



**June 7, 2021  
SCVBR  
Virtual Membership Meeting**

9:05 a.m. – President Steve Stettler welcomed and opened the meeting. He expressed thanks to Annie Bessette who agreed to take the minutes for absent Secretary Elyn Bischof.

\*Peter Tucker gave highlights from the Legislative Session including the importance of the creation of good public policy leading to more homeownership. He introduced Elizabeth Bushey, the Legislative Assistant. He mentioned that the Government Affairs is now meeting monthly. The Budget process was different this year with the need to spend approx. \$1,000,000,000. The Senate is planning to spend ½ of the money this year and ½ of the money next year. The primary pandemic recovery categories include: housing (homelessness and affordable rentals), broadband (\$150,000,000) and climate and clean water programs. He was disappointed that more home ownership funds were not allocated. He said we, as REALTORS should pay attention to the broadband issues.

\* The Rental Registry Bill (S79) went to the House, but it did not make it out of the house with proposed changes. A Health Code relating to rentals will be under the direction of the Fire & Safety Division. The Rental Registry (if it is passed) will be effective on 01.01.22 and may include the name and address of a landlord.

\*Discussion about a \$1,000,000 remodeling or rehab loan fund (a no interest loan) – this may pass if there is a meeting scheduling for 06.22.21 to open up the Legislature for more discussion on Bills.

\*#437 – the surcharge of .50% on the Property Transfer Tax Rate for homes selling over \$1,000,000. Senate Finance is considering this bill – but, Peter noted that Christopher Bray and Michael Sirotkin opposed this bill and

Randy Brock supported it. All three representatives were supported by RPAC.

\*Better Place Bill – this makes \$50,000 available for parklet, etc. Elizabeth Bushey can coordinate and provide application specifics. Basically, municipalities can apply and might be able to get \$1,500 to assist with planning a project, then \$5,000 for implementation of a project. Potentially State funding may then follow.

Steve Stettler mentioned that a VAR Call to Action is quick and easy to respond to and our vote makes a difference.

Peter Tucker – reminded us to talk to our State Representatives – let them know we are interested in building public policy and we are REALTORS.

\*Act 250 will be focused on in the next legislative session

\*Potentially \$150,000,000 will be going into homeownership/affordable housing in the future – this is a transition from the Cares Money and the voucher program. (more from Seth to follow)

\*Ken Libby –

\*RPAC allows us to present our issues to legislators willing to listen and discuss

\*SCVBR participation = 81% (134 have invested so far)

\*76% is VT's total participation (up to 79.63 now) – VT's participation is the highest in the nation.

\*70% of the funds stay in VT – 30% go to the National RPAC organization

\*There are different levels of support:

-\$1,000 - \$2,500 - \$5,000 - \$10,000. You can also be involved in the Presidents Circle and contribute to a candidate. Steve asked if funds between \$25 and \$1,000 were welcome, and Ken said yes, but without other recognized levels of support –he encouraged donations from members of a family to contribute the minimum of \$25 too – that would help our involvement percentage. SCVBR is currently 7<sup>th</sup> in the state's 9 local boards in RPAC support.

\*Andie Fusco confirmed there will be an RPAC raffle at our July meeting (more details later)

Seth Bongartz –

\*said this legislative session was 'historic'

\*dealing with 3 crisis areas:

1) broadband – received \$150,000,000 in funding

2) child care – by 2024 no more than 10% of income will need to be paid for child care

3) housing – received \$190,000,000 total for housing – an extraordinary commitment

\*in addition, clean water received \$120,000,000 and \$158,000,000 was allocated for the economy workforce and economic development

Kathleen James –

\*House Education Committee passed a number of bills, including:  
Literary Bill, School Construction Bill (radon testing will be required), school discipline bill

\*VT State College system will receive \$100,000,000 (will improve work force development programs and scholarships)

\*Property Tax Rate will be set and she is hoping it will remain stable next year (or maybe go down a bit). The average Homestead tax rate was \$1.523 and Non-Homestead Tax Rate was \$1.61 which is less than last year.

