



Vermont Horse Council Board of Directors and Members Meeting  
February 10, 2026  
7:00pm via Zoom

**Attending:** Michelle Brewster (P), Jeannette Cole (VP), Mikayla Pick (T), Laurie Baird (BOD), Robin Severy (BOD), Linsey Williams (BOD), Lisa Lafont (BOD), Heidi Krantz (M)

**Absent:** Emma O'Neill (S), Monica Raymond (BOD), Kerrie Garvey (BOD), Ryne Kessler (BOD)

**Agenda:**

**7:07pm - Call to Order** - Michelle

**7:09pm - Secretary Report** - Michelle

- Meeting minutes will be in the next month's meeting folder for review from now on, but decided to defer vote because Emma was absent.
- Robin proposed several corrections for January 17th annual meeting minutes - several attendee names need "M" designation added.
- Plan to vote on January 13th and February 10th meeting minutes and address January 17th corrections at the next meeting with Emma.

**7:11pm - Equine Industry Committee Update and Transition** - Heidi

- Several members of the EIC will be creating a new organization to separate lobbying/legislative work from VHC to protect nonprofit 501(c)(3) status.
- Heidi and Mindy Hinsdale will be creating a new L3C corporation to continue legislative work.
- An attorney from Vermont Law and Graduate School is providing free assistance on this issue, originally appointed to work with EIC/VHC on creating a new entity, and has approval to continue working with the new organization.
- A meeting is scheduled for later this week or early next week to complete the necessary paperwork.
- Heidi is tendering her resignation as EIC chair to focus on legislative work through the new organization, which removes pressure from VHC regarding lobbying activity.
- Heidi is a lifetime VHC member and will still be available as a resource, but cannot hold a leadership position that might be construed as having influence.
- The EIC will need a new chair eventually, but there is no immediate pressure to fill the position, although a current EIC member may be willing to take over (EIC can temporarily hibernate).
- The EIC is typically tasked with organizing the Equine Industry Summit (which takes about a year to plan), but there are currently no plans for a summit in 2026.

- The legislative work has a short window, which is why prioritizing legislation over a perfect EIC transition is necessary. If legislation is not successful this year, we will likely stop trying for an extended period due to the tremendous energy and cost requirements.

#### **7:24pm - Treasurer Report - Mikayla**

- Current balances as of the meeting:
  - Checking account: \$20,218.62
  - Savings account: \$6,121.14
- Financials accepted as presented.

#### **7:25pm - Insurance Coverage - Mikayla**

- Mikayla is still trying to get in touch with different providers to get new quotes.
- Michelle is planning to reach out to the American Horse Council for guidance on this issue.
- Current questions/issues:
  - What insurance coverage outside of D&O does VHC need based on actual activities?
  - If events are held at already-insured locations with an officer present, does VHC's D&O insurance alone cover some or all?
  - Does current insurance cover volunteers on trail work days?
    - What specific activities?
      - Chainsaw, loppers, etc.
    - Project dependent?
    - ROLs?
  - What insurance is required as part of the cooperative agreements?
  - Was the previous rate low due to inadequate coverage or just a good rate that was maintained?
    - New quotes are much higher than the previous rate.
  - Additional insured and private property requirements?
    - ANR, Weyerhaeuser, and others?
    - Members are not covered when riding on private property.
- VHC paid for one person's chainsaw certification and protective equipment. Aside from that, typical trail work is 1-2 designated days per year, with a maximum of 5 people (never brought chainsaw to VHC trail days).
- Jeannette will reach out to Claire to ask specifically about additional insured expectations.

#### **7:37pm - Quilty Raffle Fundraiser - Michelle**

- Michelle is committed to the raffle, but there has been no progress since the annual meeting.
  - No pictures were taken at the annual meeting.
  - Michelle didn't receive any feedback from the board after multiple requests.
- Michelle's mother's quilt guild runs an annual raffle that produces substantial revenue
  - Guild pricing: \$1 per ticket or 6 tickets for \$5
  - They market extensively on their website, newsletters, at events, and at the Champlain Valley Fair booth with a quilt displayed.
  - Guild runs raffle for 10 months with the drawing at the end of the fair.
- The raffle will be for a choice of two quilts that Michelle selected.
- Laurie will take professional photos at the retreat.

- We will set a plan and officially launch the raffle after the retreat.

#### **7:42pm - Email Address Update - Jeannette**

- Jeannette met with Kelsey on Saturday to touch base and gave her appreciation for her work.
- Kelsey requested specific formatting for email designation (Last Name.First Initial) in case administrative duties move to someone else in the future.
- Kelsey will make the transition as board members rotate off the board, so new board members (like Ryne) get name-based email from the start.
- Names are already tied to board members with numbered emails (board member 3, board member 4, etc.)
- Kelsey asked that someone else take over adding new VHC members to the website. Jeannette will take over because she already receives a Donorbox email when someone joins/renews, so this will eliminate Robin needing to email Kelsey.
- Jeannette's president email will be shutting down on March 1st with a redirect message. Michelle has set up a similar redirect for the vice president email.
  - Jeannette will ask Kelsey if they need to change their new email addresses, too.

