**FINAL MINUTES**

VIRGINIA HORSE INDUSTRY BOARD

Department of Forestry – Charlottesville, VA

Tuesday, February 26, 2019

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Horse Industry Board Meeting was called to order at 10:05 a.m. on Tuesday, February 26, 2019 at the Department of Forestry in Charlottesville, VA by Chairman Sue Fanelli.

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

Sue Alvis

Sue Fanelli

Nancy Troutman

Debbie Easter

Dr. John Wise

Oliver Brown (Proxy for Jimmy Lee)

Robert Banner

Dr. Kelly Foltman

Shayan Ghajar

**GUESTS / STAFF**

Heather Wheeler, Program Manager, VDACS

Melissa Ball, Special Projects Manager, VDACS

**APPROVE MINUTES OF LAST MEETING**

The minutes of the previous meetings (December 3, 2018) were approved.

**FINANCIAL UPDATE**

Heather Wheeler reported on the finances for each fund. Income and revenue are listed as follows:

**Coggins – cc 625 (Figures through January 31, 2019)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Beginning Balance 7/1/2018 | $301,369.07 |
| Revenues YTD | $62,200.18 |
| Expenditures YTD | -$63,948.25 |
| Cash Balance YTD | $299,648.25 |
| Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 7/1/18 + rev - budgeted) | $242,591.93 |

**Feed Tonnage – cc 626** **(Figures through October 31, 2018)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Beginning Balance 7/1/2018 | $344,163.51 |
| Revenues YTD | $98,974.05 |
| Expenditures YTD | -$40,175.00 |
| Cash Balance YTD | $402,962.56 |
| Uncommitted Balance (Cash bal 7/1/18 + rev - budgeted) | $278,222.26 |

**OLD BUSINESS / UPDATES**

**VHIB Grants**

In 2018, the Program Manager for VHIB was made aware that the VHIB grants would no longer be allowed to be paid in advance in accordance with state procurement regulations. The Program Manager made the Board aware of the changes needed to the grant program and began drafting new procedures and new forms for the grant program. These forms (grant quarterly reports and final reports) along with the newly proposed grant procedures were presented to the Board at the September 2018 meeting. The Board reviewed the forms and procedures at the meeting and were asked to review them and provided edits/changes to the Program Manager before the December 2018 meeting. On December 3, 2018 the Board met, reviewed the forms and procedures and unanimously approved the procedures and forms. The Program Manager notified VDACS that the new procedures were in place and approved and began working on website edits to update the grant page. In January of 2019, the Program Manger was approached by a grant recipient with an issue regarding a current grant. The Program Manager met with VDACS to discuss the issue and to determine a resolution. VDACS personnel from marketing and finance began working with the grant recipient to assist with the grant. The Program Manager met with the Commissioner on February 19, 2019 and provided the Commissioner with a copy of the grant in question, the new forms and procedures, along with the timeline of the Boards review and approval. It has been determined that VHIB’s new policy of reimbursing grant expenses is in compliance with state procurement regulations and that VHIB will continue to move forward with the new procedures. The only thing that has been changed is the payment of the grants and the reporting requirement. The items that grant money can not be used for has remained the same – VHIB grant monies cannot pay for tuition, salaries, equipment, overhead or indirect costs or any type of construction project.

Debbie Easter asked if a grant recipient submits an expense that cannot be paid according to the guidelines, would VHIB pay it. Heather Wheeler clarified that if expenses are submitted to VHIB that are not allowed that amount would not be paid. Grant recipients will need to submit invoices and receipts for reimbursement and those invoices will be reviewed to ensure they are in compliance with the grant program.

