

Board Meeting
January 8th 6:30pm
Brattleboro USDA Office

Present: Cory Ross; District Manager; Heather Blunk, Ag Outreach Specialist; Isabel Bowman, Conservation Specialist; Garrett Manchester; Board Members: Pieter van Loon, Meg Kluge

Zoom Participants: Olivia Carlson; NRCS Acting Zone Conservationist, Board member, Linda Corse; Cat Abbott and Olivia Butterman FSA County Executive Director Rutland & Bennington

NRCS Updates Olivia:

- USDA Cars were backed into and damaged in office parking lot in December
 - USDA filled out Form 91 about incident reports. Submit picture, vehicle management tools.
 - They will tow the car
- There is a continuing resolution, avoiding shut down.
- CSP Classic 2025- 1/24/2024
- EQIP 2025- 2/7/2025
- EQIP IRA 2025-2/7/2025
- AMA 2025 -2/7/2025
- Act Now 2025- 2/5/2025 ranked 14 days after having the application assessed.
- 340, 329, 345, 512, 336
- Protocol for shutdowns is to hope for a bill to pass and continue to have funding. If not then we bring in laptops and all government equipment. You will get an email about what / who will be able to work during that time. No access to the field office until told otherwise.
- FSA Olivia Butterman County Executive Director for Rutland and Bennington.
 - Marketing Assistance for Speciality Crops (MASC). Opened December 10th and closes January 10th. One time direct payment no strings attached. Report sales and then sign form and eligibility.
- USDA office will be closed January 9th in observance of President Jimmy Carter

VACD Update:

- The Executive Director candidate has withdrawn application and the hiring committee will have to do second interviews with other applicants.
- Executive committee will meet and review the draft code of conduct.
- Rutland has hired Katie Stiles as Executive Director (formerly District Manager).

Financial Reports

- Q2 ended at end of December
 - \$ 118,685.97 income
 - \$ 112,504.07 expenses
 - \$ 6,181 net

- No more core services income for this year, we're already paid full amount.
- Done with the greeter program. Did not cost us anything to run the program.
- Lake Raponda is done
- VT community foundation we will be able to get more from them in spring
- Stiltgrass is hard to predict because some money goes to Essex and hard to know when they need it. Essex has not spent previous agreement so they will invoice us something this year
- Will get rest of Locally Led this year
- We under utilized NACD but now are pulling it down. Will not hit \$45,000 . Will move to VACD as host and will receive more money.
- Expenses: other admin = promotional materials.
- Salaries and wages is light because of delay of hiring Mae
- Unemployment and workers comp is low we don't know why
- Questions
 - 233% on consulting and engineering. Had two projects that got pushed to 2025 and this is why we need to review the budget.
 - Donations are all from annual meeting and gardeners club
 - DEM rep dollars. Cory gets to use the billable rate of \$77 an hour.
- Balance sheet standard
 - On accrual basis
 - It's a bit misleading because we have bills which do not reflect in balance.
 - \$37,000 in bills we need to pay but waiting to be paid to pay other people.
 - Biggest unknown are CISMA and LISFF
- Balance sheet detail
 - Shows every transaction
- The financials have become more complicated as we go and the District needs to do something soon to support Cory with this.
 - We have \$5,000 to hire financial service to look at all of this and decide what is the most efficient way to do this
 - Could hire Admin Assistance that would be part time, we have this in the budget. Then have someone as a controller to look at books.
 - It would be good to know if VACD will hire someone this year to help districts with these issues.

South East Supervisory Union Meeting

- Night works best for our board
- Linda will ask them about January 21 and 22

Director Report

- Looking to buy two canoes. Meg says we can borrow hers as well.
 - Looking to hire 3 seasonal staff to finish water chestnut pulling to finish it this summer
 - Trailer and boats can be stored at Megs
- Plant sale advertising

- Sunny Radio in Keene might be worth reaching out to for advertising
- Write an article not an add for plant sale for papers
- BCTV for plant sale
- Deerfield valley news

Minutes

- November 6, 2024 Minutes
 - Linda added to complete November 2024 . Edits were made.
 - Accept minutes as they are and revise later if needed.

Motion to accept minutes moved, seconded and passed with correction

- December 11th minutes

Motion to accept minutes moved, seconded and passed with correction

Next Meeting date is February 5th at Geofs

Motion to go into Executive session was moved, seconded and passed. The Executive Session began at 8:30 pm.

Motion to exit Executive session at 8:38 pm was moved, seconded and passed.

Motion to accept Isabel Bowman's evaluation and authorize increase to her salary according to our policy was moved, seconded and passed.

Respectfully submitted,
Heather Blunk