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STATE OF VERMONT
GENERAL ASSEMBLY
LEGISLATIVE JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

Minutes

Hybrid Meeting: Room 10 and

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=F4WIMBkUlc>

To review specific testimony, please click the video time links **{00:00:00}** below.

Members present: Representatives Ancel, Briglin, Fagan, Hooper, and Kornheiser and Senators Baruth, Kitchel and Westman. Senator Sears via Zoom.

Other attendees: Joint Fiscal Office and Administration staff, and various viewers in-person and through live streaming.

The Chair called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m., and Representative Fagan moved to adopt the [minutes of November 9, 2022](#). Senator Kitchel seconded the motion, and the Committee accepted the motion and adopted the minutes.

A. Executive Branch Fees and Fund Deficits [[Executive Branch Fees and Fund Deficits](#)] **{00:02:55}**

Adam Greshin, Commissioner, Department of Finance and Management

B. Emergency Rental Assistance Program and Transitional Housing **{00:17:50}**

Douglas Farnham, Deputy Secretary, Agency of Administration

Dr. Harry Chen, Interim Commissioner, and

Katarina Lisaius, Senior Advisor to the Commissioner, Dept. for Children & Families

Pollaidh Major, Director of Policy and Special Projects, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board

Motion Item B: Senator Kitchel moves (see below), Representative Fagan seconds. **Vote is 8-0-2.**

Senator Kitchel moves that the grant acceptance motion as passed by the Joint Fiscal Committee on February 11, 2021 related to Grant #3034 to the VT Agency of Administration (AOA) from the US Dept of Treasury, Emergency Rental Assistance Program I (ERAP I) be amended as follows:

1. Agencies are allocated ~~\$168,826,860.80~~ \$110,000,000.00 the funds consistent with the following distribution and reconciliation plan:
 - A. PROPOSED DISTRIBUTION AND RECONCILIATION PLAN (GRANTS PROGRAM BUDGET):
 - i. Up to \$120,000,000.00 ~~\$110,000,000.00~~ to AOA to grant to the Vermont State Housing Authority (VSHA) to implement a modified version of their existing Rental Housing

Stabilization Program (RHSP). This program will be implemented via a MOA between AOA, VSHA, and DHCD. It is further provided that the Agencies shall establish procedures that housing units assisted with ERAP funding follows VT's Life Safety Code requirements; and procedures to ensure rent is not increased, as a result of receiving ERAP funding for the period of assistance. The participating landlords shall be encouraged to engage in weatherization activities and programs.

- ii. Up to \$15,000,000 ~~\$12,700,000.00~~ to PSD to implement a modified version of their existing utility assistance program. This ~~would~~ includes creation of two limited service positions; a Consumer Affairs and Information Specialist and a Benefits Program Administrator.
- iii. Up to \$40,000,000 ~~\$15,000,000.00~~ to AHS to assist homeless individuals, those exiting homelessness, and implement other such programming as ~~becomes~~ allowable under federal guidance. This includes over \$4,800,000.00 of subgrants for "housing stability services" as defined by the U.S. Treasury in ERA-FAQ-7.27.22.pdf (treasury.gov) FAQ 23. This ~~would~~ includes creation of two limited service positions; a Financial Manager II, and a Community Services Program Manager.
- iv. Up to \$3,085,000 ~~\$9,000,000.00~~ to DHCD for ~~"other housing services"~~ "housing stability services" as defined by the Act, ~~which pending Treasury Guidance, U.S. Treasury which~~ may include tenant and landlord counseling and mediation services such as those administered by Vermont Legal Aid, and the Vermont Landlord's Association, and to other programs which may become viable upon further guidance from the U.S. Treasury. This ~~would~~ includes creation of one limited service position; a Grants Specialist.
- v. ~~\$53,300,00.00 to AOA to hold in reserve to allocate to programs in need of additional funds, and/or to programs which may become viable pursuant to evolving U.S. Treasury guidance.~~

B. Any expenditures from the \$53,300,000 held in reserve at the Agency of Administration may only be spent based on legislative appropriation. The Agency of Administration may adjust any of the allocations during the final reconciliation process to ensure the entirety of the federal award is expended.

C. Any reallocations between and among subsections i through iv must be approved by the Joint Fiscal Committee. The Agency of Administration shall provide a final reconciliation report to the Joint Fiscal Committee on these funds as well the allocation of any subsequent ERAP II grant funds expended via authorization of the Commissioner of Finance and Management under excess receipts authority (32 V.S.A. § 511).

Explanation: This motion reflects the reduction in funding available to Vermont in ERAP I grants from \$200,000,000 to \$168,826,860.80 and updates expenditure estimates by category. This proposal amends a February 11, 2021 JFC motion.

C. Land Acquisition Donation Request from the Department of Fish & Wildlife {01:12:12}

Will Duane, Land Acquisition Coordinator, Department of Fish and Wildlife

Motion: Approve JFO Grant #3135

Representative Fagan moves, Senator Westman seconds. Vote is 8-0-2.

D. Update on Joint Fiscal Office hiring {01:18:50}

Catherine Benham, Chief Fiscal Officer, Joint Fiscal Office

Adjourn at 11:21 AM

Respectfully submitted,
Sorsha Anderson, Senior Staff Associate
Joint Fiscal Office

Link to recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F4WIMBkUlc>