

NRCC Finance Committee
Meeting Minutes
July 19, 2023
8:30 am
Zoom Meeting

Agenda

1. Welcome (Rick)
2. Review and approve meeting minutes (Clare)
3. Finance reports (Clare & Lina)
4. Grant proposals, approvals, and updates
 - o Project Development (Lina)
 - o Core Services (Clare)
 - o Other grants updates, as needed
5. VACD Board & Committee Updates (Jill)
6. Discussion of timelines & future meetings (Clare)
7. Other business, as required

Attendance: Rick Hopkins, Richard Noel, Chris Von Alt, Jill Arace, Clare Ireland, Jess Miller, Emily Nummer, and Lina Smith

The meeting was called to order at 8:31 am.

Review of Meeting Minutes

Clare presented the finance committee meeting minutes for May 17, 2023 & June 21, 2023. The motion was made by Chris to approve the minutes of May 17th as presented. Richard seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote, all were in favor.

The motion was made by Richard to approve the minutes of June 21st as presented. Rick seconded the motion. Upon a call for a vote, all were in favor.

Finance Reports

Clare reported that preliminary numbers anticipate expenditures of \$2.5 - \$2.6 M for FY23. This is the highest expenditure to date and is being driven by some large stormwater and dam removal projects done through the Design & Implementation Block Grant. She will have more detailed information for the next meeting in August.

Clare commented that the disaster preparedness and resiliency lens is becoming more prominent in this kind of work. In particular, Vermont Emergency Management attended the last District Manager meeting to talk about some of their grant programs that are available to do flood plain resiliency work. She highlighted work done by Nanci Maguire from Rutland NRCD in outreach and education about how some of the projects were working during the flood. Hopefully this will lead to more public interest in our programs.

Jill noted, for the agriculture community, VAAFM is doing the damage assessments and that will take some time. FEMA is providing emergency money for homes but in terms of recovery grants through FSA,

it will be awhile and it won't be big money. Chris commented that these kinds of events offer the opportunity to change the way we are doing things, particularly around soil health and water quality. Richard noted that the issues facing farms are complicated, and issues are often due to rules that are applied in unfair ways both here in the state and nationally.

Clare noted she is also working on the FY24 budget which will be available for the next meeting.

Rick congratulated everyone on managing \$2.5 M in expenditures.

Grant Proposals, Approvals, and Updates

- Project Development: Lina reported that an RFA for the new Project Development Grant went out last week. The amount available for project funding is \$123,165 and the grant runs through July of 2024. Applications will be considered on a rolling basis each month.
- Core Services: Clare reported that the Council approved the Core Services budget at the last NRCC board meeting. There was discussion about the distribution of funding between NRCC and districts. Council approved the proposed budget with the caveat that it be reconsidered in the future once more is known about NRCC's actual proposed expenses, including personnel and insurance, and that any balance be distributed to districts.

Jill noted that Council is still understaffed and she would support more money going to Council.

Clare explained that Council operations are funded by a wide variety of grants. The priority has been getting more money to districts but she feels we now need to shift gears and make sure Council has what it needs also. For instance, we cut NRCC's AgCWIP budget in favor of getting districts more money, and we also didn't receive our full request under TBP, so we're struggling to provide adequately for base operations. Another staff person is needed, but she realizes districts are in the same situation. It's always a balance, and she appreciates the finance committee's guidance on this.

VACD Board and Committee Updates

Jill reported that she is working on organizing the governance committee. This committee will be doing the work on the statute and VACD bylaws. She anticipates that the committee will need to meet every two weeks.

Jill noted that Council is largely caught up in regards to invoices and subagreements, and she wanted to acknowledge that this was because of the people attending this meeting. VACD is still a bit behind but should be caught up in the next few months. Rick also thanked all for the work done and he thinks that it is being noticed by the districts. He is still concerned about Supervisory Union representation not being 100%, as well as finding alternates and hoping this can be turned around. Clare noted that we are approaching the time for supervisory elections. We might be able to do a bit more this year and provide guidance on where to find board members etc. She also hopes the VACD committee will help with board development.

On the subject of Council funding, Jill noted that as more districts are engaged and educated, they will understand how Council funding is structured. An individual district manager may have a more narrow

view, and as supervisors have more of an understanding of Council's role, the need will be more understood.

Discussion of timelines & future meetings

The next finance committee meeting is scheduled for August 16th. A full Council meeting will be scheduled for some time after that. We will be tackling our budget for the year, and possibly a statute conversation.

Jill noted that Clare will be leading the budget process through the summer.

Rick talked about how to define an FTE for districts, and noted we have some preliminary guidelines. Clare responded that the VACD capacity building committee will be tackling these issues, and we have some information that has been compiled that will help guide that discussion.

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:28 am.

The next meeting will be August 16th.

Minutes approved as written August 26, 2023