

Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 19, 2024 9:00 AM-12:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

Voting Board Members Present: Alyson Eastman (Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture – designee for Anson Tebbetts, Secretary), Chair; Elisabeth Nance (designee for Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development); Oliver Pierson (designee for Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner, Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation; Alisha Utter (Vice Chair, arrives 11:23); Bob Lesnikoski; Will Belongia (departs 11:28); David Hubbard; Chris Castano; Alan Calfee; Alex Barrett; Donna Young; Tyler Miller; Megan Camp

Voting Board Members not Present: Jon Ramsay; Kathy Murphy-Moriarty; Alison Low

Non-Voting Board Members Present: Liz Gleason (designee for Gus Seelig, Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board); Sarah Isham (Vermont Economic Development Authority; designee for Cassie Polhemus, CEO); Ellen Kahler (Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund; arrives 9:11)

Non-Voting Board Members not Present: None

Staff: Clare Salerno, Elizabeth Sipple, Trevor Lowell, (Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets); Katharine Servidio (Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation)

Guests: Christine Dorsey McGowan, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund Forest Products Development Program Manager; Steve Bick, Vermont Forest Business School Owner

Members of the Public: None

Alyson Eastman calls the meeting to order at 9:05 AM.

Oliver Pierson introduces Alex Barrett, new board member in the consulting forester seat.

MOTION to approve minutes from the October 15, 2024 board meeting – Will Belongia motions, David Hubbard seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Elizabeth Sipple provided an overview of the presentations from Service Provider grantees/contractors.

Vermont Community Loan Fund SPROUT Loan Fund Presentation – Will Belongia

Will provided an overview of the VT Community Loan Fund and the SPROUT Program funded through WLEB. Will shared SPROUT program impacts and future goals.

DISCUSSION

Vermont Forest Industry Network Presentation – Christine Dorsey McGowan

Christine provided an overview of the Forest Products Development Program at the Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (VSJF), funded through WLEB. Christine shared program impacts since 2016. Christine described trends in the forest products industry.

DISCUSSION

Vermont Forest Business School (FBS) – Steve Bick

Steve provided an overview of the Vermont Forest Business School and the programming funded through WLEB since 2020. Steve shared program structure, impacts, and future goals.

DISCUSSION

Grantee Site Visit Updates – Chris Castano and David Hubbard

- Chris Castano provided an update and learnings from visit to Sheehan & Sons Sawmill.
- David Hubbard provided an update and learnings from visits to Royalton Meats and Rockledge Woodworks.

Grant Negotiation Update – Alyson Eastman

MOTION to move to executive session to discuss a contract with proprietary and confidential business information – Elisabeth Nance motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Executive Session begins

Elizabth Sipple provided an update about negotiations with a grantee business. No action taken.

Executive Session ends

Alyson Eastman stated that no action was taken in Executive Session.

Administration Updates

- Agriculture, Food & Markets – Alyson Eastman
- Forest, Parks & Recreation – Oliver Pierson
- Agency of Commerce & Community Development – Elisabeth Nance

Other Announcements – none

Public Comment – none

MOTION to adjourn – Elisabeth Nance motions, Megan Camp seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Meeting is adjourned by Alyson Eastman at 12:03 PM.

Meeting Materials

- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes Draft 10/15/24*
- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Agenda 11/19/24*