

Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, February 13, 2024 PM, 1:00 PM-4:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

Voting Board Members Present: Oliver Pierson (designee for Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation); Charlie Hancock, Vice Chair; Donna Young; Bob Lesnikoski; Alison Low (departs 3:38), Brooke Gladstone; Will Belongia (Departs 2:55); Chris Castano; Jon Ramsay; Tyler Miller; David Hubbard

Voting Board Members not Present: Alyson Eastman (Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture – designee for Anson Tebbetts, Secretary), Chair; Tayt Brooks (Deputy Secretary, Agency of Commerce & Community Development); Alisha Utter; Megan Camp; Alan Calfee; Marisa Mauro

Non-Voting Board Members Present: Liz Gleason (designee for Gus Seelig, Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board), Sarah Isham (arrives 2:32; Vermont Economic Development Authority; designee for Cassandra Polhemus, CEO)

Non-Voting Board Members not Present: Gus Seelig, Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board; Ellen Kahler (Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund)

Staff: Kristina Sweet, Clare Salerno, Laura Ginsburg (departs 2:25), Abbey Willard (arrives 1:08, departs 3:00), Diana Ferguson (Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets), Katharine Servidio (arrives 3:15; Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation).

Guests: None

Members of the Public: None

Kristina Sweet calls the meeting to order at 1:05 PM.

Introductions of WLEB members to Oliver Pierson

MOTION to approve minutes from the January 23, 2024 Board meeting – Bob Lesnikoski motions, Brooke Gladstone seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote. David Hubbard abstains

Review Recommendations and Decisions for Supply Chain Impact Pre-applications

Kristina Sweet reminded WLEB members that pre-applications have limited details by design; reviewers are recommending based on quality of concept. Kristina Sweet reminded WLEB that there are 45 applications requesting more than \$6 million, and there are \$750,000 available to award in the final round. Kristina Sweet noted that reviewers have recommended \$3.9 million to move forward, but this is still far beyond what is available so WLEB will need to further reduce that today to around \$1.5 million. Kristina Sweet reminded WLEB members that the goal is to only invite back businesses to go through the effort of drafting a full application if they are likely to receive funds.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance Godfrey's Sugarhouse to the final application round – David Hubbard motions, Chris Castano seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance Commodities Natural Market to the final application round – Bob Lesnikoski motions, Donna Young seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

MOTION to not advance Caledonia Food Coop to the final application round – Charlie Hancock motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote. Alison Low abstains.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance ANM, Inc. to the final application round – Alison Low motions, Donna Young seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote. Jon Ramsay abstains.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance North Station Millwork to the final application round – Chris Castano motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote. David Hubbard abstains.

MOTION to not advance Sole Connection Farm to the final application round – Jon Ramsay motions, Tyler Miller seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance Osprey Hill Farm to the final application round - Bob Lesnikoski motions, Chris Castano seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance Salvation Farms to the final application round - Donna Young motions, Alison Low seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote. Jon Ramsay abstains.

MOTION to not advance Ryegate Associates to the final application round – David Hubbard motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION carries with majority voice vote.

MOTION to advance to the final application round Champlain Valley Grain Center, Addison County Relocalization Network, Goodridge Lumber, LSF Forest Products, Myers Produce, VT Farmers Food Center, Winooski Valley Cooperative Market, Miller Farm, Waterman Orchards, Green Dream Farm, Kerber Company LLC, David White Trucking, Sheehan and Sons Lumber, Zion Growers - David Hubbard motions, Donna Young seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote. Bob Lesnikoski abstains from Myers Producer and LSF Forest Products. David Hubbard abstains from Sheehan and Sons Lumber. Tyler Miller abstains from

Waterman Orchards. Charlie Hancock abstains from Green Dream Farm. Jon Ramsay abstains from Champlain Valley Grain Center.

MOTION to not advance to the final application round VT Flower Consortium LLC, Rebel East, Corvus Ferments L.L.C., P & R Lumber LLC, Moksha Farm LLC, Cypress Woodworks LLC, Kingdom Brewing LLC, Hatch Space, Flower Gap Farm, Big Paw Firewood & Landscaping LLC, Village Specialties L3C, Christopher Benoit LLC, Good Hands Creamery, La Panciata, Hall and Breen Farm LLC, 3 Corners Market, Northeast Grass-Fed Beef Initiative, Pleasant Valley Orchards, Elijah David Clark LLC, Green Mountain Micro Brews - Alison Low motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

ARPA Primary Producer Impact Grant Pre-application discussion and Voting

Kristina Sweet reminded WLEB members that reviewers recommended \$2.3 million to move to next stage, and the recommendation is to that reduce number to about \$1.6 million.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to advance Green Mountain Dairy, Machia and Sons Dairy, Machia Brothers Dairy to the final application round - Brooke Gladstone motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance Kingdom Creamery to the final application round – Brooke Gladstone motions, Bob Lesnikoski seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote. Jon Ramsay abstains.

DISCUSSION

MOTION to not advance Larson Farm to the final application round – Jon Ramsay motions, Brooke Gladstone seconds

Motion carries with unanimous voice vote.

MOTION to advance to the final application round Jasa Family Farm, Kerwin Hill Farm dba Sweetland Farm, Severy Farm, Last Resort Farm, Deep Meadow Farm, Carman Brook Farm, Belter Family Partnership, Ananda Gardens, Simply Organic Sap, La Garagista and to not advance to the final application round MKVT Farm, FUNJ Shrooming, Ellison Estate Vineyard LLC, Briggs Farm, Basin Farm, Christopher Benoit, Honey Do LLC, Manning Dairy, Ledgeneer Farm, North Branch Vineyards, Pistil Production, Stewart Enterprises, LaBree Logging, Mettowee Valley Maple, Stonyhill Sugarhouse, The Dihedral Group LLC, Berger Maple - Bob Lesnikoski motions, Brooke Gladstone seconds

MOTION carries with unanimous voice vote

Administration Updates

Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets – Kristina Sweet

Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation – Oliver Pierson

Other Announcements

- David Hubbard requests that a future meeting provide an update on older projects that have received extensions, specifically PK Wood Pellet.

Public Comment – none

Meeting is adjourned by Charlie Hancock 3:53 PM.

- No quorum to make an official motion to adjourn

Meeting Materials

- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Minutes Draft 1/23/2024*
- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Agenda 2/13/2024*
- *FY24 ARPA & Supply Chain Impact Grant Pre-applications & scores*