

Healthy Roots Collaborative Advisory Committee Meeting
February 15, 2024 - 1:30 pm to 3:00 pm

NORTHWEST REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION- 75 Fairfield St., St. Albans, VT 05478

Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86820758736?pwd=NEI2NFdKUFNvdIV3djBSV2gxWGNodz09>

Meeting ID: 868 2075 8736

Passcode: 954747

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Attendance: Emily Alger, Tim Smith, Cassie Fraser, Jess Graff, Katie Darr, Marietta Scholten Payne, Lauren Weston, Peter Jenkins, Bethany Remmers, Peter Jenkins, Christine Porcaro

Goals:

- Ideas for NEW Franklin County Ag Map (including potential sponsors)
- Feedback on status of FY24 HRC Budget

Times	Agenda Item	Action
1:30 to 2:00	Working Lands Grant: Franklin County Ag Map Guide	-Outreach to potential sponsors -Sending survey to farms to update and create new entries for online & print map. Share survey link with L. Weston.
<p>C. Porcaro shared information on the Working Lands Grant that HRC has received in partnership with South Hero Land Trust. The grant includes the creation of a Franklin County Ag Map Guide, one-on-one sales & marketing technical assistance and updates to the Northwest Vermont Grown Website. E. Alger suggested the creation of a google doc to collect feedback and sponsorship ideas for the map. E. Alger also shared that we have not set sponsorship levels. C. Porcaro added that this perhaps can be a place where we can ask farms for sponsorship where they can provide any amount of funding that feels appropriate.</p> <p>C. Porcaro asked L. Weston if there are any dairy farmers that might be interested in being included on the map. L. Weston shared that perhaps some of the dairy farms that are also maple producers.</p> <p>B. Remmers shared that it might be worth reaching out to past sponsors of the In Good Taste event.</p> <p>L. Weston asked if websites for the farms should be included on the print map. E. Alger said that it is difficult to include all the information for each farm but that the Northwest Vermont Grown website does have a link to each individual farm's website.</p> <p>L. Weston asked what list of farms HRC would be reaching out to. C. Porcaro shared that HRC has a list of farms in the region, an existing list from the Northwest Vermont Grown website and that HRC</p>		

<p>could share the survey link to FC NRCD if there are any farms, they think would be interested in being included on the map and/or website.</p>		
2:00 to 2:15	2023 HRC Annual Report: Feedback	
<p>C. Porcaro shared information on the 2023 HRC Annual Report. The report highlighted that despite some challenges due to weather in the summer of 2023, the pounds of produce gleaned, recovered, grown and purchased by Healthy Roots was not as low as anticipated. C. Porcaro shared highlights of working with new farms and the increase in local purchasing that took place in our region to support the Northwest Farmacy CSA, Migrant Household Food Boxes and NOTCH mini-fridges. There was a successful completion of a DBIC grant which saw an average of 12.5% growth in sales. P. Jenkins also shared about farm to school activities done in partnership with local schools and farms.</p> <p>L. Weston asked about the frequency of stocking of the NOTCH mini-fridges. P. Jenkins shared that they are stocked during the weekly or bi-weekly delivery schedule that is already set depending on the time of year.</p> <p>L. Weston asked if organizations are allowed to apply for the Dig Deep Vermont Campaign. E. Alger said she didn't think they have finished funding for it yet.</p>		
2:15-2:45	FY24 HRC Budget Update	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Bethany working with Amy & Catherine to see about any revenue carrying over from FY23. -Christine will continue to apply for grants and explore other funding opportunities. -Add donation page on the website. -Apply for an Arts Council grant to design artwork for trailer. - Outreach to Rotary, NMC and other community partners.
<p>C. Porcaro went over budget adjustments for FY'24. The presentation highlighted the difference in confirmed revenue comparing September 2023 numbers vs January 2024 numbers. The new budget also shared actual expenses from July 2023-December 2023 which then informed updates to expenses for the remainder of FY24. C. Porcaro explained that with these updated numbers there is a projected \$57,559.36 deficit for FY24 if no other funding is secured in for FY24.</p> <p>M. Scholten Payne asked if there was currently any pending funding for this year. C. Porcaro shared that there is currently \$23,000 in pending funding with \$13,000 being a more realistic number of funding that HRC can anticipate. C. Porcaro added that the biggest lost in funding this year has been funds dedicated to General Funds & Gleaning.</p>		

