

Healthy Roots Collaborative Advisory Committee Meeting

September 23, 2021 – 8:30am to 10:30pm

Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation, Conf. RM (4th FLR), 2 North Main St., St. Albans,  
VT

Join Zoom Meeting

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82615690056?pwd=ZkRYV0lQTXovVE52d3hjc2tjY3gxZz09>

Attendance: Lynn Douglas, Nina Hansen, Tim Smith, Guy Maguire, Bethany Remmers, Robert Ostermeyer, Rachel Huff, Koi Boynton, Christine Porcaro

**Goals:**

- Review FY'22 HRC Budget
- Review and provide direction on FY'22 Fundraising Plan
- Interim Chair Discussion and Decision

Times	Agenda Updates	Action
8:30 to 9:00	Org Updates	

**Notes:**

**Board of Commissioners:** Lynn Douglas shared that she lives in Fletcher and has been a part of the Board of Commissioner with NRPC for quite a few years, in addition to this she is on the Regional Plan Committee.

**South Hero Land Trust:** Guy Maguire reported as the Programs director at SHLT. He reported that Emily did have a baby last week (Ezra Leo) and that she'll be coming back part-time mid-to-late October and ramping back up to full-time in January. South Hero Land Trust has a new AmeriCorps member, Eileen, and she has already started helping with farm and food programing. One of her first projects has been helping with the farmers' market.

**The Abbey Group:** Nina Hansen reported that their schools are all open and making meals even with the labor shortage which is definitely a problem to be solved long-term. They are very busy because there are universal meals and they hope that it continues beyond this year. Nina shared the other thing on her mind is the local purchasing incentive in Vermont (at least 15% of their products from VT sources). It is a wonderful idea/incentive but unfortunately, Abbey Group has to compete against the USDA on money and products that they can give to schools.

**FCIDC:** Tim Smith shared that FCIDC is processing HRC check. They are busy on other fronts but not much to report on Healthy Roots fronts. Tim wanted to extend a thank you to Veggie Man who has been giving out a "boat load" of veggies out. Tim explained that Veggie Man is a hero created to

help distribute veggies that have been grown and acquired by Vermont Organics, a company owned by Tim Camisa.

**NRPC:** Bethany reported that NRPC will be advertising soon for a Climate planner. They anticipate the new planner will be working on issues related to climate change for 75% of their time, and working on Brownfields and other areas for the remaining time. The position is partially funding through an allocation from the legislature for one year, will the opportunity to extend for three years.

**Farm to School:** Rachel shared solidarity in Nina's pain about USDA to get schools to percentage of local purchasing. Rachel reported that part of her work is to get schools prepared to submit that application for that reimbursement for local products. It has been fun getting to be back in-person at school with kids. She shared that her focus at the moment is looking for ways to create virtual support. Rachel also shared the she had fun doing gardening classes with SHLT and is looking forward to some cooking classes this winter in Grand Isle.

Koi added that Rachel has been hired directly by some school to do afterschool programming that is in line with Farm to School.

9:00 to 9:30

Budget Presentation

Notes:

Koi shared the PowerPoint budget presentation and emphasizes that one of the major focuses is long-term sustainability. While showing the FY21 Profit and Loss, she explains that HRC didn't start budgeting for Indirect until July 2020, and we had an increase in benefits and that explains the deficit that it shows. Koi shared that HRC acquired a VT Community Development Program ARPA grant that will cover that deficit.

Koi then share the full budget for FY22 which shows the programmatic revenue and expenses. Tim asked about the revenue under Corporate and wondered if HRC had talked with Plumrose for additional funding. Koi explained that she had been in touch over email but is going to get in touch over the phone. The Plumrose funding is under the "pending" category.

Koi shared that HRC has increased fringe and indirect. Indirect is 45% of the budget or 99.65% of salary and fringe.

