

Present: Daton Fleury, Richard Noel, Jeannie Bartlett, Brodie Haenke, Doug Lantagne, Lucy Zdziedzien, Eileen Trudell, Wynea Buford  
Jeannie Bartlett

9:45 Meeting called to order.

9:45 Eileen moves and Doug seconds to approve the minutes as written. Approved.

9:45 Jeannie shows photos of stewardship work VYCC crew did for us at Goose Pond in Fairfax. Discussion of recent and ongoing activities: nature walks with camp, seeding down steep corn field, tile drain sampling project, grassed waterways and how to approach landowners about it, and roadside signs. Noted that most of the issue with getting roadside signs in the landscape is that we need to collect a \$5 match for each sign still, currently from the prospective landowners.

9:55 Review of FY2018 budget reconciliation. Note from Doug that it would be important to figure out where our \$10,000 gain is from, and why our payroll taxes were four times higher than expected. Comments from many members that we aren't keeping adequate track of our finances, especially with so many grants. Comment from Jeannie that this has been her first year using QuickBooks or doing accounting at all, and that she is equally dissatisfied with the result. Jeannie expressed uncertainty about the value that QuickBooks is providing to us, and recommended that we terminate our subscription to QuickBooks Payroll, at minimum. Board agreed. Jeannie offered that she will resume more Excel-based accounting to parallel our continued QuickBooks accounting.

10:09 Richard advises that we investigate our tree sale prices, and that we may be below market. We grossed more but net profited about the same. Richard advised that we price ours 15% below market.

10:16 Doug makes a motion to approve the bank reconciliations as printed. Richard seconds. Approved.

10:24 Discussion of computers and workspaces. Wynea reports that NRCS will be looking at their staffing needs on July 9. Currently there would be a seat for another District person in August, but that seat will likely be needed by December.

10:36 Discussion of office spaces. Board cautions the District not to spread ourselves thin – financially or by occupying two spaces simultaneously. Board also expresses concern about jeopardizing our NRCS partnership by occupying a second, external space. Wynea speculates that there may be the opportunity to absorb space from FSA for NRCS and partners. District Board and Staff agree that that would be highly desirable. Wynea reports that NRCS is working on new District MOUs nationwide, with the goal that each state will have its own statewide Districts MOU. Some District-specific variability may be allowed.

10:54 Discussion of overhead expenses. Richard notes that reinstating board per diems may help entice new farmers to the Board. Board directs Jeannie to remove the \$3600 for office rent and \$420 for QBO Payroll, and to add mileage to board per diems, estimated at \$4500.

11:03 Discussion of benefits. Doug asks how accrued benefits should be handled at the end of the year, and suggests that any unused health care benefit could be rolled-over, whereas paid leave would be use or lose. Board advises to move \$1000 benefit directly to an IRA or 401-K rather than tying it to and tracking volunteer activity.

11:18 Board approved benefits package as proposed, with amendment that \$1000 would not require volunteer hours.

11:20 EXECUTIVE SESSION: Discussion of wages for the District Manager and proposed Conservation Technician position.

11:41 Doug makes a motion and Eileen seconds for Jeannie to take her requested leave.

11:42 Doug makes a motion to accept Liza Lemieux's application for AmeriCorps. Richard seconds. Approved.

11:43 NRCS Update and Wynea's introduction. She is in her 16<sup>th</sup> year with NRCS. Board will need training from NRCS on Civil Rights. 149 EQIP applications in 2018, requesting just shy of \$5 million. 6,400 ac contracted. Contracted 44 applications totally \$833,000, 5700 acres. Wynea questions the 149 applications number; it seems high and she suspects duplication. Wynea wants District Board to provide input on local resource concerns and ranking. Wynea is working to put conservation before funding again.

12:13 Next meeting set for August 16<sup>th</sup>.

12:14 Meeting adjourned.

Follow-up:

- Jeannie will, for next year, research local prices for trees.
- Jeannie will schedule a Civil Rights training for the Board from Wynea.
- ✓ Jeannie will tell the other WQ partners that we are likely not moving forward with Enosburg office space.
- Richard and Eileen find out whether the Fair Grounds has been sold.
- Jeannie will give Richard check for the Field Days.
- Jeannie will terminate our QBO Payroll and begin Excel accounting parallel to QBO.
- Jeannie will dig into our accounts to figure out where our \$10,000 gain opening FY18 came from.
- Jeannie will dig into PR taxes to find out why they were so high.
- ✓ Jeannie will find out from VACD that we can do a direct hire.
- ✓ Jeannie will notify Phil of our next Board meeting date.
- ✓ Jeannie will ask Marli if they're taking suggestions for participants to the Clean Water Board.
- Jeannie will reach out to Kevin King through Marli to learn about tile drainage for a potential workshop.
- Jeannie will make a spreadsheet for recording Board attendance for reimbursement.