

Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, December 19, 2023 PM, 1:00 PM-4:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

Voting Board Members Present: Danielle Fitzko (Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation; departs 2:54); Alisha Utter; Tyler Miller; Donna Young; Bob Lesnikoski; Alison Low (departs 2:20, arrives 3:54); Brooke Gladstone; David Hubbard; Will Belongia, Charlie Hancock, Vice Chair; Alan Calfee; Tayt Brooks (Agency of Commerce – designee for Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary; departs 2:00); Chris Castano; Megan Camp (arrives 1:36, departs 4:00)

Voting Board Members not Present: Alyson Eastman (Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture – designee for Anson Tebbetts, Secretary), Chair, Marisa Mauro, Jon Ramsay

Non-Voting Board Members Present: Ellen Kahler (Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund); Liz Gleason (Vermont Housing and Conservation Board; designee for Gus Seelig, Executive Director; departs 3:10 PM); Sarah Isham (Vermont Economic Development Authority; designee for Cassandra Polhemus, CEO)

Non-Voting Board Members not Present: None

Staff: Elizabeth Sipple, Clare Salerno, Kristina Sweet, Abbey Willard (Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets – departs 3:44); Katharine Servidio (Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation, becomes designee for Danielle Fitzko at 2:54, departs 4:00 PM)

Guests: None

Members of the Public: None

Kristina Sweet calls the meeting to order at 1:03 PM.

MOTION to approve minutes from the November 28, 2023 Board– Alisha Utter motions, Donna Young seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

- Bob Lesnikoski, Alan Calfee, Tayt Brooks abstain

Charlie Hancock noted a correction to the agenda: change FY23 to FY24 where it says “FY23 Business Enhancement Grants.”

Funding Decisions for FY24 Business Enhancement Grants – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth Sipple provided an overview of the grant and the process for making award decisions. Elizabeth reminded board members that WLEI staff will communicate decisions with every applicant, regardless of whether they are awarded. She further reminded board members that all information discussed is confidential, and that WLEB members with a conflict of interest can share fact based information if questions arise but should not participate in making a specific recommendation or voting on that funding decision.

Elizabeth Sipple noted that there were 63 applicants with a total funding request was \$2.4 million. Elizabeth reminded the board that the total available funding for this grant is \$611,269.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to fund slate of Sunday Bell Farm, Agrigorial LLC, Slopeside Syrup, FinAllie Ferments, Northeastern Vine Supply, Agricola Farm, Vermont Cider Lab, Vermont Bees, Top Rankin, 802 Logging,

The Goat Project, Triple J Pastures, Hackett's Orchard, SS Forestry Solutions, Bear Island Maple: David Hubbard motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION passes with unanimous voice vote.

- Tyler Miller abstains from voting on Agrigorial LLC.

MOTION to not fund the remaining slate – Bob Lesnikoski motions, Alisha Utter seconds

MOTION passes with unanimous voice vote

Administration Updates

- Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets – Kristina Sweet
- Agency of Commerce and Community Development – Tayt Brooks

Other Announcements – none

Public Comment – none

MOTION to adjourn – David Hubbard motions, Tyler Miller seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Meeting is adjourned by Charlie Hancock at 4:01 PM.

Meeting Materials

- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Minutes Draft 11/28/2023*
- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Agenda 12/19/2023*
- *FY24 Business Enhancement Grant Application Review*