**Program Manager Updates**

Heather Wheeler reported on marketing activities since the December meeting. Since the December meeting, Heather Wheeler has worked on developing the structure for a horse industry database to be added to the VHIB website. This would allow all horse industry businesses to have a listing at no cost in the directory and it would allow anyone looking for a horse related offering to find it based on business type and location. Heather Wheeler has met with the representatives of farmers markets and the farmers market association in Virginia to discuss hosting “Meet a Horse” days at the farmers markets across Virginia. This is an opportunity to develop a program that would assist market managers in partnering with local horse organizations to bring a horse to the market for a day. The market attracts an audience that is important to the horse industry since there are a lot of parents with children coming to the market with little exposure to the horse. This would be an opportunity to introduce the horse to an audience that might not necessarily see it and it would be an opportunity to provide the families with information on how to become involved with the horse industry (riding lessons, trail riding, volunteering, etc). Heather Wheeler has also been meeting with and presenting to various 4-H and FFA groups and talking about the Virginia horse industry and career opportunities within the industry. Heather Wheeler serves on the state agritourism conference team and has been working to keep the horse industry involved in the agritourism conversation. Equine agritourism operators have been invited to participated in panels during the conference. Heather Wheeler provided updates on her involvement on the Virginia Horse Museum Board and activities at VDACS.

**Virginia Bred Application**

The Board considered two Virginia Bred applications that had been previously tabled due to the Board needing additional information before deciding on the applications. Discussions were held by the members on applications from Equus Survival Trust and the Virginia Rocky Mountain Horse Breeders Association. Examined were the impact of each program, the number of participants, the number of horses, the conducting of the program and the promotion of the Horse Industry Board as the main supporter of the individual programs. The Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved the Equus Survival Trust application for $3,000 and the Virginia Rocky Mountain Horse Breeders were approved for $2,000.

**NEW BUSINESS**

**VHIB Marketing**

The Board reviewed and discussed the Strategic Marketing Plan of Work that was developed in late 2016. This plan laid out specific goals and the Board discussed the 2016 goals and how to proceed with them. Board members expressed an interest in pursuing a larger advertising plan that may include television and radio that would incorporate a VHIB recognizable slogan – for example the Virginia is for Horse Lovers slogan. The Board recognizes a need to market the industry both within the state and outside and to reach a broader audience. After lengthy discussion the Board prioritized three goals:

Goal #1 – Develop a database to be launched through the VHIB website. There is a need within the horse industry for a single point of information and the industry needs to promote it. This allows industry businesses to advertise at no charge and for those looking for industry businesses to locate what they need.

Goal #2 – Hire a Marketing Consultant to develop a 5 year strategic marketing plan for VHIB. This marketing plan would encompass marketing VHIB and the Virginia horse industry with the overarching goal of improving the visibility of the horse industry. The Board feels it needs professional guidance in developing a plan that defines goals, helps identify the audience, looks at the existing website and Facebook presence. The Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved that it would develop and issue a Request for Proposal (RFP) for a marketing firm/consultant to develop a 5 year strategic marketing plan for VHIB. After discussion, the Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved that it would approve up to $12,00 for the marketing RFP. The Board indicated that it would like to see firms/consultants with equine industry experience respond to the RFP. The Board also identified Debbie Easter, Rob Banner, Kelly Foltman and Shayan Ghajar as committee members who will work with Heather Wheeler to draft the RFP for review at the April meeting.

**Shenandoah Valley Equine Fair**

The Board received a sponsorship proposal from the Shenandoah Valley Equine Fair. This event is being hosted November 14-16, 2019 at the Augusta Expo Event Center.

The Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved being a $500 Evening Entertainment Sponsor for the event.

**Loudoun Equine Expo**

The Board had received information about participating in the event, however, Kelly Foltman informed the Board that the event is sold out. The Board will consider participating in 2020.

**Emergency Grant**

The Board received an Emergency Grant Request from the Virginia 4-H Equismartz Program requesting a $2500 sponsorship for its educational contest. The Board moved, seconded and unanimously approved sponsoring this year’s contest at the $2500 level.

**2019 Grant Committees**

The Board selected the following members for the 2019-2020 grant committees:

Education Committee – Sue Alvis, Sue Fanelli, Mike Stoher, Janie Ober

Research Committee – Dr. John Wise, Dr. Kelly Foltman, Shayan Ghajar, Debbie Easter

Marketing Committee – Nancy Troutman, Rob Banner, Oliver Brown

**Public Comment**

None

**Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the board will be held on April 17, 2019.

**Adjournment**

The meeting adjourned at 1:25 PM.

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