

Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes

Tuesday, May 14, 2024 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 1:20 PM), Chair; Charlie Hancock (departs 4:01), Vice Chair; Chris Castano; Jon Ramsay; Alisha Utter; Alison Low (departs 4:05); David Hubbard; Donna Young; Tyler Miller (arrives 3:17 PM); Oliver Pierson (designee for Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner, Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation; arrives 2:00 PM)

Voting Board Members not Present: Tayt Brooks (designee for Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development); Bob Lesnikoski; Will Belongia; Megan Camp; Alan Calfee

Non-Voting Board Members Present: Liz Gleason (designee for Gus Seelig, Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board; departs 1:30-1:51 PM and at 4:05), Sarah Isham (Vermont Economic Development Authority; designee for Cassie Polhemus, CEO); Ellen Kahler (Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund)

Non-Voting Board Members not Present: None

Staff: Elizabeth Sipple, Clare Salerno, Abbey Willard (departs 4:03), Laura Ginsburg (departs 2:30), Trevor Lowell (Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets); Katharine Servidio (Department of Forest, Parks & Recreation)

Guests: Julia Scheier, Market Development Section Chief, VAAFM (departs 1:54); Nina Gage, Agriculture Water Quality Division Assistant Director, VAAFM (departs 3:30)

Members of the Public: None

Abbey Willard calls the meeting to order at 1:11 PM.

- Abbey introduces Trevor Lowell, new Assistant Director of Agriculture Development

MOTION to approve minutes from the April 23, 2024 Board meeting – Charlie Hancock motions, Alisha Utter seconds

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

VAAFM Presentation – Looking at Sector Needs and FY25 Funding in the Agriculture Sector – Abbey Willard

Elizabeth Sipple reminded the board that the goal of these presentations is to identify the existing funding available and what the gaps are that WLEI can fill in FY25. The presentations and other knowledge today will be used to build budgeting scenarios to discuss at the June symposium.

Abbey Willard provided an overview of the [Future of Agriculture Commission](#) Priorities and FY24 Program Demand.

- DISCUSSION

Julia Scheier provided an overview of Market Development Grants at VAAFM.

Laura Ginsburg provided an overview of NE-DBIC grants for FY25.

- DISCUSSION

Nina Gage provided an overview of Water Quality programs available in FY25.

- DISCUSSION

WLEB reflection on presentations and gaps and priorities to discussed in FY25 WLEI budget conversations.

- DISCUSSION

FPR Presentation – Looking at Sector Needs and FY25 Funding in the Forestry Sector – Oliver Pierson

Oliver provided an overview of forestry funding available in FY25.

- DISCUSSION

Program Updates – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth tasked the board to continue looking across the landscape that you are most connected with and to come to the June symposium with funding priorities and strategies for the upcoming year.

Elizabeth reminded the board to RSVP to the symposium using the form that Clare sent.

Elizabeth reminded the board that she will be on maternity leave starting June 17th. She reminded the board that she will develop both the agendas with the symposium planning committee prior to her leave and that the committee will take on facilitation.

Elizabeth reminded the board that they will be asked to participate more deeply in site visits.

Elizabeth announced that the WLEB Sharepoint site is available for WLEB members to access and that the sign-up sheet for the site visits will be on there.

Other Announcements – none

Public Comment – none

Meeting is adjourned by Alyson Eastman at 4:07 PM.

- Donna Young motions, David Hubbard seconds

Meeting Materials

- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Minutes Draft 4/23/2024.*
- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Agenda 5/14/2024.*
- *VAAF and FPR FY25 Funding for Working Lands Businesses*