

Strategic Planning Committee (SPC) Report

DATE: 15 May 2024

MEETING TYPE: Teams

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Gary De Gasta (Chair), Jennifer Carmichael, Charly Dickerson, Peter Fagan, Michael Klopchin, Cathy Tester

INVITED GUESTS: Trustees: Larry Cupoli, Michael diMonda, Robert Hooper, Joyce Scribner

STAFF: Melissa Jackson, Asa Whitcomb, Robyn Boland

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Brenda Cruickshank

MEETING START TIME: 10:35 am (meeting start time delayed due to a Special BoT meeting)

SPC GOALS: Strategic Plan Initiative #1: **Serve More Vermont Veterans** (Page 1 – 2, Page 14 – 15) Strategic Plan Initiative: #3 **Expand Geographic Reach** (Page 1 – 2, Page 18 – 19) Strategic Plan Initiative: #4 **Offer New Services** (Page 1 – 2, Page 20)

SPC Duties: By-Laws of the BoT VVH (ARTICLE VI. DUTIES OF COMMITTEES SECTION 6) --
“The Strategic Planning Committee will prepare a strategic plan for the Board that will ensure the accomplishment of the Vision and Mission statements for the years to come. The plan will include inputs from management and staff, and will be reviewed annually in advance of the budget”.

Background:

The convergence of a number of factors including: the Covid Pandemic and its aftermath; the shortage of healthcare personnel; the necessity to supplement Home employees with contracted personnel (at exorbitant costs); outcomes of the Gibbous Market Study; perennial budgetary shortfalls, etc., **point to the need for the Home, its Board (and especially its SPC), to reassess our position regarding Strategic Planning.** As the starting point, three topics [Next Steps, Strategy, Philosophy and Goals and The Impact of Legislation (H.794)] were reviewed, discussed and **prescriptive language proposed (bolded and *italicized*):**

Strategic Planning (Next Steps):

1. ***The position of the Home and its Board: At least for the immediate future, the Home’s primary focus will be on employee and facility stabilization and the reduction of its contracted personnel costs rather than adding service lines or expanding to a new location.***

NOTE: The Home and BoT’s position relative to Strategic Planning (notably Strategic Initiatives #1-3) is best *referenced* in CEO Jackson’s “White Paper on Vermont Veterans’ Home CMS Staffing Mandate” and *summarized* in her “White Paper on Vermont Veterans’ Home Marketing Study” -- both archived on the BoT MS Teams).

DISCUSSION: A recommendation to add “***and facility***” (inserted in italics and underlined in the sentence above) was adopted. This additional language was added to ensure the Home’s construction projects will also continue to receive the Home’s focus and attention and the Board’s oversight.

2. Strategy, Philosophy and Goals:

- ***The VVH's leadership, with the support of its BoT, must diligently work on employee stabilization, the reduction of its contracted personnel costs and pursue a goal of financial solvency without compromising the quality of healthcare or services.***
- ***While the VVH's leadership and the BoT work to address the Home's contemporary personnel and budget challenges, we must think and plan strategically:***
 1. ***Continue to evaluate the need for, and feasibility of, implementing new programs and services – (CEO Guidance added) “any proposed service would be fully vetted and presented to the legislature for approval”.***
 2. ***Continue to investigate pilot projects and partnerships, such as the VA, to help implement and fund future activities – (CEO Guidance added) “no decisions will be made without an in-depth feasibility study”.***

DISCUSSION: Once the proposed legislation (H.794) has been signed into law by the Governor, CEO Jackson will actively pursue options for partnering to include the White River Junction VA Healthcare System (exploratory discussions have already begun).

Bennington Conservation District and Bennington Fair Food Initiative (partnership proposal) -- During its June 12th meeting, the Board will complete its discussion of the Bennington Conservation District and Bennington Fair Food Initiative proposal (The goal of which is to develop objectives to create a connected farm and food system to boost the growth of the agricultural workforce in Bennington County and establish farming partnerships across the food system enabling participating veterans to learn how to develop skills, build their efficacy, and increase their agricultural knowledge in the program).

CEO Jackson will approach the program Point of Contact, Michael Fernandez to include in his discussion what is/has been done to partner with established veteran organizations, such as the VA, VSOs, etc.

- ### **3 *While the statutory changes included in H.794 (sponsored by Representative Mary Morrissey with Senate Amendment) provide the Board/VVH governance authority to expand “services and programs” and with the financial and administrative support of the VA, to also “establish an additional State Nursing Home”, such actions will be deferred until the timing is right, a feasibility study completed and validated, and the resources are available.***

DISCUSSION: CEO Jackson commented on what is being done by the Home to address personnel shortages, especially in nursing. The Home is considering touting its comparatively favorable staffing ratios and expanding its LNA classes (the next group expected to include 9 students). Later this month CEO will participate in a meeting

regarding the hiring process and will also contact Labor Relations regarding the feasibility of LNA students, in exchange for the costs of their training, to work at VVH for 2 years after they complete their training (should they leave beforehand, they would be required to reimburse the program costs at a prorated rate).

OTHER TOPICS DISCUSSED: - -

RECOMMENDATIONS: That the Board endorse the SPC language (***in italics***) relative to: 1. The Home/Board's Position on Strategic Planning; 2. The Strategic Planning Strategy, Philosophy and Goals; and 3. Response to the H.794 and its governance authorities.

FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS: Begin Strategic Plan Review -- Notably focusing attention on shorter term planning -- 3-5+ years (While hard copies were previously distributed to Trustees, the Strategic Plan is also available on the Board Teams page).

MEETING END TIME (adjournment): Meeting adjourned at 11:20 am.

COMMITTEE CHAIR: Gary De Gasta 16 May 2024

2024 Strategic Planning Committee Meetings to all start at 10:00 am via Teams:
July 17, October 2