

Windham County Natural Resource Conservation District Minutes

May 11, 2022, 6:30 pm

795 Bonnyvale Rd Brattleboro VT

Present: Meg Kluge, board supervisor; Cory Ross: District Manager; Heather Blunk, Agricultural Outreach Specialist.

Joining via ZOOM: Linda Corse, Pieter van Loon, Katie Morrison: board supervisors, and Phylixia Moore, NRCS.

District managers report

-Haywards planting is in need of volunteers. We could possibly reach out to the career center who might have a horticulture program. In the future we may need to consider when applying for grants if it would require paying people or volunteers.

-Southern VT CISMA needs a Unique ID. Cory has asked Jolene and not heard back. We do not have a number currently. We need to submit documents that verify us and we have all except the letter of incorporation. Funds can be used over three years so there is still time.

Update from Phylixia Moore, NRCS Zone Conservationist:

-Continuously moving toward getting pre-approval for round one. Deadline is this Friday, May 13th, and state wide is next Friday, May 20th.

-Phylixia is excited for the local working group meeting and will help Cory and Heather organize the meeting.

-The feedback from the last proposal is that we will need to be more specific about projects, practices, resources concerns and how much we would spend. Proposals are due June 3rd. With the new State Conservationist local funds will be reviewed as zone areas. This means applications will be ranked against local funds, not state. Proposals need to be VERY specific, and needs to be projects that would not be funded otherwise.

-Round two applications looking for assessments on June 10th. Focused on Cropland and grazing applications.

-They are looking to add another position to the Brattleboro office. Another Soil con or soil con tech.

-June 9th and 10th Travis Thomason, NRCS VT State Conservationist, will be in the south zone area. He will be in the Brattleboro office one of those days.

Plant Sale Review

- Everyone thought it went really well
- A lot of people walked around the check in. Next year we can make a funnel so people cannot do that.
- Long lines were from PayPal and same day sales. Need a table dedicated to same day sales next year.

- We can hand a clipboard with newsletter signup and suggestions down the line to keep people busy while they wait.
- We could have the stream table there to entertain people in line
- Have two posters with all of the information about the plants on them, one where people are waiting in line to check in and one in main sale area.
- We would like to thank the volunteers who helped us. Send a physical card in the mail. At least to Andrea and family, Marie, Tabatha, Gail, Pat, Penny, Sherry, Samara, Susan and all

Core funding request

- \$ 250,000 into our core services through the agency of Agriculture budget so we get \$ 20,000 per district. This means we might receive \$ 27,000 next year. This will be administered through NRCC. Might need to do more reporting, but that is not a big deal.

District Pay and Benefits Policy

- Cory changed all of the new language from the February meeting. Only other changes are under the Benefits section. Cafeteria plan with 2 people is not possible. New language says if it is feasible to provide one in the future then we can do so. Cory has reached out to VACD to see if we can pull resources together. Retirement accounts can match up to 3% and won't be more than 18% like stated in the document.
- Under sick leave it says sick leave does not roll over one year to the next. If we allowed it to accumulate for 4 months and they needed to be gone for 4 months. We don't know how to account for rolling over sick leave into a billable rate year after year. People shouldn't be able to accumulate indefinitely but maybe up to a month. Employees can approach the board when a specific situation appears. Land Trust is allowed to accumulate about 5 weeks.
- "Sick leave rolls over from one year to the next however only allowed to accumulate up to 4 weeks". "Unused sick leave is surrendered when the employee leaves".
- *MEG MOTIONS TO MOVE TO ACCEPT POLICY PIETER SECONDS MOTION PASSED.*

Brattleboro Farmer Market Rain Garden

- The revised proposal is under budget
- As built drawing map needs to be acquired
- *PIETER MOVES TO ACCEPT PROPOSAL AS AMENDED MEG SECONDS WE ARE APPROVING THE PROPOSAL FOR DuBois & King, inc. SERVICES. MOTION PASSED.*

Minutes

- Heather will make changes to the language of a motion getting passed as opposed to moved.
- *MOTIONED TO MOVE MINUTES AS CORRECTED PASSED*

Future agenda items

- Budget
- Stream table storage

Next Meeting

- June 7th 6:30 at Meg's Place