



GENERAL ASSEMBLY
STATE OF VERMONT
LEGISLATIVE JOINT FISCAL COMMITTEE

Saturday, November 14, 2020

Minutes

Videoconference

Members present: Representatives Ancel, Fagan, Hooper, Lippert, and Toll and Senators Ashe, Cummings, Kitchel, Sears, and Westman.

Other attendees: Joint Fiscal Office and Administration staff and various viewers on live stream.

Senator Cummings, Chair, called the meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. and asked for discussion on the Administration's remaining Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) requests.

Adam Greshin, Commissioner, Department of Finance and Management, confirmed that the Administration would deliver a counter proposal later in the meeting for the Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD) and the Department for Children and Families (DCF) requests for a total of \$81,450,000.

Senator Kitchel moved to **NOT** approve the two Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets requests for a total of \$2,410,000 of CRF. The first for \$2,075,000 CRF to increase local meat processing capacity through enhanced efficiency, productivity, and utilization of modern processing equipment and training resources and the second request for the Buy Local Campaign. Representative Ancel seconded the motion, and the Committee passed the motion to NOT approve the request on a 10-0 roll call.

Senator Kitchel moved to approve the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) request for a total of \$1.9 million of CRF. Senator Sears seconded the motion, and the Committee passed the motion and approved the request on a 10-0 roll call.

Representative Ancel asked the Administration to return to the Committee if there continued to be a need for the Stay-at-Home benefit with a plan to implement it. The Committee generally agreed that the concept of the proposal was important and expected a more well-thought-out plan in the future, if there was a need. Senator Kitchel moved to NOT approve the CRF request for \$700,000 from the Agency of Human Services for the creation of a financial support program for Vermonters who have tested positive for COVID-19 or have been asked by the Department of Health to quarantine. Representative Fagan seconded the motion, and the Committee passed the motion to NOT approve the request on a 10-0 roll call.

Senator Kitchel moved to approve a CRF request for \$931,880 from the Department of Vermont Health Access for expenditures resulting from the use of the Vermont Health Information

Exchange (VHIE) to meet the State's needs for real-time exchange of health information as part of its public health response to COVID-19. Representative Fagan seconded the motion. At the request of Senator Ashe, Commissioner Greshin explained the use of the funds and the Vermont Information Technology Leaders' (VITL's) role. The Committee approved the motion and the request with a 10-0 roll call.

Representative Hooper moved to accept the Agency of Commerce and Community Development's request for \$750,000 of additional funding to enable the State's small business technical assistance network to provide additional services to COVID-19 impacted businesses (Restart Program). Senator Sears seconded the motion, and the Committee approved the motion and the request with a 10-0 roll call.

B. Possible Changes or Additions to the Administrations CRF Reallocation Requests

Commissioner Greshin presented the Committee with a revised proposal for the two remaining requests for a total of \$81,450,000. Joan Goldstein, Commissioner, Department of Economic Development, explained and responded to questions on the first request totaling \$75,000,000 to ACCD.

Representative Ancel moved to approve the first request as presented by the Administration for \$75,000,000 to ACCD and commended the Administration's effort to further target the business sector most in need of financial relief, and Senator Westman seconded the motion. The Committee held the vote until the entire proposal for both CRF requests was presented. There was further discussion and clarification for inclusion in the Administration's proposed motion for the ACCD request.

The Committee moved on to the second request within the Administration's revised proposal for a total of \$6,450,000 to the Department for Children and Families. Sean Brown, Commissioner, Department for Children and Families, reviewed the request and responded to questions. The Committee requested a memo to attach to the final proposed motion that explained the eligibility for the supplemental payments to specified 3SquaresVT households.

Commissioner Greshin submitted a [proposed motion](#) that included the Committee's concerns on the two requests and included a memo from Commissioner Brown on the eligibility for the 3SquaresVT households.

Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development clarified the application process using the North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) codes to determine business types for eligibility of the ACCD CRF grants.

Representative Ancel amended her motion to the [corrected revised proposal](#) presented by Commissioner Greshin, and Senator Westman agreed to the correction. The Committee approved the motion and the revised proposal with corrections on a 10-0 roll call.

Senator Kitchel moved to approve the CRF request for \$6,450,000 to DCF for supplemental payment to specified 3SquaresVT households to cover COVID-19 related expenses and impacts, as specified in the attached memo to the motion from Commissioner Brown. Senator Sears seconded the motion and the Committee approved the motion and the request on a 9-0-1 roll call.

Representative Hooper requested that at the Committee's next meeting, it receive an update on the status of wastewater and water supply arrearages to determine if the program has exceeded its available funds. Senator Sears requested the Committee receive a summary of the anticipated report from the Judiciary on its e-filing plan. Senator Sears also reminded the Committee that the Joint Legislative Child Protection Oversight Committee and the Joint Legislative Justice Oversight Committee intended to submit a recommendation to the Joint Fiscal Committee for action at its November 20, 2020, meeting.

The Committee confirmed its next meeting for November 20, 2020, and adjourned the meeting at 12:12 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Theresa Utton-Jerman, Senior Staff Associate
Legislative Joint Fiscal Office

Link to recording: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kJj9nyglvos>