

Senate Institutions Committee

Thursday, February 21, 2019





Dorothy Weicker, Vermont Folklife Center photo

“I don’t think it’s jobs against conservation. You can grow, but in a way that respects the culture and the landscape of Vermont.”

— John Ewing

VHCB Statue: 10 VSA Chapter 15, Section 301

- (a) The dual goals of creating affordable housing for Vermonters, and conserving and protecting Vermont's agricultural land, forestland, historic properties, important natural areas, and recreational lands are **of primary importance to the economic vitality and quality of life of the State.**





VHCB Results: FY 2018 and FY 2019

State Investment: \$38M Leverage: \$160M

- 1,029 homes and apartments
- 42 farms; 6,063 acres conserved
- 2 historic preservation projects
- 22 projects conserved 3,220 acres of land for public recreation, natural areas, and forestland
- 167 farm, food, and forest enterprises were provided business planning and technical assistance
- 10 communities were assisted in securing \$1.78 million in grants

VHCB PROGRAMS

- Multi-Family Housing Development and Preservation
- Recreational Lands, Forests, and Natural Area Conservation
- Rural Economic Development Initiative (REDI)
- Farmland Access
- Farmland Conservation
- Water Quality Grants
- Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program
- Home Ownership
- Healthy & Lead-Safe Homes
- AmeriCorps
- Historic Preservation
- Home Access
- Community Planning & Technical Assistance
- Modular Housing Innovation Program
- Housing Opportunities for Persons living with HIV/AIDS

Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

Status of VHCB Funding

FY16: \$4.55 million for housing, conservation and water quality
Fully committed and disbursed

FY17: \$4.0 million for housing, conservation and water quality
Fully committed; \$3.8 million disbursed

FY18: \$5.0 million for housing, conservation and water quality
Fully committed; \$3.9 million disbursed

FY19:
\$2.75 million for water quality and other conservation projects
Fully committed; \$730,00 disbursed

\$1.1 million for water quality farm improvement grants or fee purchase projects
 \$294,000 of \$544,000 for WQ grants committed; balance to be committed in April
 \$554,000 application for farm retirement is pending

\$1.8 million for Housing
Fully committed and disbursed

FY20 Capital Construction and State Bonding Act

VHCB Sections – Governor’s Proposal

Section 10 Clean Water

Agricultural Water Quality Projects:

Water quality farm improvement grants and farm retirement projects –
Line 103

\$1.1 million (Level with FY19)

Land Conservation and Water Quality Projects – Line 104

\$1.7 million (Reduction of \$1.05 million from FY19)

Section 18 Vermont Housing & Conservation Board

Housing

\$1.8 million (Level with FY19)



Revitalizing a Rural Community through Housing, Conservation and Historic Preservation

Hardwick has used VHCB funding to leverage many millions in other sources to rehabilitate and rebuild downtown housing following fires, to invest in cultural resources, and to support the agricultural economy. Conservation of Atkins Field creates opportunities for education, exercise, gardening, and community events. The Vermont Food Venture Center, supported with VHCB funding and business planning assistance, is a shared use food hub and business incubator for entrepreneurs and farmers seeking to grow their business that is creating jobs and generating income.

Helping Communities Meet Challenges

New Avenue Apartments,
St. Johnsbury



Conservation and Outdoor Recreation

VHCB committed \$199,000 targeted to economic and community development in the Northeast Kingdom towards a recreation corridor and bridge connecting Bluffside Farm with Newport's Prouty Beach and trails in downtown Newport and Quebec.

REDI grant-writing assistance helped secure an additional \$678,000 in federal grants for the project, which is expected to boost tourism.



Kingdom Trails, Burke



VHCB helped conserve part of Kingdom Trails including a favorite trail supporting the outdoor recreation economy in Burke. This trail network attracts 94,000 visitors to the Northeast Kingdom annually; cumulative spending on accommodations, food, equipment and trail passes is estimated at \$7,945,524 annually.*

*Economic and Fiscal Impact Analysis of the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council Member Organizations, 2016

Conservation and Outdoor Recreation



Prospect Mountain, Woodford

With 30 kilometers of high elevation cross country ski trails, this Nordic ski area is popular with locals, visitors, and high school and college ski teams. The new non-profit owner hopes to develop year-round recreational opportunities.



