

Meeting Minutes – VAEL Governance Board

Location: VAAFM, 116 State Street Montpelier

Date: November 18, 2016

Time: 9:00 am

In Attendance

Jolinda LaClair – Deputy Secretary, VAAFM; Jim Leland – ARM Director, VAAFM; Dr. Kristin Haas – FSCP Director, VAAFM; Cary Giguere – Agrichemical Management Section Chief, VAAFM; George Desch – Deputy Commissioner-DEC, ANR, Mary Borg, Deputy Division Director, Watershed Management Division - ANR

Ex Officio in Attendance

Dr. Guy Roberts – VAEL Director, VAAFM; Chuck Ross – Secretary, VAAFM, Michelle Sama – VTC, Assistant Professor; ANR; Marcey Hodgdon – Finance Director, VAAFM; Hunter Thompson – IT Director, VAAFM and Patricia Moulton, VTC Interim President -- VTC.

Ex Officio Not in Attendance

Michael Snyder – Commissioner, Forests, Parks & Recreation, ANR; Alyssa Schuren – Commissioner, DEC - ANR

Other Attendees

Michael Kuhn – Project Engineer, BGS; Littleton Tyler, Dean of Administration – VTC;

Minutes of Official Action

Next Governance Board Meeting –to be scheduled in February 2017

Welcome

- Jolinda LaClair, VAAFM Deputy Secretary motioned to start meeting, Jim Leland – ARM Director, VAAFM seconded the motion.
- Jolinda welcomed VTC Interim President Patricia Moulton to the meeting and gave a brief overview of the Governance Board.
- Chuck Ross, VAAFM Secretary thanked ANR, VAAFM and VTC for working so well together over the last year and noted all the progress made. Secretary Ross noted that Hunter Thompson, IT Director, Anne Charbonneau, VAEL chemist and Guy Roberts, VAEL Director have been working together creating a system to bring the VAEL Laboratory into the 21st century.
- Guy Roberts noted that VAEL is currently recruiting two vacated positions; one position in the Organics Analytical area and one position in the Inorganics Analytical area.
- Guy also noted that Marcey Hodgdon, VAAFM Finance Director has done an outstanding job getting the VAEL budget in good order and the VAEL Laboratory is refining it's tracking of expenses and revenues, FY 2017 is still a transition year for this detailed tracking and the volume of detailed data being input has been increasing throughout this fiscal year.
- Patricia Moulton, VTC Interim President commented on the positive impacts of the VAEL Laboratory being located on the VTC Randolph campus:
 - Integration with students
 - Internship opportunities for students

- Faculty and staff are already thinking of opportunities with VAEL, higher education and a State government partnership.

Approval of Minutes from August 5, 2016

Jolinda LaClair, VAAFM Deputy Secretary asked for approval of the August 5th minutes, George Desch, DEC Deputy Commissioner, Motioned and Mary Borg, Deputy Director, Watershed Management Division seconded. Minutes were approved.

Administration Transition Planning

Jolinda LaClair, VAAFM Deputy Secretary noted that the members listed on the Governance Board MOU of October 15, 2015 has the potential for 4 out of the 10 members to change with the new administration coming on board in January 2017. This transition should be discussed more thoroughly at the next Governance Board meeting.

BGS Update on the Randolph Lab Project – Mike Kuhn, Project Engineer BGS

Capital Bill ---- has grown to \$27 million as opposed to the original \$26.5 million. \$8,444,716 is proposed in this year's Capital Bill. The transition team will be looking at the Capitol Bill, the Randolph Lab project is #11 on the Capital Bill priority list.

Judicial Proceedings ---

- Pierre LaFrance, the owner of the Lake Champagne Campground, has sold this property.
 - the lawyer for the State of Vermont, will file a motion to dismiss the appeal,
 - Mike Kuhn said we'll have to wait for the judge's ruling on Nancy Rice's appeal.
 - If these 2 appeals are dismissed it leaves only 1 appeal still active.
- BGS is still waiting for a decision for the Act 250 Permit.
 - If everything moves forward in a positive manner, this should all be resolved late this year or early spring of 2017.

Cannon Design --- construction documents are ready for review, the reviewing process will continue thru the end of 2016. Final comments will be due in early 2017.

- BGS will put the project out to bid in January of 2017, review bids in February 2017 and could possibly start construction April 1, 2017.

Director's Update – Guy Roberts, VAEL Director

Staffing Update – two analytical positions are currently being recruited, one position in the Inorganics Analytical area and the second position in the Organics Analytical area. The interviews will be taking place November 29 – December 1st, with the expectation that the new hires will come on board in early 2017. Cross-training continues to be a priority at the Lab and staff are being cross-trained in the Organics Analytical area and the Inorganics area.