Revenue: Raise \$342,928

309,642 toward FY'22

33,286 toward FY'21

81% Restricted

19% unrestricted

48% is EDA grant which is a large portion of HRC budget for this year. Koi wanted to highlight this high percentage in terms of a funding source as the budget is being reviewed. The EDA funding is being used towards: Farm viability, STEM apprenticeship program development, and infrastructure.

Guy asked for clarification on what is EDA. Koi explained what it is and the different programmatic ties to that money and the difficulty spending it down. Koi also shared that we do expect to receive an extension for that funding which will be between a 6-9 month extension.

Koi explained that we did raise the budget and a bit in excess and have some grants that are pending.

Koi shared that in 2018 HRC's goal was to work over the next five years to diversify funding with a focus on increasing community support through individual and major donors. Healthy Roots was still at the hospital at this point but knew that is was not where HRC was going to be long-term. The focus was on diversifying income and also looking towards individuals' campaign. Koi expressed that it would be great to get feedback from the committee to see if that is where we want HRC to be going.

Koi showed that we no longer have NMC funding but that HRC has replaced it with other areas. HRC has a revenue mix with philanthropic giving which has grown with more foundation coming on board. There was recently another anonymous donor who gave \$10,000. HRC has government funds from EDA and VCDP, which has increased a lot over the past year. HRC had earned income from the Farmers to Families food boxes but since then HRC has not seen much other earned income and don't for FY'22. HRC has a base of non-profit partners through SHLT, FCIDC, Salvation Farms and the VT Food Bank that have provided direct or pass through grant funding. HRC corporate and individual funding has not grown that much but the staff has also not found the time to focus on it just yet but Koi shared that she was hoping to share a plan today to see if it makes sense for us to dedicate some time to it. Denise shared that it is was nice to see HRC's diversified income, even without growing the individuals campaign.

9:30 to 10:15

Fundraising Presentation

-Tim to put Koi and Christine in touch with Blue Cross Blue Shield.

-Tim, Koi and Christine to meet about corporate funding.

Koi shared that the goal for fundraising is \$345,000 which is beyond the operating budget. With additional unrestricted funding HRC could build a little reserve for ourselves so that if opportunities come up HRC will be able support them. HRC has currently reached 90% of that goal and has met 100+% of the operating budget with \$72,000 pending. Guy asked if there is a reserve now and if there is any reserve money to pass over year to year. Koi responded that there is no reserve right now but that HRC is working with the VCDP to fill the deficit from last year.

Koi then shared the proposed focus areas FY'22 fundraising: Launch individuals' campaign, raising of \$5,000 in unrestricted funds and build out corporate sponsorship model raising \$15,000. Leverage

partnerships to increase govt/public, raising \$225,000 towards existing programming. HRC has an application with VHCB for \$50,000 which could help us attain that goal. If HRC wanted to launch an individuals' campaign there would be work that we would need to do to make it compatible within NRPC and to create an easy way for people to donate through HRC website and social media. The plan would include launching a seasonal Eaters Newsletter (3,000 eaters), an email campaign to growers and makers, taking part in giving Tuesday, tying donation to event registration, and a Spring 2022 Annual Appeal Email. Koi mentioned that Emily has shared concern about soliciting growers and makers and there being overlap and making sure that we are being respectful of that. Total cost to execute is estimated at \$8,125.

Denise highlighted that it is costing more to execute than the amount of money that we would be able to bring in. Koi said that from what we have been hearing, \$5,000 is actually ambitious attempt for first year. Koi wants to know from the group if that is realistic. Nina asked if In Good Taste would be taking place this year. Koi explained that it is not off the table but we have been discussing alternatives for what can take place. Nina then had a question for Denise about the success of the Friends of Lake Champlain and wondered if there was any information about that success that we could transfer to HRC. Denise shared that membership incentives can work and that events are a lot of work but they have the ability to bring in a lot of money. Lynn added that as a longtime board member of a non-profit in Burlington and with COVID and advances in technology they have been able to make more money virtually than with in-person events. They updated their website (way to join, way to donate, way to donate monthly). Lynn emphasized that once a campaign has started, you have to make it very easy for people to give.

