

NRCC Finance Committee Meeting Minutes - Approved January 14, 2025
December 11, 2024 – 8:30 am
Zoom Meeting

Agenda

- Welcome (Rick)
- Review and approve October meeting minutes (Clare)
- FY24 Financials (Clare)
- Grant proposals, approvals, and updates
 - Core Services One-Time Funding - RFP Approval (Clare)
 - Enhancement Design & Implementation Block Grant - Project Approvals (Lina)
 - Trees for Streams - Project Approvals (Jess)
 - VAWQP Regional Coordination Issue (Alli and Jill)
 - Other grants updates, as needed
- Statute & Admin Updates (Clare)
 - Creation of NRCC Statute Committee (Rick)
 - District eligibility for statewide contract purchasing (Clare & Lina)
 - Potential partnership with VLCT (Clare)
- VACD Report
 - Organizational Development Work (Jill)
 - Action Circles Contract & Legislative Work (Jill & Clare)
 - Jill's Retirement & ED Recruitment (Jill & Jess)
- Other business, as required

Attendance

Voting Members: Rick Hopkins, Richard Noel, and Bill Manner

Other attendees (non-voting):

Jill Arace, VACD Executive Director

Clare Ireland, Administrator

Emily Nummer, Agriculture Programs Manager

Alli Lewis, VAWQP Coordinator

Jess Miller, Grants & Finance Manager

Lina Smith, Grants & Finance Manager

Welcome

Rick welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 8:35 a.m.

Approve Minutes of October 16, 2024 Meeting

Bill made the motion, seconded by Richard to approve the minutes of October 16th. Upon a call for a vote, all voted in favor.

FY24 Financials

Financials were not available for the meeting.

Clare reminded the board that the NRCC full board meeting will be next week. An in-person option will be available at the National Life building in Montpelier.

Grant Proposals, Approvals, and Updates

Core Services One-Time Funding - RFP Approval

Clare presented a draft RFP for the \$100,000 in funds that were appropriated by the legislature. She proposed using the funds for supplies, equipment, or one-time services, prioritizing anything that would help districts meet the legal requirements of the open meeting law.

- She noted that she is still waiting for clarification from the Secretary of State's office on whether districts are considered advisory or non-advisory entities under the new open meeting law.
- She reported that districts now have access to statewide contracts and services, so they might be able to purchase supplies and equipment at better rates than they would have previously.
- Because this grant would involve ranking proposals by relative need and priority, all proposals will be brought to the finance committee for approval.

The motion was made by Richard, seconded by Bill to approve the RFP noting it may change somewhat as more information becomes available. Upon a call for a vote, all were in favor. Clare will present this to the NRCC board at the next meeting.

Enhancement Design & Implementation Block Grant - Project Approvals

Lina requested approval for the five Enhancement Grant project applications as presented via email.

Bill made the motion, seconded by Richard to approve the five projects totaling \$600,042. Upon a call for a vote, all were in favor.

Trees for Streams - Project Approvals

Jess presented Franklin County NRCD's Garland Park Trees for Streams project noting it would be the last project for the NFWF grant.

Bill made the motion, seconded by Rick to approve the project. Upon a call for a vote, all were in favor.

VAWQP Regional Coordination

Alli and Jill provided history of and information about VAWQP Regional Coordination. Alli reported on issues with some districts not meeting the terms of the agreements as Regional Coordinators specifically:

- Focusing on personal agendas and viewpoints instead of acting as an ambassador and facilitator;
- Not working in a collaborative way;
- Not fulfilling meeting and reporting requirements;
- Exhibiting unprofessional behavior;

- Creating division with partners;
- Showing minimal engagement and effort.

Alli is planning to schedule follow up meetings to discuss some of these issues. She may seek termination of these agreements if issues cannot be resolved. She asked the committee to clarify Council's process for terminating the agreements if it comes to that. Clare recommended that all performance issues be documented clearly, including number of missed meetings, any other missing or delayed deliverables, and any complaints that have been filed about district performance. Rick suggested that Alli loop in board chairs so district boards can be made aware of any performance issues. If the VAWQP Steering Committee has a recommendation to terminate any agreement, those should be provided to the finance committee. Clare reminded the finance committee that NRCC has had to terminate agreements for nonperformance in the past, so to some extent, this is not new, and usually the decision to terminate is made between the district and the program manager. However, historically, this has usually been a collaborative process, with the district acknowledging an inability to meet project or performance goals. If grant termination is not voluntary, we would ask the finance committee for approval.

This will be revisited at a future meeting.

Other Grants Updates

Rick thanked staff for their work on the NRCC webpage on the VACD website.

Statute & Admin Updates

Creation of NRCC Statute Committee

Rick explained the VACD Governance Committee attempted to do the statute work, but they ran into delays and also had a second priority of reviewing and revising VACD bylaws and they've found it difficult to deal with both. At a recent VACD Governance Committee meeting, it was suggested that NRCC take up the statute work. Rick will introduce the topic to Council at the next board meeting, looking for volunteers to form this new committee.

District Eligibility for Statewide Contract Purchasing

Clare reported that districts can now work with the Building and General Services to make purchases under state contracts. This could allow districts to take advantage of better prices or terms of services the state has been able to negotiate.

Potential Partnership with VLCT

Clare met with VLCT to explore a partnership to provide tailored training to districts. VACD would become a member and work with VLCT to review and possibly develop additional resources for districts. Clare presented the idea that NRCC cover the cost of a basic level of VLCT membership for districts under the core services grant. This could help ensure all districts have access to all VLCT resources, including resources developed in partnership with VACD.

VACD Report

Organizational Development Work

- Jess, Clare, and Jill working on a transitional plan as Jill retires. Beyond talking about immediate tasks, they are considering future staffing needs.

Action Circles Contract & Legislative Work

- VACD has signed a contract with Action Circles. Currently, districts are working on one-on-one outreach to their legislators.

Jill's Retirement & ED Recruitment

- Interviews are taking place currently.

Other Business

Rick would like to continue finance committee meetings monthly in the new year. Clare will cancel the meeting scheduled for December 18th.

The meeting adjourned at 10:07.

The next finance committee meeting is rescheduled for 8:30 am on January 15, 2025.