

WC NRCD Board Meeting
December 20th 2022 2PM held over Zoom

Present (via ZOOM): Cory Ross; District Manager, Emma Kuester; NRCS Soil Conservationist, Linda Corse, Heather Blunk, Phyllicxia Moore; NRCS Zone Conservationist, Pieter van Loon, Meg Kluge, Geoff Dolman

- **NRCS update** from Phyllicxia Moore:
 - Introduce new Soil Conservationist Emma Kuester
 - CSP annual payments
 - Still discussion about rearranging office space.
 - Program assistant Kayla starts January 9th. She is with VACD, but works directly with Phyllicxia. She will be housed in the Brattleboro office.
 - New producers coming in. Looking at RCPP, DEC 2132 and AFT RCPP. Waiting to receive further details about AFT. DEC has already made site visits. Nothing final as to who is supposed to cover Windham/ Windsor County. VACD employee is coordinating DEC RCPP for Bennington. All grazing goes into DEC RCPP.
 - Natural resource specialist job might be announced soon. GS79 position.
 - IRA funding is coming. Funding will come in the spring. It will have its own separate IRA EQUIP funding. ACT NOW is coming to NRCS. This is when a producer qualifies and receives the money they then have 30-60 days to get the plan completed. This will be one way they spend IRA money.
- **Heather gave an update on DEI.** She has requested the board to make edits and comments on the DEI statement so we can finalize it at the January meeting.
- **ONRCD Staffing Opportunities and SE Supervisory Union Annual Meeting**
 - Sue Greenall, ONRCD DM, is looking to retire. Our district decided it is not a great idea to share an employee between our district and theirs. We might be able to subcontract work to them to help get them to full time, but this would be a case by case basis.
 - Should have an annual SU meeting with ONRCD Board sometime in January. Zoom meeting might work well for this meeting.
 - Cory can send out a poll for a date to get together and then share with ONRCD and check their availability.
- **VACD Full Board**
 - Hoping to have a full board meeting in January. Technically Windham County Board needs to appoint a VACD rep. They would also like us to have an alternate member. Looking for volunteers and or nominations to be the VACD board rep. Quarterly meetings. Pieter might be interested in being the alternate.

Official motion to have Linda Corse as WC NRCD rep to VACD was moved, seconded and passed.

- **Review and Accept/Reject Revised FY23 Budget**

Motion to accept revised budget was moved, seconded and passed.

- **Supervisor Term Expiring 12/31 Board Option to appoint someone to serve 5-year term**
 - Meg's term is up and she is willing to continue
 - There were no petitions presented for the election.

Motion to have Meg serve another term was moved, seconded and passed.

- **Review and questions on Districts Managers report**
 - All praise Cory for his great work and positively representing the district!
 - Payments are slowly trickling in. Core services are supposed to be paid by end of day (12/20) but hopefully end of week.
 - Office moves are final and we will be moved into cubicles. End of February is when this will happen. Usually contractors will move things around. We will have to box up everything.
 - VACD Holiday Party January 12th. Supervisors are invited along with staff.
- **Heather Gave Agriculture Update**
- **Approve Minutes From November 9th**

Motion to accept minutes was moved, seconded and passed with correction (Meg wasn't at the meeting).

- Only two people were in physical attendance, it should mention who joined from where.
- **Windham's Agricultural Services in Relation to Other Districts and Partners**
 - Pieter thinks CSPs might be interesting work.
 - Open to working with/for NRCS as we feel is appropriate. Keeping it in mind if the work aligns with the values and needs of our district. Accepting mission driven work.
- **Review of Conservation Hiring Process**
 - It went well. We have a candidate whom Cory is checking references on and then we will have her come up for an in person interview.
- Linda is still working on Cory's performance evaluation. She has it handwritten, but will get it in format to share with the board for review before final approval at our meeting in January.
- **No budget amendment it will just be the FY24 Appropriations Budget Update**
 - Once legislation is in session we have to be ready for it to be fast and furious. When (if) we get 1.4 million, we will not need a lobbying firm anymore because once we get it it is hard to lose.
- **Next meeting** will be January 10th. We will meet at night at Geoff's or Meg, weather dependent.
- Cory explained that Katy has been busy with work and her new commuting schedule, but hopes to rejoin the board by summer. Linda suggested Cory keep sending her the board materials so she can stay on top of things and respond to items as she can.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:20

**Respectfully submitted,
Heather Blunk**