Tim reminded folks that In Good Taste was never designed to be a fundraiser. It is used to educate, market and promote local food and wanted to make sure the group was not conflating the two. He also shared that HRC needs to have consistency and regularity to the campaign.

Guy shared that one of the things SHLT does is some research into their donors: where they live, whether they concentrated in certain places, whether there are areas not represented, finding out why people are donating to those programs and use that language in campaigns. Guy also wanted to highlight that the start-up cost for fundraising might be higher in the beginning but that it will cost less down the line. Rachel shared that HRC should make sure everything we do is predictable and reliable. Robert cautioned that this year might not be a great year for giving and that while last year was good, this year there might be some donor fatigue. Koi summarized that she was hearing two options: going for the membership style or doing the softer sell of the newsletter at first. Denise shared that becoming a member vs being a friend is different. Members expect something in return. If you break down what HRC is doing (feeding people local food in our community) how does HRC get that message out there and get community members to support. Guy explained that there is a membership structure for non-profits that has to do with the internal structure of the non-profit. That membership structure can have a certain sense of involvement and ownerships for non-profits so he would caution using the word "members" and that "friends" would potentially be more accurate. Koi added that HRC should focus more on the friends concept with making it easier to give through existing mechanism and using the newsletter to engage those eaters. Koi then asked how the committee felt about the larger campaign for giving Tuesday and in the spring. Nina shared that the competition on giving Tuesday is really tough but thinks a spring campaign could be effective.

Rachel expressed liking the lighter touch, working through existing mechanisms plus the eater's newsletter and focusing on telling the story of what HRC does with an easy way to donate included. Bethany added that she thinks this is a great direction to be moving in but we still will need to identify how to be efficient in launching the friends program. If Healthy Roots loses "\$3000" in unrestricted funds, that will take away from our ability to use those funds to leverage other dollars.

Denise makes a motion to adopt a HRC friends campaign to raise unrestricted funds to support access to local food in our community. Nina seconds. All in favor. Motion passes.

Koi asked for input about HRC's plan to build out a corporate sponsorship model. Tim expressed that businesses could have been affected by COVID. Lynn asked if there are grants that HRC applies to locally. Koi shared that we have gone to places like Yankee Farm Credit, the coop and Vermont Federal Credit Union for events like In Good Taste and the Land Link Project event. Koi explained that we have been going after government and foundation grants but that local giving has been low. Lynn shared that she had seen that Union Bank has who they donate to online. She expressed that if people visit those websites and see who they are giving to, they would then visit the HRC website. Robert asked who we would be reaching out to for corporate funds. He shared that CVOEO has tried a bunch of outreach and it has been very difficult. Denise added that some of the local businesses feel like they get asked a lot and that they feel like the bigger businesses are not solicited as much as the smaller guys. Koi added that perhaps HRC should focus on friends and then put corporate sponsorship on the side. Tim shared that he has a contact at Blue Cross Blue Shield that he will put Koi and Christine in contact with. He also said that we can definitely go back to People's Trust and Yankee Farm Credit and in terms of Union Bank it really helps to know someone on the board.

10:15 to 10:30

Wrap up (interim chair)

Notes:

Koi asked if the Advisory Committee would want to elect an interim chair or if we should wait until Emily returns. The commitments are meeting with Koi and Christine once a month, facilitating the meeting and reviewing notes after. Denise shared that it is long enough of a break for an interim chair but that if we are comfortable waiting until after Emily comes back she supports that.

Koi asked if the Advisory Committee would be interested in opening up a seat to FC NRCD. Koi added that we did include NRCD in the rules of procedure but we will check in with Catherine to determine if there is a process through NRPC.

Denise makes a motion to nominate someone from FC NRCD to join the HRC Advisory Committee. Robert seconds. All are in favor. Motion passes.

Moving meeting to every other month. Next meeting will be November 18<sup>th</sup> 9am-11am. Then the next meeting would be January 27<sup>th</sup> from 9am-11am.

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