

## WCNRCD Board Meeting

September 19, 2024

USDA Service Center 28 vernon street, Suite 332, Brattleboro VT, 05301

And over zoom

**Present:** Cory Ross; District Manager, Isabel Bowman; Conservation Specialist, Linda Corse, Meg Kluge; Board Members, Garrett Manchester; Americorps

**Zoom Participants:** Heather Blunk; Agricultural Specialist; Pieter van Loon; Board member, Olivia Carlson; Acting NRCS Zone Conservationist

### **NRCS Update:**

Still working through obligations

Heather will be getting mobile tools that are non-mobile phones. These will be useful for working in the field on mapping

Our new hire is getting background checked and will get a USDA computer

Locally led process meeting in Randolph on September 27th, this will meeting also be recorded

South zone staff meeting in Bromley on September 20th

ProTracts is the payment system used by NRCA and will be shutdown for processing – will be down for two weeks in October

### **FY24 Financial Reports**

NRCC is our largest funder – lots of state grants. Sales programs, rentals and workshops were the second largest, and the third largest was municipal and towns.

Natural Resource conservation and restoration is the largest income by area of work, mostly comprised of dam removals. The second largest is from agriculture.

Funding by activity were mostly from sales program, secondly outreach, education and technical assistance to producers, and thirdly greeter program and water chestnut survey and removal

Funding by staff time is mostly the greeter program, secondly outreach and technical assistance to producers, and thirdly conservation planning.

Our 5-year district budget growth shows a jump of \$10,000 up to \$80,000 since last year

Looking at the budget (setup in December) to actual, the biggest discrepancy is the Long Island Sound Futures Fund (LISFF), followed by the Dummerston implementation as the work was

completed after July 1. The Jacksonville berm contractors are working to meet the project deadline but that will be moved into the next fiscal year.

American Farmland Trust (AFT) came in under budget. Heather wasn't fully trained before, only one contract was assigned to AFT RCPP, working towards allocating more time to AFT in the next year,

### **Update on Agricultural Resource Specialist Hiring Process – Board to potentially approval hire**

**Motion to approve hiring Maelenn Masson was moved, seconded and passed**

### **Annual meeting planning**

Still need a keynote speaker: Vern Grubinger was suggested. Heather will contact him.

Need ideas for what they could speak on

- Speak about the Conservation Districts

Catering and location deposit paid for

Musician secured

Need desserts from the board

Registration page is set up. People can email us if they need to register for free

Silent auction is still needed. Will speak with Blue Seal. Tour of Corse farm. Literature or posters. Equine Experience with Meg. Have a gift certificate in envelopes and a summary document.

- Bascom maple syrup
- Green Mountain Orchard cider
- Paradox bakery
- Sidehill farm jam
- Boyd farm
- Retreat farm
- Kayla yoga class
- Plant Skyd
- Swag

## **DEI Self-assessment session**

Chinese mid autumn festival videos and discussion

## **District Manager's report**

Adopt a drain raising awareness about storm drains

Significant increase in funds from this time last year. Cory has been invoicing quickly to keep funds in our account.

Decolonizing event was very organized and detailed. Serin provided a great perspective.

**Motion to approve June 5 and August 22 was moved, seconded and passed.**

## **Other business:**

Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership farm tours were beneficial to hear from a smaller dairy farm in Franklin County and small vegetable operation that had helpful critiques of NRCS to get more engagement. Rural Development provides funding gaps.

Strategic planning is on the horizon to have more organization. This effort is being worked on with outside consultants for VACD.

Next meeting on October 9<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm.

**Motion to go into Executive session was moved, seconded and passed. Executive session began at 8:27pm.**

**Motion to come out of executive session at 8:43 was moved, seconded and passed.**

**Motion to approve Cory's recommended action with regards to seasonal invasive species technician, seconded and passed.**

**Motion to reclassify Heather Blunk as salaried moved, seconded and passed.**

**Motion to adjourn moved, seconded and passed.**

**Meeting ended at 8:51 PM.**

Respectfully submitted,

Isabel Bowman