Department Strategic Plans – the Inorganic Analytical area 2017 updates were reviewed

- new instrumentation has been ordered and received for the metals area
- working on recovering tests that were dropped or lost to outside vendors
- adding new clients by offering lab services to a wider audience
- adding new clients by adding new tests where there is a specific demand
- providing effective training to water quality sample collectors
- establishing sampling schedules to avoid exceeding the laboratory's testing capacity
- implementing NELAC sample rejection criteria

Specific goals for FY 2017

- Improve performance of the metals analytical area
- Improve water quality sample processing with training and scheduling
- Strengthening the feed and fertilizer analytical services
- Improve compliance with NELAC standards.

Management

- Guy will assume the responsibility of conducting annual laboratory audits as required by NELAC, currently being done by the VAEL QA Officer, Dan Needham.
- the Lab continues to refine the coding system that Marcey Hodgdon, Financial Director, VAAFM set into place to track VAEL expenses and revenues by analytical area, FY 2017 is a transition year while we gather data.
- Overview of the 2016/2017 sampling season showed that due to the dry summer the sample volume is down during the traditional sampling period, however sampling programs are extending their sampling later into the season, thus the volume should be about the same by the close of the sampling season.

Updates on Working Groups - Guy Roberts, VAEL Director

Internships – staff from VAEL, ANR, VAAFM and VTC met at VTC in October to discuss opportunities for VTC students to have an internship at VAAFM and ANR, there was a lot of positive feedback and appears to be diverse array of opportunity for the students.

- This work group will continue to discuss and refine the implementation of an internship program with VTC students. It was determined it would be more productive and stream-lined to go directly thru VTC for internships rather than using the VTHR internship program due to the time element. Micehelle Sama, VTC Assistant Professor, noted it might be worthwhile for the State to set-up a display table at the Spring and Fall job fairs to show the internship opportunities to students. Guy Roberts noted that this group will frame a template for moving forward on the Internship Program.

Certifications – VAAFM programs with certification requirements met in September to discuss any opportunities to coordinate certification procedures throughout the Agency, it was determined that the certifications are application specific that there was no opportunity to consolidate efforts.

Sample Transport – VAAFM and ANR staff met in September to discuss stream-lining the transport of samples to VAEL and what the individual programs needed. Mary Borg, Deputy Director, Watershed Management – ANR, summarized the needs of the program detailed at this work group meeting and then submitted a request to VCPM to have this as a project. VCPM approved this and have already assigned this project to a group of students who expect to

Updates from Board

Marcey Hodgdon, Finance Director – VAAFM, stated that the VAEL budget is in good standing. VAEL has purchased new lab equipment to replace old instrumentation. There is a balance of \$191,389.50 VAEL is in a good spot for equipment purchases and doing a great job with determining which equipment to replace and providing the documentation needed processing these purchase orders. Guy Roberts, Marcey and John Jaworski are working on an equipment replacement schedule and assigning depreciation values for each piece of equipment. The depreciation money will be set aside and used to purchase new equipment as needed on a regular basis. Marcey noted that VAEL should have equipment replacement as a focus in the VAEL budget.

Hunter Thompson, IT Director - VAAFM

- LIMS assimilation is 98% complete.
- All IT equipment now under VAAFM control.
- Network issues at UVM brought to DII's attention and being looked at by DII.
- The current LIMS is antiquated – VAEL can have it replaced while still stationed at UVM, do not need to wait for move to Randolph, it will be a seamless transition to the Randolph Lab.
- RFI submitted for LIMS, BGS is reviewing RFI and hopefully it will be posted by January 2017.
- Working on Customer reporting – customers can be self-serve from a web site.
- Working on having web-based training for VAEL customers, such as sample collection, submission of samples protocols, etc.

Jim Leland, ARM Director - VAAFM

- Hemp/Cannabis program certification work and rules will be written in 2017.
- Tile drain analysis work will continue into 2017.
- Issues of Pollinators & pesticides resources demand will increase at VAEL.

Cary Giguere – Agrichemical Management Section Chief - VAAFM

- names on the Governance Board MOU and Lab Management Meeting should align for transition, a small subset of these 2 groups will meet.
- Cary noted he's been very pleased with the Lab support his program is receiving.

Motion to adjourn by George Desch, Deputy Commissioner – DEC, seconded by Cary Giguere, Agrichemical Management Section Chief – VAAFM and Mary Borg, Deputy Director, Watershed Management Division – DEC. Meeting adjourned at 11:05 AM.