HARTFORD BUSINESS REVOLVING LOAN FUND COMMITTEE/
HARTFORD VCDP REVOLVING LOAN FUND COMMITTEE

APPROVED Meeting Minutes

September 3rd, 2025 at 8:30 a.m.
Hartford Town Hall, Room 312
171 Bridge Street, White River Junction, VT
And via Zoom and by Conference Call

This meeting was conducted in compliance with the Vermont Open Meeting Law with electronic participation. The public was able to join the meeting from a computer, tablet or smartphone.

The HBRLF/ VDCP RLF Committee Members:
Crystal Pearson (term expires 6/26/2026)
Frank Klymn (term expires 2/21/2026)
Michael Gabriele (term expires 3/11/2027)
Jay Zanleoni – Chair (term expires 3/11/2027)

Members attending in person: Crystal Pearson

Members attending online/by phone: Chair Jay Zanleoni and Michael Gabriele

Others attending online/by phone: Erika Hoffman-Kiess, GMEDC Executive Director,

Others present in person: Lori Hirshfield, Town of Hartford Department of Planning and Development Director; Lexi Webster, Town of Hartford Housing and Development Specialist; and Mark Condon, GMEDC Operations Manager

Call to Order: With quorum met, Committee Chair Jay Zanleoni called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Order of the Agenda: Jay asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were none.

Public Comments: Jay asked if there were any public comments. With no members of the public attending, there were no public comments.

Minutes: Jay asked if there were any changes or comments for the minutes from the June 4, 2025 HBLRF/VCDP RLF Committee meeting. There were none.

Crystal Pearson made a **motion** to approve the minutes from the June 4th, 2025 HBRLF/VCDP Committee Meeting. Mike Gabriele seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Executive Session: Review of the Confidential Loan Summary Report for July 2025 and Updates on any Potential Loan Applications

Crystal Pearson made a **motion** to go into Executive Session due to the proprietary nature of the information in the July 2025 Loan Summary Report and to receive an update on any potential loan applications. Michael Gabriele seconded the motion, and the motion passed.

The Committee went into Executive Session at 8:34 a.m.

The Committee exited Executive Session at 8:55 a.m. No actions were taken for either the Hartford Business Revolving Loan Fund or that Hartford 2020 VCDP Revolving Loan Fund.

Discussion of Funding a Potential Housing Program: Crystal Pearson reported that she had attended a meeting of the Hartford Committee on Housing and Homelessness (HCHH) to further the possibility of the RLF Committee working with them to help increase housing in Hartford. At that meeting they discussed the cost of Accessory Dwelling Units (AUDs) and the various types of them: Attached, detached, etc. They determined that a housing liaison was needed to assist people through the steps of going forward with adding an ADU, including choosing the type, permitting, State inspections and potentially receiving a Town grant or loan for the project. The Committee had nominated Lexi Webster to be that liaison.

Crystal suggested that if the HBRLF/VCDP RLF Committee wanted to do a trial run of a housing loan, she could recuse herself and submit an application.

Jay asked if there was a difference between an ADU and a tiny house. Lori answered that it depends on a number of things. She noted that Hartford considers a mobile home no different that a stick-built building. Things that matter is if it has potable water, waste disposal, a kitchen and other factors. She said the State now looks at if it is accessory to the other building and doesn't have to be attached to the primary dwelling anymore. Lori said the Town's policies always reflect what the State statues are, always going with the maximum of what the State allows and making sure that it is very clear in Town regulations.

Erika Hoffman-Kiess departed the meeting at 9:04 a.m.

Lexi Webster said the HCHH's focus is on small scale housing which it refers to as, "AUD+," which can be a duplex as well as an ADU or tiny house. She said that Vital Communities, through their Home Creator program, is working on a program guide and may have a concierge person. She said we don't want to "recreate the wheel" if they are already doing so. She said we are hoping to partner with that and not duplicate the effort. She stated that we are putting in a budget request for FY2027 for $15,000 for a pilot program to give small grants or forgivable loans of $3,000 each to help develop 5 units. This would help them get permit-ready. After that, if the homeowners developing the ADU feel they need more capital to get it done, they could possibly come to the HBRLF/VCDP RLF Committee for a loan.

Lori said there was an effort amongst the regional towns, particularly the four core-towns, and Vital Communities, to create a partnership for financing housing programs. She thought it would be great if Hartford could be a leader in that.

Crystal asked if they had been working with the Town assessors in regards to ADU additions. She noted that why would someone develop an ADU on their property if the improvement is going to double their property taxes and any rent gained from the unit has to go to paying the increased tax? And what if there is now a mortgage loan needing to be paid but the taxes leave none of the rent to cover the loan payments? Lori said the Town would assess the property with the normal process. She noted that there is a tax stabilization policy which could help keep the taxes down the first five years.

Lexi said there were a lot of things to be considered. Everyone agrees they don't want a project that just adds AirBnB spaces which don't help with the problem of affordable housing in the Town. But do we really want to add things like a maximum rent amount that can not be gone over, which will disincentivize people from adding ADUs?

Jay said it would be good to have a liaison to make sure people check all the boxes before getting stuck in a project.

Outreach Plan for Both RLFs Development Discussion: Jay asked if anyone has no ideas for getting the word out about the availability of loans from the RLFs. Lori suggested someone from GMEDC and/or the Committee could attend the monthly meetings of the White River Downtown Business Association. Lexi said they meet on the first Monday of the month at 10 a.m. at Whitney Pension Associates or virtually. Jay said he could attend the October meeting. Mark will check with Erika about one of them attending.

Other Business

Jay asked if there was any other business. There was not.

Adjournment

Crystal Pearson made a motion to adjourn the meeting, Mike Gabriele seconded the motion, and the motion passed unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Minutes approved by Committee on December 3, 2025