Caleb Kenna Photos

Mount Anthony Union High School
Nordic Ski Team Co-Captain Noah Payne



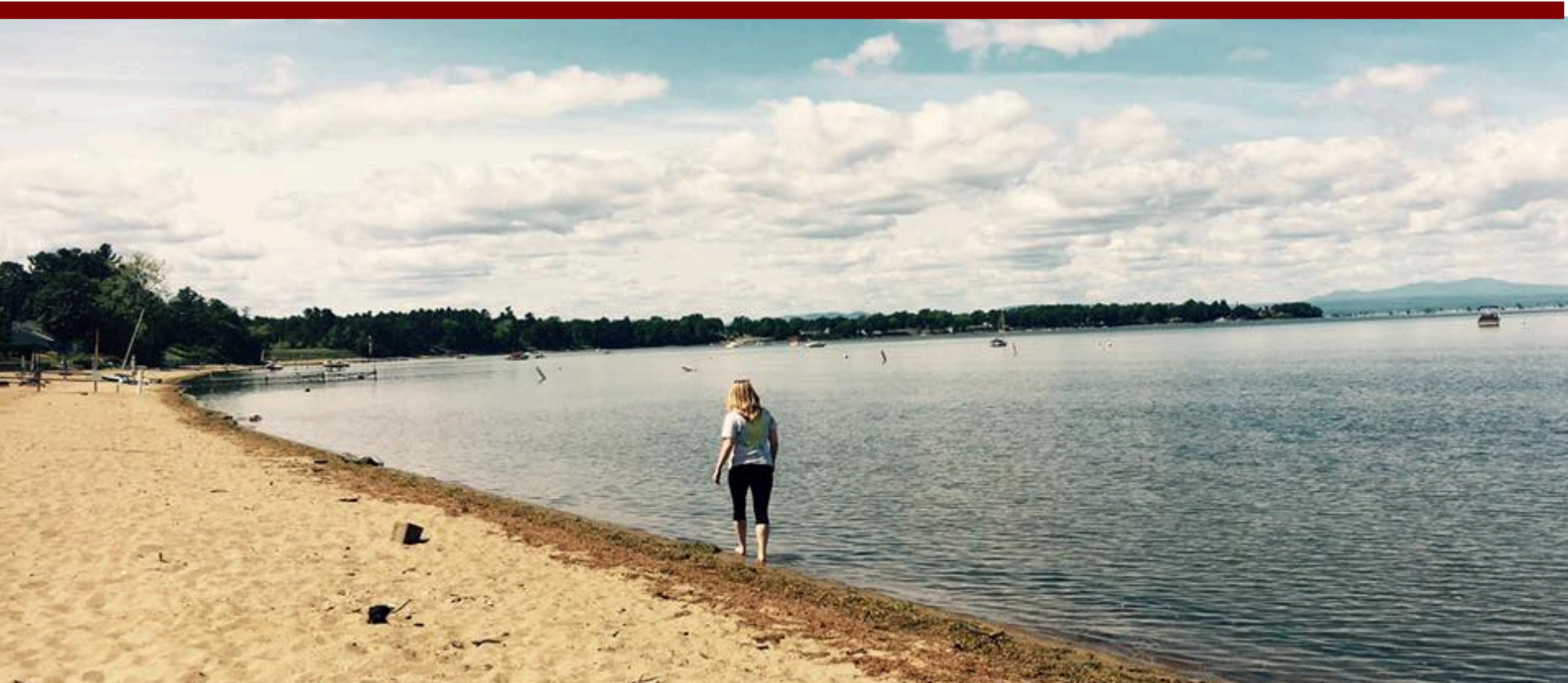
Trust for Public Land photo

Catamount Community Forest, Williston

\$325,000 in Capital Bill funds through VHCB is helping conserve 383 acres for this new town forest. Twenty miles of trails, including 3.5 miles of ADA-accessible trails, will be managed by the Catamount Outdoor Center and. Conservation easements will include riparian buffer protections on headwater streams and 8 acres of wetland protection zones in the Lake Champlain watershed.

Rossetti Beach Natural Area, Colchester

Using Capital Bill funds, the Lake Champlain Land Trust purchased and saved this ecological and public access gem when it was slated for 44 homes. Its 47 acres feature free access to a rare sandy beach on Lake Champlain. In addition, the natural area preserves a button-bush wetland filtering the local stormwater. This natural area also protects critical habitat for two endangered plant species.



Protecting Water Quality



Photo by Paul Richardson

“... the protection of lands for multiple conservation purposes, including the protection of surface waters and associated natural resources.

