

Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Notes

Annual Symposium – Fiscal Year 2024

Tuesday, August 22, 2023 PM, 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Inn at Shelburne Farms

Voting Board Members Present: Alyson Eastman (Deputy Secretary, Agency of Agriculture – designee for Anson Tebbetts, Secretary), Chair; Charlie Hancock, Vice Chair; Tayt Brooks (Agency of Commerce – designee for Lindsay Kurrle, Secretary)(departs 10:32 AM); Paul Frederick (Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation – designee for Danielle Fitzko, Commissioner); Alison Low; David Hubbard; Alisha Utter; Megan Camp; Will Belongia

Voting Board Members not Present: Jon Ramsay, Tyler Miller, Donna Young, Alan Calfee, Marisa Mauro, Bob Lesnikoski

Non-Voting Board Members Present: Ellen Kahler, Executive Director, Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund; Liz Gleason, designee for Gus Seelig, Executive Director, Vermont Housing and Conservation Board (departs 4:31 PM)

Non-Voting Board Members not Present: Sarah Isham, Vermont Economic Development Authority, designee for Cassandra Polhemus, CEO

Staff: Elizabeth Sipple, Clare Salerno, Diana Ferguson, Kristina Sweet, Abbey Willard (Agency of Agriculture, Food, and Markets); Katharine Servidio (Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation)

Guests: None

Members of the Public: None

Elizabeth Sipple calls the meeting to order at 9:18 AM.

Introduction of Hosting Organization – Megan Camp, Shelburne Farms

Agenda Overview – Elizabeth Sipple

MOTION to approve minutes from the June 28, 2023 Board Symposium – David Hubbard motions, Charlie Hancock seconds

Paul Frederick abstains

MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Updates to Vision, Mission, Strategies – Clare Salerno

Clare introduces the purpose of these updates and describes work completed to date; Board members provide input on wording of vision and mission.

DISCUSSION

Review of Grant Application Scoring Criteria – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth introduces scoring criteria for FY24 business grant applications that require Board input, e.g., goals and outcomes, financial statements, measures of business vitality, worker well-being, social impact/marginalized populations, financial need, and letters of support.

DISCUSSION

Continuous Improvement of the Grant Application Review Process – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth proposes revising the grant application review process to include sector-specific review teams and requests input on how applicants' financial documentation is reviewed.

DISCUSSION

FY24 Provisional Budget Discussion: Review and update contracts section – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth reviews the proposed FY24 WLEB budget line items related to service provider contracts and requests input to finalize dollar amounts for each category.

DISCUSSION

- Financial analyst Lawrence Miller, proposed contractor for reviewing financial statements for WLEI's two impact grant rounds – increase amount from \$5,000 to \$10,000
- \$50,000 minimum for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) consultant per advisement based on AAFM staff's assessment
- Move remainder of \$36,200 into Supply Chain + Market Level Impact Grant category (formerly \$750,000) to become \$786,200

MOTION to pass FY24 Provisional Budget as proposed – Charlie Hancock motions, Alison Low seconds
MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

FY24 Board Calendar Review – Clare Salerno

Clare presents the FY24 WLEB Calendar including funding opportunity, review, and Board meeting dates. Board members complete a questionnaire indicating their availability to participate as a reviewer for FY24 grant applications.

Grantee Update – Clare Salerno

Clare presents updates on FY20-FY22 grant projects that are in process, amended/extended, and deobligated.

PK Wood Pellet / Lyme Green Heat Grantee Update and Decision – Charlie Hancock

Charlie shares updates from PK Wood Pellet's current grant project with a recommendation to extend their grant period as requested.

DISCUSSION

WLEB Engagement in FY24 – Elizabeth Sipple

Elizabeth suggests several opportunities for increasing WLEI visibility by the public and the legislature in the upcoming year.

DISCUSSION

Other Announcements – Paul Frederick's last meeting will be next month.

Public Comment – none

MOTION to adjourn – Charlie Hancock motions, Will Belongia seconds
MOTION passes by unanimous voice vote

Meeting is adjourned by Alyson Eastman at 5:10 PM.

Meeting Materials

- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Minutes Draft 6/28/2023*
- *Working Lands Enterprise Board Meeting Agenda 8/22/2023*
- *Part 2 Agenda*
- *Vision, Mission, Strategies*
- *FY24 WLEB Calendar*
- *DEI questionnaire*
- *Review questionnaire*
- *Grantee updates*
- *Review options table*
- *Review by sector scenario*
- *FY23 Business Enhancement and ARPA Impact scoring criteria*
- *Proposal from Paul Frank + Collins*
- *Update from PK Wood Pellet*