#### New Business

#### **7:50pm - Spring Retreat - Michelle**

- The spring retreat is set for March 28, 2026, at the Monkton Town Hall from 10:30am - 2:30pm.
  - Monica verified that Kerrie secured the reservation for the room.
- Michelle will work on getting the agenda up on the shared drive.
- Kelsey will be available for 30 minutes at the retreat if anyone needs any specific questions answered (not a training session).

#### **7:52pm - Event Booth Planning - Laurie**

- Laurie wanted to know if VHC has ever had a booth at Addison Field Days, and if we should do one going forward, because she would be interested in helping man it.
- Ideally, it would be similar to the Spring Fling setup at the Rutland fairgrounds last year.
  - Tables under pavilion, brochures, various information, items to sell, etc.
  - Guest Speaker - Heidi spoke about legislative work last year
  - Another way to get VHC and our work out there
- The dates this year are August 4-8, but the horse show starts on August 3rd.
- Robin is the go-to contact for this event - knows more about booth set up, and which spots might work best, who to talk to, etc.
- VHC did have a table set up a few years ago during the equine industry census/survey research.
- Robin will reach out to her contact and find out more about the cost, living quarters options, booth locations, and more general information.
- Lisa will be covering the Northeast Kingdom Equine Expo with Heidi, May 30-31.
- At this point, Equine Affaire would not be a viable option for VHC given the high costs (\$500+/booth), long hours, and distance/travel.
- Jeannette has had a hard time finding enough help from volunteers to man the booth for events like the Champlain Valley Fair and the Vermont Farm Show.

- Per Michelle, the VFS has hired a new director and will be hosting the Show in April 2027 at the Champlain Valley Expo.
  - Michelle has already had a discussion with the VFS board about the possibility of hosting the next Equine Summit during the Farm Show, and they were receptive/open to the idea of having VHC in some capacity.

#### **8:03pm - Newsletter - Michelle**

- The Q4 newsletter did not go out because Michelle didn't have enough contributions from the board.
- Michelle decided to put out a call for help on the members-only Facebook page to see if anyone would be interested in taking over organizing the newsletter, but there was no interest.
- There has been great feedback about the newsletter in the past, but without support, it is too much for one person to carry, and Michelle is ready to step away from it.
- Jeannette will take over writing the quarterly newsletter, but will not be using Mailchimp to organize it, so Michelle will help with sending out the emails.
- Newsletter sections can include the president's note, member profile, and business spotlight.
- Jeannette will email the BoD when she creates a new folder for newsletter submissions in the shared drive and will go back through previous unused submissions.

#### **8:10pm - Volunteer Hours and Disclosures - Jeannette**

- As a 501(c)(3) compliance requirement, VHC needs to show proof of volunteer hours and annual conflict of interest disclosure forms (in shared drive).
- Jeannette will put a template of her hours tracking sheet in the shared drive, and requests that each board member log all of their VHC-related activities, as well as any monetary donations they make.
- Activities may include board meetings, manning VHC booths, hiking/scouting trails, returning phone calls, sending emails, etc.
- Jeannette will send out an email when the tracking sheet, disclosure form, and submission folder are set up in the shared drive.

#### **8:18pm - Sponsorship for Large Animal Rescue Training - Michelle**

- Steve from the Craftsbury Fire Department reached out to VHC (through Heidi) about sponsoring a NEMA large animal rescue recertification class (first in about five years).
- The class is being held at the end of April and covers extraction from various situations (stall, manure, mud, water, etc.) for all large animals (not just equines), and includes information on keeping animals calm and knowing which organizations have equipment/who to call.
- There are 350 recipients on the email invitation list, and they are hoping for roughly 60 attendees (\$60 cost per attendee).
- For a donation of \$150-\$200, one VHC BoD member could audit the class, and the VHC logo would be included on the event banners, website, and invitation email.
- The safety page on the VHC website lists fire departments with equipment/training, but this hasn't been updated in a while, so Michelle is planning to reach out to the listed departments to verify the status of equipment and members with training.
- Lisa is willing to personally donate \$150-\$200 to make sure VHC can participate in this training.

- Linsey suggested setting up a donor-match fundraiser (VHC would match any public donations) through Donorbox to "sponsor a firefighter". We can share this through the VHC Facebook pages and website.
- Laurie has had a personal horse rescue experience, but had difficulty with VLATRC when seeking additional information on training. Laurie is very interested in helping fund this event and participating in the training if possible.
  - Each fire chief has the authority to allow trained individuals to assist in rescues, even if that person is not on the fire department.
- Jeannette will work on settling up the donor-matching campaign and is willing to sponsor a Northfield Fire Department attendee.
- Michelle experienced a property fire recently; she has researched barn safety equipment (heat-resistant straps, blindfolds, fire extinguishers, heat sensors, cameras) and will create a write-up for the safety page.
- BoD members can help by reaching out to their local fire departments to inquire about equipment and training, and asking if they are planning to send any members to this training (training is valuable even without full equipment).
- Michelle put the email from Steve in the folder for this meeting in the shared drive.

**8:36pm - Adjournment**

**Links:**

**Parking Lot:**

- Insurance coverage requirements and costs
- Cooperative agreement discussion

**Proposed Minute Corrections:**

Name	Date/Time	Change	Vote