10 V.S.A.15 §303



VHCB and Water Quality

- Pledged over \$5 million match to the state's \$16 million Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) award from NRCS:
20 farms funded with 16 closed
- Adopted Water Quality and Flood Resilience Guidelines and revised Conservation of Agricultural Lands policy to incorporate water quality/flood resilience attributes
- Management (ALE) plans are now required to address soil health and water quality prior to closing on a farm easement
- Special easement language protects surface waters
- The VHCB Farm & Forest Viability Program has awarded \$881,099 in water quality grants to 29 farms, and \$492,302 in dairy improvement grants to 17 farms



VHCB Farmland Conservation Investments July 2017–December 2018

- 45 farms (including 4 retroactive OPAVs)
- 6,063 acres of farmland conserved
- 36 include water quality easement protections
- Approximately 24 miles of buffers protected
- 24 transfers: 10 to new farmers;
6 intergenerational, 8 to existing farmers



Choiniere Family Farm, Highgate Missisquoi Bay Watershed

The Choinieres implemented numerous conservation practices: installed buffers along the river, installed cattle lanes and fencing, and kept manure under cover using bedded pack barns. The farm now produces milk without feeding grain. The Choinieres are in the process of purchasing a neighboring conserved farm.

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP) Matching federal funds focused on Water Quality



Marc and Tiffany Marquis Farm, Newport Center

- 90-cow grass-based organic dairy
- 124-acre parcel conserved in 2015; 122-acre home farm conserved in 2017
- Located in Mississquoi watershed (critical source area for phosphorous loading)
- Buffers in easement for small streams protect surface water
- Farm needed manure pit, barnyard, ditching, pasture watering system—all installed in 2017 with NRCS cost share

Pigasus Meats, South Hero



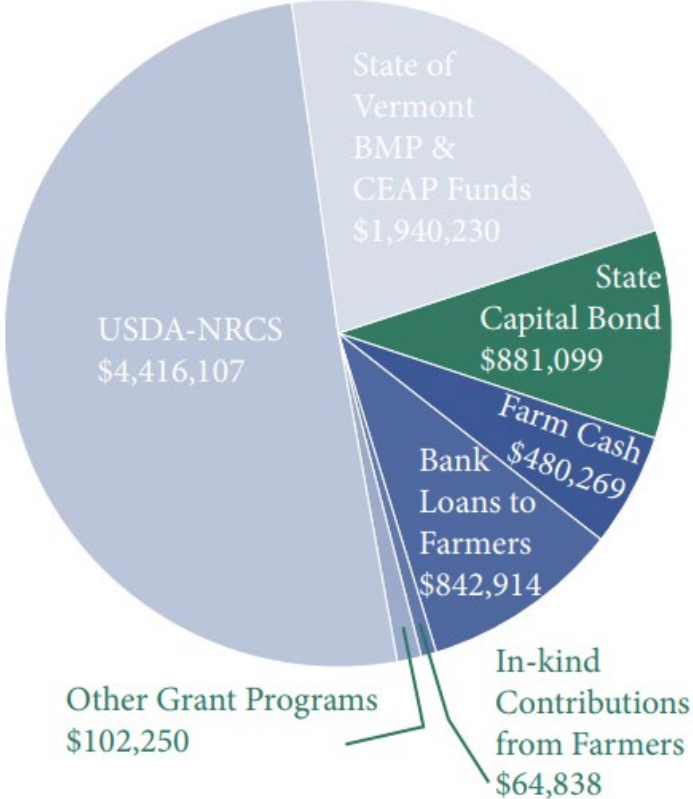
Adjacent to land conserved by the Lake Champlain Land Trust with a public trail, Phelan O'Connor and his wife Kelsey exemplify the energy and innovation of young farmers in Vermont right now. With business planning assistance from the Viability program, they are expanding into local and regional markets. They raise pigs and chickens and are ramping up production quickly since moving their business to the conserved farm in 2017.

