

Draft Minutes

Wednesday, July 24, 2019

1:00 AM – 4:00 PM

Ethan Allen Room, State House

Present: Commissioners: Stephen Trenholm, Bram Kleppner, Deb Brighton; Staff Director: Sean Sheehan; Consultant: Susan Mesner; Joint Fiscal Office Staff: Joyce Manchester, Chloe Wexler, Stephen Klein; Vermont General Assembly: Representative Peter Anthony, Representative Jim Masland; Tax Department: Erin Hicks-Tibbles, Jake Feldman, Doug Farnham, Kevin Angel, Claudia Brousseau, Jill Remick, Christie Wright, Casey O'Hara; Public Assets Institute: Julie Lowell; Vermont League of Cities and Towns: Karen Horn; State Treasurer's Office: Beth Pearce, Ashlynn Doyon; Leonine Public Affairs: Chuck Storrow; Killington Town Clerk and Treasurer: Lucrecia Wonsor; Barre City Clerk and Treasurer: Carolyn Dawes; Vermont National Education Association: Jeff Fannon

1:04 P.M. Welcome and call to order – Deb Brighton, Commissioner

Approval of minutes from 6/24/19 – Commissioner Kleppner moved to approve, Commissioner Trenholm seconded, all in favor.

Review of agenda

Public comment - none

1:06 P.M. Vermont's long-term revenue challenges - Beth Pearce, Treasurer, State of Vermont, gave an update on the Treasurer's office. She stated VT reserves are healthy but changing demographics are a concern. Treasurer Pearce stated that investing in programs that support migration to Vermont is a priority.

1:40 P.M. Draft demographic paper

Sean Sheehan, Staff Director, Tax Structure Commission presented a draft paper of VT demographics. The draft document is posted on the Commission website and the Commission invites public feedback over the next two weeks before they finalize the paper.

2:10 P.M. Draft non-resident withholding paper

Susan Mesner, Consultant, Joint Fiscal Office presented a draft paper on pass through entities. The draft document is posted on the Commission website and the Commission invites public feedback over the next two weeks before they finalize the paper.

2:20 P.M. Administering the education property tax from the local perspective

Karen Horn, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy, VT League of Cities and Towns (VLCT) introduced Ms. Wonsor and Ms. Dawes and gave an overview of VLCT. She also said VLCT would welcome an opportunity to discuss property tax policy with the Commission.

Lucrecia Wonsor, Killington Town Clerk & Treasurer and Carolyn Dawes, Barre City Clerk & Treasurer talked about their experience concerning property tax billing and collection. Ms. Wonsor and Ms. Dawes both highlighted taxpayer confusion and the efforts that they make at the local level to help citizens understand education property tax bills/adjustments and to help citizens fill out the tax forms, as well as the difficulties

they have in attracting and training qualified listers. Ms. Wonsor also expressed concerns regarding the current use system and abuse due to the dual tax rate system.

2:55 P.M. Administering the education property tax from the State's perspective

Jill Remick, Director of Property Valuation and Review, Vermont Department of Taxes and Christie Wright, District Advisor Field Chief, Vermont Department of Taxes discussed the process of appraisals and data gathering for the CLA (common level of appraisal). Highlighted concerns were difficulty recruiting part-time listers, appraisals of high value properties and defending challenges.

3:25 P.M. Work status update/Future work

Sean Sheehan, Staff Director, Tax Structure Commission
Susan Mesner, Consultant, Joint Fiscal Office

3:40 P.M. Next meeting date and agenda

Deb Brighton, Commissioner – the next regular meeting will be Thursday, August 29, 2019 from 1-4PM in the Ethan Allen Room. The September meeting will take place on Monday the 23rd from 1-4PM in the Ethan Allen Room. An additional meeting is planned for August 12, 2019, time and location TBA.

3:50 P.M. Adjourn by consensus

Respectfully submitted by Sorsha Anderson, JFO Staff