

WCNRCD Board Meeting
September 10, 2025 6:30 PM
and over Zoom

Present: Cory Ross, District Manager; Meg Kluge, Geof Dolman, Pieter van Loon, and Katie Morrison, board supervisors; Heather Blunk and Mae Masson, Ag Resource Specialist; Arrow Kitchens, Administrative Assistant; Phyllicia Moore, NRCS; Isabel Bowman, Conservation Specialist.

Zoom Participants:

Land Acknowledgement: *We respectfully acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Abenaki People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.*

NRCS Updates:

- Working to review applications, field visits are being made, working with landowners.
- For FY25 discussion about local fund pool. Local fund pool FY25 funded applications included: ag: five high tunnel systems, pasture, cover cropping; forestry: 15 submitted, 2 funded, \$160,000 - brush management, wildlife habitat, early successional planting. We funded 5 CSPs, 2 RCPPs in Windham County. For FY 26 there is still a need for forestry funding.
- Personnel updates: new Brattleboro position: won't be in the office for at least another week as they're doing the transition. Olivia is coordinating the transition.
- Working through the process for access for Arrow. Moving forward, just need to complete paperwork. Should be good to go, just working its way through the system.
- Will be updating MOUs and UCAs into the new template. Will join for the last meeting in September and share a template then.
- There will be an SOP that will be added for partner onboarding, for new hires.
- It's still looking like five spaces will be reserved for NRCD to be using equipment and working in the office (not working in the office regularly, won't count to the five).
- There will be some upcoming changes with processes for the Farmer First program.

Financial Reports:

- Transition to QuickBooks online has been a little complicated, financial reports look a bit different.
- Dave's recommendation is that we shouldn't do profit and loss by class, we don't need that level of detail.
- Income was 93% of projected income.

- Quarter four was a more expensive quarter, higher payroll and equipment costs (specifically the truck).
- Cory has no concerns - transition to QuickBooks is moving along and in the long run should be easier. Eventually he will be able to upload the projected budget into QuickBooks.

Proposed Revisions to Financial Policies and Procedures:

- These are policies Dave recommended
- The goal of these is to make procedures more efficient on the front end and add in accountability after the fact to discourage wrongdoings in the first place.
- Breaks down responsibilities by board, ED, treasurer. The District Executive Director is responsible to make sure we're following state and federal requirements, etc.
- Purchasing change: check requires 2nd signature - change to any check/expense over \$5,000. Different if expense isn't in the budget.
- Contracts are approved by Cory, which is a change.
- Procurement - under \$15,000 we don't need to go through a bid process. Over \$15,000 - seek 3 bids. Greater than \$25,000, use a simplified bid process. At least 3 quotes must be considered. Should we change this section, for over \$15,000 and over \$25,000 to "every effort must be made to get 3 quotes," because in some projects it can be difficult to get 3 quotes.
- If a contractor is pre-qualified (worked with them before), we can skip the bid process.
- This will be useful for an internal controls audit.
- If grant clearly spells out how money can be used
- Moving forward - will digitize receipts.
- Spells out annual budget preparation.
- A lot of this is just spelling out things that we've already done.
- The board requests to read through this once more and then finalize it at the next meeting.

Americorps Position:

- We've been awarded an Americorps, we have to decide by tomorrow if we want to accept them. Cost is \$11,000, need to approve because not in budget. Cory feels it's worth it. Job description is similar to Garrett's, but more time in the field, planting trees etc.
- If NRCS sticks with five people, we'll need to figure that out, hopefully they'll allow the equivalent of five to people be in the office.

Motion to accept the Americorps award.

Motion accepted.

Annual Celebration

- Wednesday, October 29, Rockingham Hill Farm, 6pm

- Heather is trying to figure out a budget.
- No keynote speaker - unless we can find someone free or cheap.
- Will show video, highlight
- Will have a concert with a band: Mal Maise.
- Dessert - s'mores. (Hopefully no burn ban).
- Costume contest.
- Do we want to present a conservation award?
- Do we want to charge anything?
- Sliding scale? Free to farmers?
- Ticket price - \$45?
- Possible speakers - Rich Earth institute
- Silent auction - seems like it probably doesn't make sense.

Strategic Planning Update:

- Next Tues, 9/16, 5-8pm, Vernon Elementary.
- Cater or potluck? Consensus is cater.

Next Meeting:

October 8 at Geof's, 6:30pm.

Next Month:

- Finalize financial policies