

**ADDISON COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
BOARD OF TRUSTEES**

Date: September 19, 2024, 7:30-9:00 a.m. (Hybrid)

Present: Joseph Andriano (7:45), Valerie Capels, Chris Lapierre, Jason Larocque, Gina Larrow, Nicole MacTavish, Richard McKerr, Renny Perry, Susan Ritter.

Also Present: Fred Kenney, Executive Director; Camille Lyons, Assistant to the Director; Dr. Elizabeth Mauch, Chancellor of VT State College Systems.

Absent: Ryan Bartlett, David Castle, Mark Foster, Bob Ortmyer, Darcy Tarte, Bill Townsend.

Call to Order:

Jason called the meeting to order at 7:34 a.m.

Introductions:

Jason noted that, as per OML, this meeting was being recorded for public domain and introductions must be made. All members introduced themselves.

Minutes of the August 15, 2024, Board Meeting:

Jason requested a motion to approve the minutes of the August 15th Board meeting.

7:36 Gina made the motion. Chris seconded.

Vote; 7-0-1. Renny abstained.

Executive Director Report:

Fred briefly updated the board on staff activities and initiatives. Highlights:

- Slower month for meetings- but very busy making adjustments to workload - more admin work
- Very popular Webinar on distractions during the workday with Porter Knight. 33 attendees
- Several municipal presentations
- Submitted the ACORN Food Hub feasibility report to USDA/RD (copy in board packet FYI)
- All 7 FY24 BGS projects completed and funds distributed; Submitted 4 applications to BGS for FY25
- Continued with annual financial audit and cybersecurity audit
- Loan committee met: Started review of a new loan; approved an extension of an Interest Only period; Prepared Loan Loss Reserve for Board
- August VBM had Addison County economic report

Mixer Debrief:

- 60 attendees: 50 registered; 10 walk-ins. 3 staff, 8 board members, 20 member businesses, 17 partner-members, 9 prospective, 3 legislators
- All good comments.
- Followed up on membership with non-members that attended

Jason asked about the reason for the cyber security audit. Fred explained that it was recommended by insurance agent, Also, The Cybersecurity Center at Champlain College presented at one of our webinars and we learned it was free.

Citizen Comments:

As per OML, ACEDC is now required to offer an opportunity at all public meetings for citizen comments on items not included on the agenda. No citizens were present at the meeting.

Fred suggested town representatives share general updates/news. Nicole shared about the success of new welding class (lots of girls) and STEM class. Reported a drop in attendance due to Middlebury High School class scheduling conflicts & Vergennes and MAUSD class sharing. Val shared plans for a Montpelier presentation on Designated Downtown renewal, new capital improvement plan, BristolCORE success. Joe shared about progress at ACRPC on the new regional plan including transportation section and Act 250 mapping.

Staffing Update:

- Camille is now permanent employee
- Advertised for OOM position. Received 3 resumes to date. Will start interviews next week.

Loan Loss Reserve:

- RLF capitalized by four past USDA/RD IRP loans
- Reserve level starts at 7% (6% required by USDA/RD)
- Staff reviews loan, business, and financial strength of borrowers and grades loans.
- Loan Committee reviews and makes recommendation to Board
- One loan was paid off, two were added in FY24
- One more added in FY25 to date totaling 19 active loans
- After analysis and grading, eleven loans stayed at the same grade as in FY24, three improved by a grade, and five were lowered a grade.
- Based on the new grades, 6 loans are at the standard 7% LLR, 9 are at 15%, 3 are at 25% and 1 is at 50%.
- Based on the grades and percentages, the Loan Loss Reserve levels for FY25 recommended by the ACEDC Loan Committee are as follows:
 - ACEDC RLF: \$210-1 loan
 - CBLF: \$5,004-1 loan
 - USDA: \$128,567-17 loans
 - Total \$133,781

No questions on LLR policy/procedures.

8:03 a.m.: Gina moved to approve the recommended Loan Loss Reserve. Sue seconded. All in favor.

Guest Speaker, Chancellor Elizabeth Mauch:

Fred introduced Dr. Elizabeth Mauch of the VT State College Systems.

Dr. Mauch presented on enrollment news, higher education accessibility, and plans of the organization.

- Gina asked about actions towards affordability. Mauch talked about conversations with the state going forward.
- Joe asked about enrollment growth. Mauch talked about technical education offerings and emphasizing the importance/why higher education matters.
- Sue asked about subjects, wrap-around services, and enrollment trends. Mauch said online enrollment is up, out-of-state is up. Discussed the blending of students.
- Fred asked about enrollment. Fred shared about advanced manufacturing center.
- Mauch left the call.

Closing Discussion:

Fred asked if ACEDC should write a letter in support of Hannaford Career Center about schedule changes. Jason said it will fix itself. Gina and Sue questioned the situation. Gina connected to what Mauch presented. General consensus was to learn more before writing anything.

8:30 a.m.: Jason requested a motion to adjourn. Gina made the motion, Sue seconded, all agreed and the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted, Camille Lyons, Assistant to the Director