\*There is a task force that is working on moving people out of emergency motel housing

Laura Sibilila –

\*worked on the Energy and Technology Committee – focusing on Broadband (Act 79) and the Communication Union Districts (CUD's). 400 Vermonters are involved in the CUD's and 9 CUD's have fundable plans asking for partners to provide internet service (primarily fiber optics). There is \$150,000,000 on the table for Governor Scott to sign for this work. This Committee intends to obtain \$250,000,000 over 3 years which should be enough to get the CUD's connected to providers. Some of these funds will assist with financial and legal guidance.

\*S13 – this bill is looking to weight our educational finance system – bringing a plan to work on equalizing the costs in schools

\*also worked on moving expense reimbursement for workers moving to Vermont. \$7,500 for those moving to areas with the highest unemployment numbers and a reduced reimbursement of \$5,000 for those communities less impacted by employment opportunities.

David Durfee –

\*Ways & Means Taxing Committee

\*focusing on the tax situation

\*each December, a forecast is presented to the legislature for anticipated tax rates for Education. This year, an increase of \$.09 was expected, but there was an increase in the sales tax received by the State (including consumption taxes), so a decrease actually took place. With some funds taken out of reserves, a \$1.50 residential tax reduction may occur.

\*Act 60 – excess spending issues are being considered. He said there is a 2-year moratorium on the excess spending penalty.

Steve Stettler –

Voting on approving minutes – Laurie Barrett made a motion to approve and Carrie Mathews seconded.

There were no deletions or corrections. No nay votes. Since we were 6 people shy of a quorum, Steve will contact members who were unable to attend to complete the vote requirement.

No new members at this meeting. Steve is optimistic our next meeting will be in person.

VAR (Mark Montross) has helped to organize a statewide REALTOR Safety Day – so, on Saturday, July 31, 2021 there will be paper shredding opportunities throughout the state. 9-11am at Londonderry Volunteer Rescue Squad Building, noon – 2:00pm at Maple Street School in Manchester, then 3:00 – 5:00pm at Bank of Bennington in Bennington. Steve mentioned more participants from SCVBR are needed to assist. Contact him to volunteer.

Up to 5 boxes of papers can be shredded and there will be a table with VAR info available.

Andie Fusco –

\*Andie is finalizing details relating to a Tuesday, July 13, 2021 ROTY and Good Neighbor SCVBR summer meeting that will take place outdoors and in the downstairs Distillery at Johnny Seesaw's, Rte. 11 in Peru from 4:30 – 7:00pm. There will be a raffle (RPAC) with gift certificates to local businesses as the 3 main prizes. \$25/per person with light apps, cash bar. COVID guidelines will determine if there will be a limit on the number of people (including spouses, partners, etc.)

\*Andie asked for nomination for ROTY and Good Neighbor awards by 06.15.21 (Steve mentioned that the nomination forms are included in the most recent newsletter and in the zoom link for this meeting).

\*The new Strategic Plan details will be available for sharing soon.

Claudia Harris – (notes from Claudia below):

Waiting on the Taking Points from our last VAR Board meeting that I usually send out and I will certainly send those around as soon as they are available.

- Working on a BROKER SUMMIT for summer 2021 – stay tuned for details
- Had a presentation from Gabe Gillman, general counsel for OPR about reorganization of the OPR and REC – reviewing everything from licensing to the complaint process to the possibility of introducing transactional brokerage where a realtor will not have a fiduciary responsibility to either a buyer or a seller but will simply manage a transaction.

- It is very likely that VAR will be ending its relationship with DotLoop. We are reviewing options right now and later this week VAR is hosting a series of stakeholder meetings with principal and managing brokers to demonstrate the new transaction management system they are considering. That system is from Remine which is already strongly integrated with NEREN.

As VAR moves in this direction I'd like to encourage everyone to download your Dotloop files as a pdf at the end of the transaction so that you have the information you need going forward.

Peter Pierce –

Report from the Treasurer:

\*Berkshire Checking balance \$20,030.19

\*Berkshire Savings balance \$150.01

\*Heritage Family Credit Union Share balance \$34,805.27

All bills are paid.

Jenifer Prouty Hoffman thanks everyone for keeping us informed of local and statewide issues.

Meeting adjourned at 10:19am with Steve spreading the word: go make dreams happen!

Respectfully submitted – Annie Bessette 06.07.21