



# TOWN OF RANDOLPH, VERMONT

## Economic Development Council

Via Teleconference  
Minutes of April 24, 2020

**Members present:** Mary Richter, Jay Hooper

**Guests:** Peter Reed, Julie Iffland, Dan Bennett

**Town of Randolph:**

**Selectboard Liaison:** Perry Armstrong

**Public Attendees:** None

1. Call to Order
2. Public Comment – None present
3. Approval of Agenda (*no quorum*)

### **Topics Discussed:**

The group met to provide updates and progress relating to the Coronavirus (CoVID-19) relief benefits, communication and supporting local businesses and the community.

#### **4. CARES ACT – April 24, 2020**

Peters believes there may be extra money for hospitals. Hospital is losing in revenue and next installments may be helpful.

Medicare advance for hospitals and helps the hospital but must be paid back in August. However, it allows not dipping into reserves.

Hospital is doing fine; next several months into a year will be tough and have adequate reserves. The balance sheets are strong.

Hospitals are reporting to the Green Mountain Care Board reports to the legislature as it relates to hospital reserves. Gifford is in a good position within the state.

53 employees who are on full or part time furlough; more than 10% of Gifford's workforce, this is a volunteer not mandated. \$600 a week has helped employees to go on furlough. No plans for a layoff. Dan can see this increasing in the coming weeks.

## 5. Business outreach

- RAMAN (Randolph Area Mutual-Aid Network) <https://racdc.com/covid19>  
RAMAN Fund for CoVID-19 Response  
Julie provided a quick update for funds almost ready and ironed out questions between Capstone and RAMAN volunteers. The plan is in draft form, ready for review and post on the RACDC CoVID-19 Resource site.
- Vermont Revolving Loan Fund  
This is not going through RACDC and is offered by the State and enables small business to access small loans and smalls for businesses to obtain outside their regions. Julie has spoken to Josh about getting more funds as this approach is more flexible than banks and monies to support local businesses.
- Small Business Support  
Business Survey  
Julie spoke to Josh and a handful of people completed the survey and to provide help with PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) funds or any other needs they may have. Approximately 30 people have responded to the survey.

As of date, approximately two businesses have received funds. Would like some feedback as it relates to the food businesses, restaurants, Chef's Market, etc.

In addition to the restaurants, there are approximately nine seasonal businesses.

## 6. Coronavirus Pandemic (CoVID-19)

### Local Testing and Economic Recovery Work

No new plan or solution as this time. Dan is working on a plan internally for GMC's workforce. Swabs are sent out for testing and turn around time. Factors are how many tests can be done in a day, availability of testing kits and PPEs to accommodate testing as well as normal daily needs.

ZOOM call on Tuesday, April 28 with Maury Smith, Marcus Coxon and Joshua White to discuss and expand community testing and help get people back to work. Twice a week in contact with Dr. Levine. Some businesses have reached out Dan.

Dan asked Peter and Jay to investigate what the Vermont Department of Health as it is unclear what the approach will be. It is up to the Health Dept to have a centralized process, guidance, and funding. The State has the resources and training for a quick turnaround. Gifford would be the hub and partner with others.

A plan from the hospital association is working on what steps need to be in place and how to expand the capacity to provide services and start opening and Department of Health will be discussing publicly next week.

Jay and Peter will reach out to the Department of Health and include Mark MacDonald.

## 7. Vermont Technical College

Jay asked how the community, businesses and others can reach out to the Legislature and others on making the case of VTC's value in central Vermont and other areas within the state.

Perry updated the group that he, Bob, Adolfo, Josh and Trini had an hour-long+ conference call with Pat Moulton today on how the community can help, what does she need them to do and how to save the campus.

The process is very fluid, and Perry has access to Pat's VTC staff around the campus.

### Farm

The farm is losing money, looking at farm programs, what and how to save. Looking at the dairy to, farm to include Keith Sprague, goat program with Miles Hooper, table and there is a group of people working on this initiative.

### Nursing Program

Moving Williston to Randolph is not going to work because VTC has a very strong nursing program that is the lead at VTC and has an interactive network throughout the state with 14 satellites. Need to maintain Willison and Randolph campuses.

### Assets

Perry is working with Ted and Chris Reilly at the campus on all assets. Some need to be shuttered or repurposed.

### Buildings

There is a \$10M maintenance program that will need time to evaluate. There are buildings that have been built in the 60s and 70s and there is a program where students are working on a study to how to make them more useful.

### Successful Programs

Perry spoke with Terry Booska as there are programs that are making money and are successful with a 95-98% placement ratio after graduation and are staying in Vermont which is what the Governor is looking for.

### Marketing Program

VTC does not have a good marketing program.

Perry reiterated that we have a good base to work with, look at the programs, clear out the deadwood and build efficiencies.

VTC's enrollment is strong, we are in a good position and the community wants to be involved.

Need to make a case to the Board of Trustees, to go to the Legislature and Governor for funding. We are going to be competing with NVU (Johnson and Lyndon colleges) in the Northeast Kingdom. VTC has a success rate with placement of graduates from nursing, manufacturing with Gifford, LEDynamics, Darn Tough Socks, GW Plastics, etc.

The groups are starting to form, and delegating responsibilities related to real estate, manufacturing, academic and CCV alliance (Pat), brain trust of ideas. Enterprise Center, childcare and tenants (Bob Haynes), Red School House is safely ready for a Waldorf School model for 60 families who are interested (Rebecca Hips), House on Water Street, Renting space at the old Vermont Spring building, no horse farm, RTCs to VTC create a better connection, create a “Works for Men” since there is a “Works for Women” in place.

In the coming weeks, task force groups will be defined, outlining and developing an action plan.

### **Other Business**

The new hotel ACT 250 is in the 30-day appeal period. Brooke Dingedine withdrew additional hearings. Bids are out for earth movement, conference center and the hotel building.

Communications with the banks are on hold due to CoVID-19. Need to break ground by July, if not, the project needs to be extended.

Adjourned: 6:38 PM

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary V. Richter, Chair