

Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, November 28, 2023 PM, 1:00 PM-4:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

Voting Board Members Present: Alyson Eastman (Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture – designee for Anson Tebbetts, Secretary – arrives 1:30), Chair; Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation (departs 2:30, returns 2:45); Alisha Utter; Tyler Miller; Donna Young; Bob Lesnikoski; Megan Camp (departs 1:30, returns 2:37); Alison Low; Brooke Gladstone; David Hubbard, Will Belongia, Charlie Hancock, Vice Chair; Jon Ramsay

Voting Board Members not Present: Marisa Mauro, Tayt Brooks (Agency of Commerce – designee for Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary); Alan Calfee

Non-Voting Board Members Present: Ellen Kahler, Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund (departs 2:10); Liz Gleason, designee for Gus Seelig, Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (departs 2:10); Sarah Isham, Vermont Economic Development Authority, designee for Cassandra Polhemus, CEO; Chris Castano

Non-Voting Board Members not Present:

Staff: Elizabeth Sipple, Clare Salerno, Diana Ferguson, Abbey Willard, Laura Ginsburg (Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets – arrives 1:30), departs 2:11); Katharine Servidio (Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation),

Guests: None

Members of the Public: None

Elizabeth Sipple calls the meeting to order at 1:04 PM.

MOTION to approve minutes from the October 17, 2023 Board– Alison Low motions, Jon Ramsay seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Working Lands Program Updates – Elizabeth Sipple

- 64 Business Enhancement Grant applications totaling \$2.4 million in requests
- ARPA and Supply Chain Impact Grants open on 12/8 for the pre-application
- Upcoming site visits 11/30 and 12/8

Service Provider Grant Discussion and Decisions – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth provided an overview of Service Provider Grants and the applications received.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to fund the slate of four service provider applications (Center for Women & Enterprise , Intervale Center, Northern Forest Center, Northwest Regional Planning Commission) – David Hubbard motions, Alisha Utter seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

- Abstentions – Jon Ramsay abstains from voting on the Center for Women & Enterprise

Producer Association Grants – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth provided an overview of Producer Association Grants and the applications received.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to fund the slate of 4 producer association applications (Vermont Cheese Council, Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association, Vermont Woodlands Association) – Charlie Hancock motions, Brooke Gladstone seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

- Abstentions – Alisha Utter abstains from Vermont Vegetable and Berry Growers Association

Administration Updates

- Department of Forests, Parks & Recreation – Danielle Fitzko
- Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets – Laura Ginsburg & Abbey Willard

Service Provider Contracts – Elizabeth Sipple

Liz Gleason and Ellen Kahler depart because VHCB and VSJF submitted proposals. Elizabeth Sipple provided an overview of the Service Provider Contracts and review process.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to fund the slate as recommended by the committee at \$519,531 – Charlie Hancock motions, Alison Low seconds

- VHCB Agriculture: \$99,065
- Beef on Dairy VSJF: \$100,000
- Northeast Forests: \$75,000
- VHCB – Forestry: \$99,986
- Rival Brands: \$33,250
- Paul, Frank & Collins: \$55,800

MOTION passes with unanimous voice vote

MOTION not to fund UVM Extension – David Hubbard motions, Charlie Hancock seconds

MOTION passes with unanimous voice vote

Other Announcements – none

Public Comment – none

MOTION to adjourn – Charlie Hancock motions, Danielle Fitzko seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Meeting is adjourned by Alyson Eastman at 3:10 PM.

Meeting Materials

- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Minutes Draft 10/17/2023*
- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Agenda 11/28/2023*

- *FY24 WLEF Service Provider Contract Proposal Review*
- *FY24 Producer Association Grant Application Review*
- *FY24 Service Provider Grant Application Review*