

Minutes of August 31, 2023, Meeting of the Vermont Labor Relations Board

The Vermont Labor Relations Board conducted a meeting of the entire Board on August 31, 2023, beginning at 9:00 a.m. Board members Michelle Phelps, Karen Saudek, David Boulanger, Alan Willard, and Roger Donegan, and Board Chair Robert Greemore attended in person. Also, present were Executive Director Judith L. Dillon, and Clerk Melinda Moz-Knight.

Review and approve Board Meeting Minutes for April 26, 2023:

Roger Donegan moved to approve the meeting minutes. Karen Saudek seconded the motion. The April meeting minutes were approved without any changes.

Office displacement-status/issues:

Executive Director Dillon discussed the impact of the flood caused closure of the building and lessons learned and recommended adjustments to prepare for future events. The Board shared alternatives for distributing hard copies of documents to Board Members appearing in future remote hearings. If a Board member were to appear remotely and parties did not provide hard copies that Board staff could mail to them in advance of the hearing, Board staff would send an electronic copy to the Board member. Staff would provide Board member with the copying center nearby for delivery. For hearings in person, Board staff would provide Board members with a copy of the exhibits at the hearing.

During the lock-out, the Executive Director obtained a recycled printer from surplus, and Melinda received an office cell phone.

Discuss converting paper files to electronic files:

Over the past two years, Board staff created electronic files for Board matters. Pleadings are received electronically in all but elections. The Board files are maintained on the Board SharePoint site that is supported and backed up by Agency of Digital Services (ADS). Board staff also maintained a hard copy file which imposes a time burden on the Clerk. The Clerk and Executive Director recommended moving away from paper filing and relying on electronic filing only. Board Chair Greemore asked Board staff to confirm that (ADS) is backing up our files. Chair Greemore also asked Board staff to ensure that files continue to be stored in electronic files in a universal format that ADS would update on a regular basis, so documents were not stored in a format that becomes obsolete.

Discuss request for electronic filings for union petitions:

Executive Director Dillon reviewed the process of Petitions for Election of Collective Bargaining Representative and the role of interest cards. ED Dillon reviewed the National Labor Relations Board ("NLRB") Guidance on Electronic Signatures to Support a Showing of Interest. Jurisdictions in New England have yet to adopt electronic signatures, but the ED will research other states and their processes. The Board consensus was to continue to investigate electronic signatures. At some point the Board will open the discussion to the public for feedback and if the final decision is made to accept electronic filings, incorporating that decision into our Rules of Procedure.

Case management system:

The Board was shown the Excel spreadsheet that was being developed to create a case management system. The ED is recommending a temporary hire to assist in this process for up to 100 hours at a rate of \$27 per hour. Chair Greemore asked for a motion to be made to hire the recommended person for up to 100 hours to develop the case management system to monitor Board matters for \$27/hour. Alan Willard made the motion. Michelle Phelps seconded the motion. The motion passed with no objections.

Proposed calendar/SOP for decision making:

Executive Director Dillon reviewed for the Board her recommended timetables to be incorporated into the case management system for the timing of stages along the case management system for moving cases along the process. The timetable incorporated time for decision drafts and review and the Board provided their comments.

Budget:

The Board reviewed an Excel spreadsheet with the FY23 and FY24 budget as passed and what had been expended in FY23 and what had expended so far in FY24. This spreadsheet will be updated for each Board meeting.

Case update/case status report:

Eighteen new matters have been filed since our last Board meeting. There are forty-two cases pending.

Board Assignments:

Hearing panels were assigned through May 2023.

The next Board meeting will be held on December 7, 2023.

The Board meeting adjourned at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted
/s/ Melinda Moz-Knight