

# State Natural Resources Conservation Council

An Agency of Vermont State Government, Serving Vermont's 14 Conservation Districts

## NRCC Finance Committee Meeting

**May 20, 2020: Conference Call**

**Present:** Bill Manner, Somara Zwick, Kerry O'Brien, Jill Arace, Rick Hopkins, Holden Sparacino

**Meeting Opened: 8:00am**

**April Financials:** Everything in order. Trees for Stream payments arrived from DEC and Pur Project. Jill asked if the 2018 DEC Design and Implementation grant is closed – from a financial perspective – as far as allocating 10% admin etc. Somara confirmed it was. Bill made a motion and Rick seconded to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was approved.

**Updates from Holden:** Holden sent a list of Design/Implementation Block Grant and Trees for Streams approved projects/ subagreements to keep the Finance Committee in the loop. Rick concurred that NRCC should have a role in approvals. Holden explained the review process – there is an extensive natural resource screening, Jill and Holden review for merits, and there are also reviews done by the other partners who have block grants as well, Watersheds United Vermont (WUV) and the Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs). The intent is not to add another layer to the review process, but to provide a financial checkpoint for subapprovals. The group discussed the projects and were supportive of all the projects moving forward. DEC is also moving forward with executing Project Development (\$100,000) and Trees for Streams (\$70,000) agreements with NRCC that had been on hold during their Covid19 budget process and hoping to see these agreements in the next couple of weeks. Holden will develop budget estimates for 2021. *(Holden left the meeting after his updates).*

**Project Review Procedures:** Somara will update the Financial Operations Policy adding another line to the authorization matrix to include review by Finance Committee of subagreements over \$20,000. Program Managers will be notified of the Finance Committee meeting dates and send a list prior to the meetings for review.

**Finance Committee Membership:** The group discussed adding another member to the Finance Committee. Richard Noel was discussed at some point but it was understood he didn't want to take it on. There is not a current representative from Poultney Mettowee and Bennington County NRCDs. Rick will reach out.

**Finance Manager Orientation:** Clare Ireland will be starting on a contractual basis with NRCC this week, her first orientation is Friday with Jill and Kerry, and next week on the 21<sup>st</sup> with Somara and Kerry. It was discussed to give her access to the google drive, send her the financial procedures, budget, list of grants, and financial statements ahead of the call to get her started. Somara has started making procedural documents and posting them on the drive. We need to start bank signatories to add Clare. Kerry will start DUNS process to remove Somara. Kerry, Jill and Somara will connect on Friday 15<sup>th</sup> to prioritize where to start.

**Updates from Jill:** Jill confirmed the Ag-CWIP amendment will be processed which in part helps fund the Finance Manager and Holden's positions. She summarized the Paycheck Protection and stimulus loan program funds

they received. It can be used to support Jess and Holden as well which will save NRCC a little funds. Jill will be working through it. There will undoubtedly be budget adjustments so she will continue to provide updates.

**NRCC Full Board Meeting:** Committee discussed having an NRCC meeting and suggested to hold one on zoom. Jill suggested Program Manager or District Manager do a power point of projects. Another suggestion was to focus on strategic watersheds – perhaps NRCS could provide a presentation. It could also include grant lists, budget updates. The State is trying to have a budget approved by June 12<sup>th</sup>, so meeting after this would be best to get these updates. Kerry will send an invite to full board for 6/23 1-3pm. Finance Committee on 6/16 at 9 or 10, Jill will confirm time with Clare.

**Meeting Adjourned: 9:25am**