated based on a modified version of Federal Methodology to determine a family’s need. The VSAC Board of Directors is required to approve this cutoff each year. The recommended cutoff for the FY ’16 is \$24,310. For FY ’17, the cutoff would increase to \$24,440.

*Upon a motion made by Katherine Hutchinson and seconded by Dennis O’Brien, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the recommended student/parent cutoff recommended for FY ’16 and FY ’17, as presented.*

- **VAST/Early College Program** – This policy defines Vermont Incentive Grant eligibility for high school students enrolled in approved Early College programs at an approved Title IV school. The maximum Vermont grant award will not exceed the amount awarded for Early College students attending a Vermont college.

*Upon a motion made by Katharine Hutchinson and seconded by Pam Chisholm, the Committee voted unanimously to accept the recommendation to expand the VAST Policy to include Early College Program, and to limit the Vermont grant award to not exceed the amount awarded for Early College students attending a Vermont college.*

Executive Session

*Upon a motion made by Pam Chisholm and seconded by Katharine Hutchinson, the Committee voted unanimously to enter executive session at 11:17 a.m. in order to consider contractual matters for which premature public knowledge would clearly place VSAC at a substantial disadvantage; and to obtain confidential and privileged advice from General Counsel. The following were requested to remain in the room, as*

*they have information needed for the executive session: Scott Giles, Tom Little, Patrick Leduc, Marilyn Cargill, and Mike Stuart. 1 V.S.A. sec. 313 (a).*

The Committee exited the session at 11:40 a.m.

**Federal Update**

Scott Giles provided a federal update on Treasury, Direct loan allocation, and Reauthorization.

**Vermont Update**

Scott updated the Committee on legislative affairs and Local Investment Advisory Council (LIAC) conversations regarding potential funding for loan financing products.

Martha encouraged Committee members to review the standing reports and to notify Marilyn with any questions.

**Other Business**

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marilyn Cargill, Assistant Secretary