Water Quality Grants to Farmers

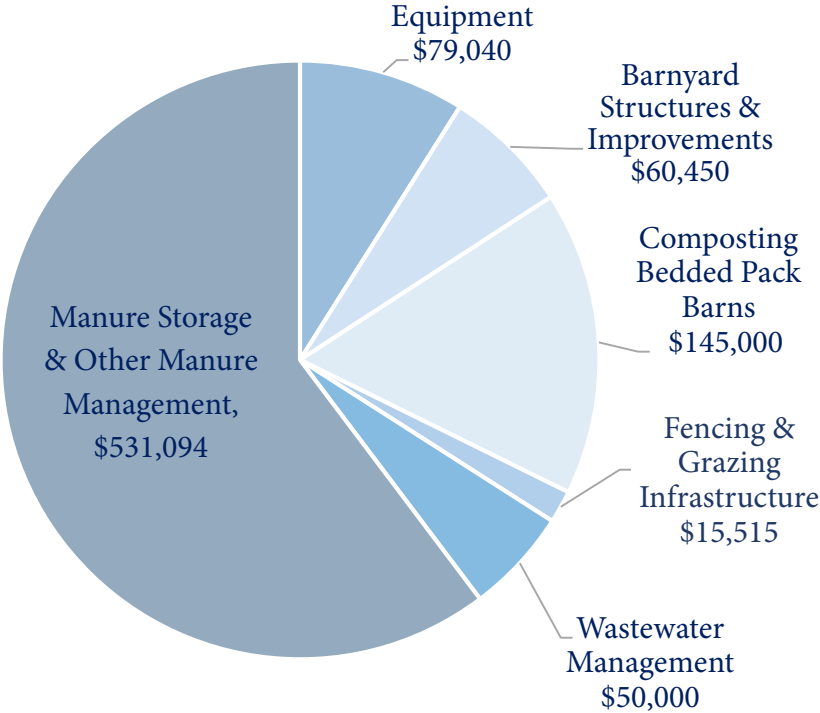
From July 2017 to December 2018, the Viability Program made awards to 29 farms totaling \$881,099. These grants leveraged an additional \$7,846,609 investments, nearly 9:1.

Total funding of all projects

\$8,727,708 of VHCB & leveraged funds



Uses of Water Quality Grant Funds



Water Quality and Dairy Improvement Grants



The O'Donnells milk Holsteins on their farm in Westfield along the headwaters of the Mississquoi River. With a VHCB Water Quality Grant, they purchased a manure injection system to help them manage phosphorus and nitrogen levels in the soil, reduce nutrient runoff, and increase crop yields.



Housing Revenue Bond Initiative Well Underway

- Signed into law on June 28, 2017.
- VHFA shaped and issued the bonds. Sale exceeded expectations and raised \$37 million. VHCB's record of investments in permanently affordable, energy-efficient housing in smart growth areas allowed marketing as a sustainability bond.
- \$24.8 million committed. Nearly \$140 million leveraged. Remaining bond proceeds to be awarded by the end of 2019.

Vermonters Moving into New Homes



18 new homes around a central green in Putney developed by the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust and Housing Vermont

To date, HRB has funded 21 developments with 550 homes in 16 different communities across 9 counties plus accessibility improvements and Habitat for Humanity homes statewide.

The first 86 homes are complete and occupied: Putney, South Burlington and Brattleboro. Another 240 under construction with 200 more set to get underway by the end of the year.

On track to target 25% of the homes to households \leq 50% of median and target 25% to households between 80 and 120% of median.



Public Private Partnership Creating a New City Center

Snyder Braverman Development Company and Cathedral Square Corporation developed 39 apartments for older Vermonters in South Burlington. Allard Square is the first building in a larger development where 60 affordable apartments are now being built by Snyder Braverman in partnership with Champlain Housing Trust. Market rate homes and a new community center with library and municipal offices will follow.

Downtowns Revitalized

New and rehabilitated apartments



Economic Impact

“Construction as an industry has one of the highest economic multipliers, both in overall terms and for employment multipliers.”

— *Making Economic Development Policy*, State Auditor Report, July 2018

- The 21 projects funded thus far with \$25 million in HRB funds will result in an estimated \$124 million in construction activity.
- The National Association of Homebuilders indicates each new apartment built creates 1.13 jobs and generates \$14,000 in state and local tax revenue. Single-family homes each create 2.97 jobs.
- Grand list value of first three completed HRB projects increased by an estimated \$2.89 million.





Hickory Street, Rutland

Redeveloped by the Rutland Housing Authority and Housing Vermont in three phases over nine years to create a mixed-income neighborhood with 78 homes affordable to households at 30-80% of median income. Demolition and new construction, energy efficient new construction.



Appletree Lane, Fair Haven



The Housing Trust of Rutland Company will acquire and rehabilitate 40 homes with rental assistance: 5 duplexes with 10 family rentals and 30 apartments for seniors and people with disabilities.



