

# Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Notes

Tuesday, February 21, 2023 at 2:30-5:00 PM

Microsoft Teams

**Voting Board Members Present:** Alyson Eastman (Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture – designee for Anson Tebbetts, Secretary), Chair; Charlie Hancock, Vice Chair (departs 5:04 PM); Randall Szott (Agency of Commerce – designee for Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary); Katharine Servidio (designee for Danielle Fitzko, Interim Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation), Bob Lesnikoski; Tyler Miller; Donna Young; Alison Low; Will Belongia; Alisha Utter; David Hubbard; Megan Camp (arrives 2:38 PM, departs 4:05)

**Voting Board Members not Present:** Marisa Mauro

**Non-Voting Board Members Present:** Ellen Kahler, Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

**Non-Voting Board Members not Present:** Gus Seelig, Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board; Sarah Isham, Vermont Economic Development Authority, designee for Cassandra Polhemus, CEO

**Staff:** Elizabeth Sipple, Clare Salerno, Diana Ferguson, Kristina Sweet (Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets)

**Guests:** Kristina Brines and Kerin Stackpole, Attorneys from Paul, Frank + Collins

**Members of the Public:** None

Deputy Alyson Eastman calls the meeting to order at 2:34 PM.

**MOTION** to adjust agenda by moving 4:15 PM item (ARPA pitches) to 2:50 PM and removing Administrative Updates in the interest of time – Charlie Hancock motions, Donna Young seconds

**MOTION** passes by unanimous voice vote

**MOTION** to approve minutes from January 24, 2023 WLEB meeting – Tyler Miller motions, Charlie Hancock seconds

**MOTION** passes by unanimous voice vote

**Program Updates** – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth shares information on the FY22 Impact Report, February legislative hearings, potential new Board members, and a recent grant deobligation.

**ARPA Primary Producer Impact Grant Applicant Project Pitch** – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth provides background information on ARPA Grant applicant pitches planned for April 2022 and will confirm procedure via an email to the Board.

**Building Executive Business Skills (BEBS) Program Presentation with Paul, Frank + Collins**

Presenters Kristina (Kris) Brines and Kerin Stackpole, both directing attorneys at Paul, Frank + Collins, share an overview of the Building Executive Business Skills Program funded under their FY22 WLEI contract. After the slide deck presentation, Kris and Kerin take questions from the Board.

## **Building Executive Business Skills (BEBS) Program – Participant Experiences Panel**

### Panelists:

- Ron Lencz, Sweet Tree Maple – Island Pond
- Brian Moses, Britton Lumber - Fairlee
- Becky Castle, Fisher Brothers Farm/Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream – Shelburne (also a 2x WLEB grantee)

Panelists take questions from the Board regarding their experience as participants in the BEBS Program.

### DISCUSSION

#### **Proposal for Business Enhancement Award Replacement – Elizabeth Sipple**

Elizabeth presents options of new FY23 Business Enhancement Grant awardees due to Vermont Malthouse having declined their award of \$35,000. Potential recipients are Myers Produce, Farm at Wheeler Mountain, Mureta's Butcher Shop, and Kalche Wine Cooperative.

**MOTION** to use \$35,000 of Southshire Meats' deobligated FY22 grant to fund Mureta's Butcher Shop in FY23 and offer Myers Produce an award of \$35,000 (\$11,716 in remaining funds would roll over to next year) – David Hubbard motions, Alison Low seconds

3 in favor, 4 opposed

**MOTION** fails

**MOTION** to use \$35,000 of Southshire Meats deobligated FY22 grant to fund Mureta's Butcher Shop in FY23 and the following:

- Offer Myers Produce an award of \$35,000 and explain the landscape of funding opportunities for the fall and the competitiveness of grant application if they have received recent funding; allow 48-72 hours to make a decision
- If Myers Produce declines award, offer \$35,000 to Kalche Wine Cooperative
- If Myers Produce agrees with award, Kalche will receive \$11,716

Alisha Utter motions, Alison Low seconds

**MOTION** passes by unanimous voice vote

Bob Lesnikoski recuses from Myers Produce and Kalche Wine Cooperative

**Other Announcements – none**

**Public Comment – none**

**MOTION** to adjourn – Bob Lesnikoski motions, Alison Low seconds

**MOTION** passes by unanimous voice vote

Meeting is adjourned by Alyson Eastman at 5:20 PM.

Meeting Materials

- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Agenda 2/21/2023*
- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes Draft 1/24/2023*
- *Statement of Work for Building Executive Business Skills Program*