

# Minutes

## VSAC Programs & Services Committee Meeting

**May 18, 2020**  
**10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.**

### Via Zoom Video and Telephone Conference Platform

**Committee Members Present:** Martha Heath (Chair), Dave Larsen, Chuck Soule, Pam Chisholm, Dennis O'Brien  
**Committee Members Absent:** N/A  
**Other Members Present:** Dodie Mitchell, Chair  
**VSAC Staff Present:** Scott Giles, Marilyn Cargill, Patrick Leduc, Mike Stuart, Jodie Ducharme  
**Others:** N/A

Chair Martha Heath called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m. on the Zoom virtual meeting platform with all present able to hear one another throughout the meeting. With a quorum established, the Committee proceeded with the agenda.

### Approval of Minutes

*Upon a motion made by Pam Chisholm and seconded by Dennis O'Brien, the Committee Members voted unanimously to approve the Programs & Services Committee Minutes of March 23 and April 20, 2020, as presented.*

### Grant Policy – Ongoing Annual Review

Marilyn Cargill reviewed each the following policies:

- **Awarding Incentive Grants** – Marilyn reviewed the policy and noted there were no proposed changes.
- **Awarding Basic Incentive Grants** – Marilyn reviewed the policy and noted there were no proposed changes.
- **Change of School** – Marilyn reviewed the policy and noted changes to reflect the online, self-service Grant system.

*Upon a motion made by Chuck Soule and seconded by Dave Larsen, the Committee Members voted unanimously to recommend that the full Board approve the Awarding Incentive Grants, Awarding Basic Incentive Grants, and Change of School policies, as written.*

### Grant Funding

Marilyn Cargill presented to the Committee a revised staff recommendation for Grant funding based on updated information from the Vermont Legislature. Programs and Services, using the authority granted by the Board on April 20<sup>th</sup>, *Further Resolved that, the Board being aware that there are unknowns at this time which could result in different choices for grant levels and cut-off dates being made when the staff runs the final projections, VSAC's staff are asked to analyze projections in the "live" environment and the Executive Committee is thereafter authorized to further adjust the levels up or down by \$100 if necessary. If changes greater than plus or minus \$100 are needed based upon VSAC staff analysis and Executive Committee recommendation, the*

*Board authorizes the Program and Services Committee to approve new levels at a greater variance than \$100 up or down., reset the grant levels based on updated funding information from the Vermont State Legislature. The Committee resolved that VSAC shall:*

- Increase the level of aid for full-time enrollment by \$200.00 from the level set in '20.

In response to member questions, Marilyn noted that we expect to see an increase in students and families who need to use estimated income due to changes in income as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

***Upon a motion made by Dennis O'Brien and seconded by Chuck Soule, the Committee Members voted unanimously to approve the Resolution and revised FY21 grant levels.***

### **Operations Updates**

Marilyn Cargill provided a loan origination update noting that VSAC is collecting names and email addresses to notify customers when the new loan product is available for the 20-21 AY.

Mike Stuart provided an update on loan financing, noting that the Finance Committee will vote on the bond authorizing resolution later today and, if passed, will go to the Board later this week.

Marilyn briefed the Committee on the impact COVID-19 has had on forbearances and delinquency, noting that for FFEL loans we've been granted the authority by the Department of Education to auto process a forbearance on delinquent loans to prevent further delinquency and impact to credit. She noted that we cannot auto post forbearances on private loans and have been reaching out to make sure borrowers know we can help them with their private loans, but they need to contact us.

Marilyn noted that VSAC is preparing to provide arbitrage on bonds 10 and 11, explaining that it is expected to occur the weekend of June 6.

Marilyn drew the Committee's attention to the standing report on Microgrants, noting the significant increase in nominations and approvals when schools transitioned to online education and pointing out that many students didn't have the necessary hardware or infrastructure to transition successfully to remote learning.

Marilyn announced that VSAC is in the early stages of developing a survey that will be presented to every Vermonter who files a FAFSA to determine if they have been financially impacted by the coronavirus and to determine how the pandemic has impacted their education plans.

### **Federal Update**

Scott Giles gave an update on the Peter Welch Bill and the Heroes Act. Scott also noted that VSAC has been working with customers and community leaders to address confusion that resulted after the CARES Act was passed in which only loans held by the Department of Education were eligible for payment relief and an interest-free period. Scott noted that we continue to work with our delegation to extend these benefits to all federal education loan borrowers.

### **Vermont Update**

Marilyn Cargill provided an update on the funding to address families impacted by COVID-19 that the Legislature is considering for VSAC from the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) and Grant Program funding.

***Upon a motion made by Dave Larsen and seconded by Dennis O'Brien, the Committee Members present voted unanimously to enter executive session at 11:25 a.m. in order to***

*A. Consider sensitive and confidential contract negotiations, premature public knowledge of which would put VSAC at a substantial and unwarranted disadvantage;*

*And/or*

*B. Receive confidential and privileged advice from legal counsel.*

*The Committee exited the executive session at 11:47 a.m.*

Scott Giles provided an update on the Vermont State Colleges and Vermont Fall Enrollment.

**Other Business**

Scott Giles provided a strategic planning update, noting that the preliminary strategic plan, originally planned for the June meeting, will be delayed until the fall.

There being no other business, the Committee adjourned at 12:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Marilyn Cargill, Assistant Secretary