B. Remmers asked about the change in budgeting associated with mileage and wondered about the difference created by having the new gleaning truck vs. the usage of personal vehicles. P. Jenkins said that the biggest difference related to mileage would more likely be related to an increase in volunteers delivering. C. Porcaro clarified that the mileage expense line-item included both mileage reimbursement for staff as well as gas gift card for the gleaning truck.

L. Weston asked about the 10% management fee and B. Remmers explains the transition of HRC from NRPC's audited indirect rate to the 10% management fee instead. L. Weston then asked what are the next steps for HRC with the current information from the FY24 budget. B. Remmers answered that NRPC is the host organization and that they are currently working to figure that out. L. Weston asked if there is less work for staff to do since there are less grants supporting that work. P. Jenkins shared that he is going to have a conversation with Catherine as there is some potential for his position to go down to 20 hours/week during the winter/early spring.

L. Weston asked about any feedback HRC has received from funders who did not provide funding to HRC this year. C. Porcaro explained that a lot of funders have expressed interest in funding new projects and that some of the feedback that HRC has received has been that the proposal was not a new project or expanding capacity enough. M. Scholten Payne asked if for future applications if HRC could be more explicit about the balance HRC is trying to achieve by working to fund current programming to create sustainability and build a strong foundation.

M. Scholten Payne asked what has changed about funding this year. E. Alger shared that there has been a definite shift in funding priorities, HRC wrapped up a large federal grant at the end of FY23 and the end of ARPA funding.

M. Scholten Payne also wondered if an increase in insurance cost was being seen in the FY24 budget. B. Remmers confirmed that is a contributing factor as well.

L. Weston asked about the USDA Community Food Project. C. Porcaro explained that it is a grant that HRC applied for at the end of 2023 but that if awarded, the funds would not impact FY24. L. Weston asked if there are currently grants that staff know about that they could apply to currently that would have impact on FY24. E. Alger shared that funding from Foundations could have a faster turnaround which could have impact on FY24.

L. Weston asked if HRC applied for AgCWIP funding through the Agency of Ag. She added that part of the funding goes to supporting economic viability and it comes out every 2 years.

B. Remmers shared that NRPC and HRC has already started working on the FY25 budgets to begin to see where the organization is at and what funding there is currently. M. Scholten Payne asked who at NRPC works on the budget. B. Remmers shared that it is herself, Executive Director Catherine Dimitruk and Office Administrator Amy Adams.

L. Weston asked if HRC has done any fundraising events and shared that Vermont Maple Festival could be an opportunity to raise money. C. Porcaro shared the idea of having an event at the new storage space with CVOEO that was discussed at the previous HRC Advisory Meeting.

M. Scholten Payne asked about approaching NMC and seeing about what funding support they might be able to provide. She added that they have a new CEO and there could be some opportunity for now or in the future.

L. Weston proposed a fee-for-service model. C. Porcaro expressed concerns that farmers might prefer free business services as those are widely available. C. Porcaro also shared about a funding opportunity through the VT Arts Council to create artwork for the refrigerated trailer. The idea of presenting to the Rotary Club was brought up, but J. Graff clarified that organization cannot make a financial ask there.

2:45 to 3:00

Partner Org Updates & Discussion

L. Weston shared that FC NRCD is looking for new office space. They have currently outgrown their space in St. Albans. L. Weston added that office space which also had access to land would be ideal so that they could hold workshops and events at that space. B. Remmers asked if FC NRCD currently pays rent to USDA. L. Weston shared that they have a cooperative agreement with the USDA.

P. Jenkins asked about FC NRCD's need for cooler space for their tree sale. L. Weston shared that the Intervale is allowing them to use their cooler and that perhaps the HRC space could work for the FC NRCD tree plantings but it's probably not big enough for the tree sale.

Meeting end: 3:01 pm

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