

**Vermont Climate Council
December 7, 2021 Minutes**

Date/Time: December 7, 2021, 1:30 PM
Location: Zoom Meeting recorded and [posted online](#)
Vermont Climate Council members: Abbie Corse, Anson Tebbetts, Bram Kleppner, Brian Gray, Chris Cochran, Catherine Dimitruk, Chad Farrell, Erica Bornemann, Iris Hsiang, Jared Duval, Johanna Miller, Julie Moore, June Tierney, Kelly Klein, Kristin Clouser, Lauren Oates, Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, Liz Miller, Richard Cowart, Sean Brown, Sue Minter

Sub-committee co-chairs: Billy Coster, TJ Poor

Staff and support: Jane Lazorchak, David Plumb, Marian Wolz

Minutes Prepared by: Cameron Hager and David Plumb

1:30 PM Convene/Welcome/Overview and Approval of Agenda
Kristin Clouser, Agency of Administration & David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

Agenda was approved by the Council.

1:35 PM Review and Approval of [December 1 Minutes](#)
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

Minutes were approved by the Council with the following changes suggested:

- In the discussion of the final text:
 - Add in “human impact such as mental health, air quality, and heat waves”.

1:40 PM Just Transitions Reflection – Exercise around Public Engagement Improvements
David Plumb, Consensus Building Institute

David Plumb led a discussion on the Council’s ideas for future public engagement for the new year. Key points of the discussion are recorded below:

- Council members suggested resourcing trusted community organizations that are known and understood by community members. This type of community organizing should be done in a way that this a part of the Council’s work, not as a “fix” by others to where the Council has failed.
- In terms of communication, the Council should proactively explain what the plan “won’t do” in addition to “what it will do”, to reduce fears and get ahead of rhetoric.

- The Council should reach out to groups that are not just the organizations typically consulted, and who represent a broad range of Vermonters.
- There was a suggestion to do deliberative polling for public engagement.
- The Council should focus on who is doing the synthesizing of information and feeding it back into the Council's process.
- The Council should reflect on its process. (The council should expect a survey and a future council meeting to have this reflection.)

2:00 PM Overview of ARPA Dollars

Doug Farnham, Chief of Operations (Invited)

Doug Farnham from the Agency of Administration gave a high-level overview of ARPA dollars and their potential uses. Key points from the subsequent discussion with Council include:

- Is it okay to think broadly in terms of how funding can be used for resilience?
 - Doug said yes, but there may be a need for additional justification, and you will need to find the link to how it is benefitting a disadvantaged community in order to have flexibility with funding.
- Can you explain more about the categories of eligibility?
 - Doug explained that there are normally qualified census tracts that have automatic eligibility, but in Vermont there are very few. The state has used income-based metrics that will identify a community as disadvantaged. These standards have proven to be useful for eligibility.
- A question was asked about infrastructure upgrades.
 - Doug clarified that general infrastructure projects are not allowed except for broadband, sewer, and water. If an individual is impacted by COVID and in need of assistance, there is a possibility of infrastructure projects related to the building the individual lives in.

2:40 PM ARPA Investments in Climate Action

Water - Julie Moore, Secretary Agency of Natural Resources ([LINK](#))

Broadband – June Tierney, Commissioner Public Service Department ([LINK](#))

Housing – Jen Hollar, Director of Policy and Special Projects, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board ([LINK](#))

Julie Moore, Jen Hollar, and June Tierney gave presentations on ARPA Investments related to water, broadband, and housing respectively.

3:00 PM Discussion of Process for Allocating ARPA Dollars

Jane Lazorchak, Director of Global Warming Solutions Act

Jane Lazorchak presented on the process for the Council related to allocating ARPA dollars. Afterwards, the Council had the opportunity to discuss the types of recommendations for the

allocation of ARPA dollars as well as the process going forward. Key points from the discussion are recorded below:

- Council members had a discussion on the criteria for recommendations. Frequently repeated criteria were: impact on climate goals, equity, leverage, and cost effectiveness.
- In terms of **equity**, Council explored the ideas a minimum percentage of funding going to frontline or marginalized communities, like the State of New York as well as the Justice 40 initiative from the Biden administration.
- In terms of **leverage**, members of the Council envisioned ways that funds could be used to create an on-ramp for future actions.
- Members of the Council suggested some emerging priorities in terms of ARPA dollar allocation. These ideas included: home weatherization/upgrades, EV charging infrastructure, and water/waste-water. A suggestion was made that the Council can provide guidance to trusted partners putting in work in such areas.
- Council members suggested that recommendations on allocation should be kept at a high level. These recommendations should be thought more as guiding principles. When making recommendations, members of the Council suggested to take into account the needs and experiences of the whole state.

3:45 PM Next Steps

Jane Lazorchak, Director of Global Warming Solutions Act

- Appendices Timeline
- Process Reflection
- Council Meetings in 2022

Jane Lazorchak discussed the Next Steps for the Council. Key points from the discussion are recorded below:

- Dissenting opinions and signing state statements due to Jane and Marian by 12/16
 - All will be compiled and shared with appendices by Friday 12/17
- There will be a Process Reflection at a future Council meeting which will be preceded by a survey given to the Council.
- In terms of meetings in 2022, the Council will be polled on future meeting times. Many of the Council members suggested that the previous pace of the schedule is not sustainable. A broad consensus emerged to shift to monthly meetings. A note was made to take into consideration the subcommittee schedule that will be based around the Council meetings as well.
- Jane will create guidance for the subcommittees on the ARPA discussion based on today's Council meeting and will be sent out in the next week.

4:00 PM Public comment

The following individuals made public comment:

- Annette Smith

4:15 PM Adjourn

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