



STATE OF VERMONT
VERMONT INTERACTIVE WORKING GROUP
SEC. E.602.1 OF ACT 58 OF 2015

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

Minutes

All members were present.

Other Attendees: Annie Noonan, Commissioner, Department of Labor, John Sheets, Director of Technical Operations, Vermont Interactive Technologies (VIT), Sigrid Olson of Agency of Education, Joint Fiscal Office and Legislative Council staff, and various interested members of the public

The Interim Chair, Justin Johnson, convened the meeting at 10:30 a.m.

One nomination was cast for Jim Porter for Chair by John Sayles and seconded by Chad Wawrzyniak. The Committee approved the nomination.

Jim Porter, Chair, requested a change in the agenda to move the discussion on the working groups report date to the end of the meeting, and the working group agreed. He reviewed information received by the Vermont State Colleges, and others since the previous meeting.

Stephanie Barrett, Associate Fiscal Officer, Joint Fiscal Office, and Michelle Hughes, Connectivity Coordinator, Public Service Department, distributed two data sheets and explained the VIT user survey results. The Committee discussed the data of the users and usage for VIT. John Sayles and Chair Porter agreed VIT's services were excellent.

Michelle Hughes explained information distributed to the working group on research conducted as part of the working groups charge for determining the ownership of VIT's property. She referred to language in Sec. 34 of Act 26 of 2015 that explained the Legislature had the final approval of the ownership for the property once the working groups charge/report was completed. The working group decided to make the Department of Buildings and General Services' Surplus Property Division the custodian of VIT's property until a decision of ownership was made.

Mr. Sayles stated that after some research on his part, he discovered that VIT was listed incorrectly under the Secretary of State office as a non-profit. He also confirmed that any funds remaining in the VIT budget would revert to the OPEB retirement fund at the end of the year.

Peter Drescher, Education Technology Coordinator, and Jeff Renard, Coordinator of Vermont Virtual (the state's K-12 online course provider), Agency of Education, and Michelle Hughes, presented a proposal on alternative technology to VIT. They distributed a site map of the Career Technical Education Centers in Vermont. The proposal included the CTE sites as possible hosts for video conferencing meetings. It may also be possible to use existing bridges from AOE and VIT to adapt equipment.

Mr. Sayles stated that he thought it was a good proposal, and requested that he be included in the setup, if the CTE's agreed to be the host sites, to ensure a clean transition. Mr. Drescher confirmed AOE and CTE were meeting the following week.

Mr. Renard distributed information on Vermont Virtual and explained it existed under the River Valley Technical Center that was established through a federal grant. The Working Group discussed the relationship between VV and the River Valley school district and its fee structure.

Representative Keenan requested for a side-by-side-by-side comparison of VIT/VSC/CTE-proposed videoconferencing systems including but not limited to technologies/equipment, costs, governance structures, availability for public use. Secretary Johnson asked that stakeholders be included in the possible governance structure of the spreadsheet. Ms. Hughes agreed to create the spreadsheet for the working group.

The Chair asked for a motion to approve both the June 19, 2015 minutes as amended by Legislative Council, and the July 20, 2015 minutes. Mr. Sayles made the motion to approve both minutes, and the working group accepted the motion.

Mr. Sayles stated he would inform the VIT Council of the Working Group's progress and inform the working group if the council would still prefer to have a joint meeting.

The Working Group decided to request an extended report deadline for December 1, 2015. The Chair would write a request to House and Senate Appropriations Chairs for approval.

The Working Group decided on October 14, 2015 at 9:30 a.m. for its next meeting. It also agreed to formally invite the VIT Council if they so choose to have a joint meeting on that same day with the working group.

Public comments were heard from Steve Whittaker.

The Committee adjourned at 11:55 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted

Theresa Utton-Jerman
Legislative Joint Fiscal Office