Rehab will include new windows, new siding, accessibility improvements, new flooring, cabinets, counters, plumbing fixtures, interior lighting fixtures, new ceiling sheetrock, and repainting.



Community-Based Transitional Housing

VHCB Support Saves the Correctional System \$3.7 Million Annually

Project Name and Location	Units	Gender	VHCB \$\$	DOC \$\$	DOC Beds	Prison Cost	Annual Savings
Dismas House Rutland	11	M/W	70,000	95,952	4	266,552	170,600
Dismas House Burlington	7	M/W	70,000	87,690	5	333,190	245,500
Dismas House Winooski	9	M/W	162,000	158,128	9	599,742	441,614
Covered Bridge	5	M	90,000	87,043	6	387,126	300,083
Phoenix House Burlington	19	M	162,000	204,400	14	903,294	698,894
Dismas House Hartford	9	M	162,000	150,000	10	645,210	495,210
Barre Phoenix House	18	M	170,000	204,400	14	903,294	698,894
Northern Lights, Burlington	9	W	162,000	393,752	11	810,172	416,420
Mandala House, Rutland	10	W	198,000	316,967	8	589,216	272,249
TOTALS:	97 units		\$1,246,000		81 BEDS	SAVINGS:	\$3,739,464

*source: Department of Corrections and VHCB 2018



SASH: Coordinated Health Care at Affordable Housing Sites Reducing Medicare Expenditures

With 5,000 participants statewide, SASH (Support and Services at Home) is a nationally recognized and tested model.

- Average Medicare savings of \$1,227 per person per year.
- 3,300 SASH participants with advance directives could translate into a savings of \$18.4 million in end-of-life care.*

*Journal of the American Medical Association



VT Farm & Forest Viability Program in 2018

- 85 farms received business or transfer planning services
- 41 farms received a second year of services
- 18 farms received shorter-term business coaching
- 5 food hubs received strategic planning assistance
- 16 forest products businesses received technical assistance
- 27 loggers attended 2 business management workshops
- 23 family forestland owners and consulting foresters attended 2 succession planning workshops
- 6 forestland-owning families received one-on-one succession planning assistance
- 17 farms received Dairy Improvement Grants
- 29 farms received Water Quality Grants
- **Total enrolled Viability clients: 167**

VHCB

Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program

- 16 years of in-depth advising
- More than 800 businesses have completed business plans
- 30% of enrollees are conserved farms

From 2017 to 2018 Viability Program Participants:

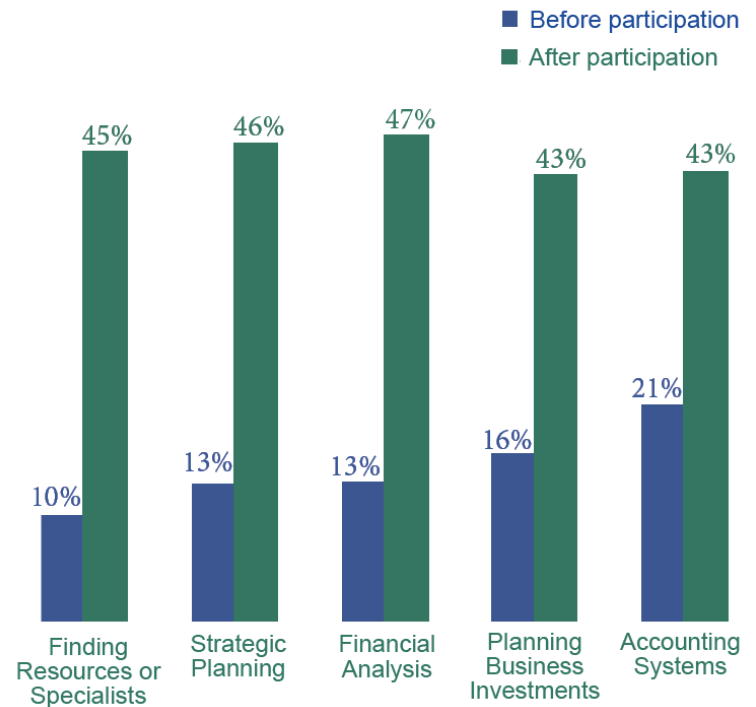


Gross sales by 21%



*Profits by \$32,500
ave. per business*

Percent of farmers who report high skills in:

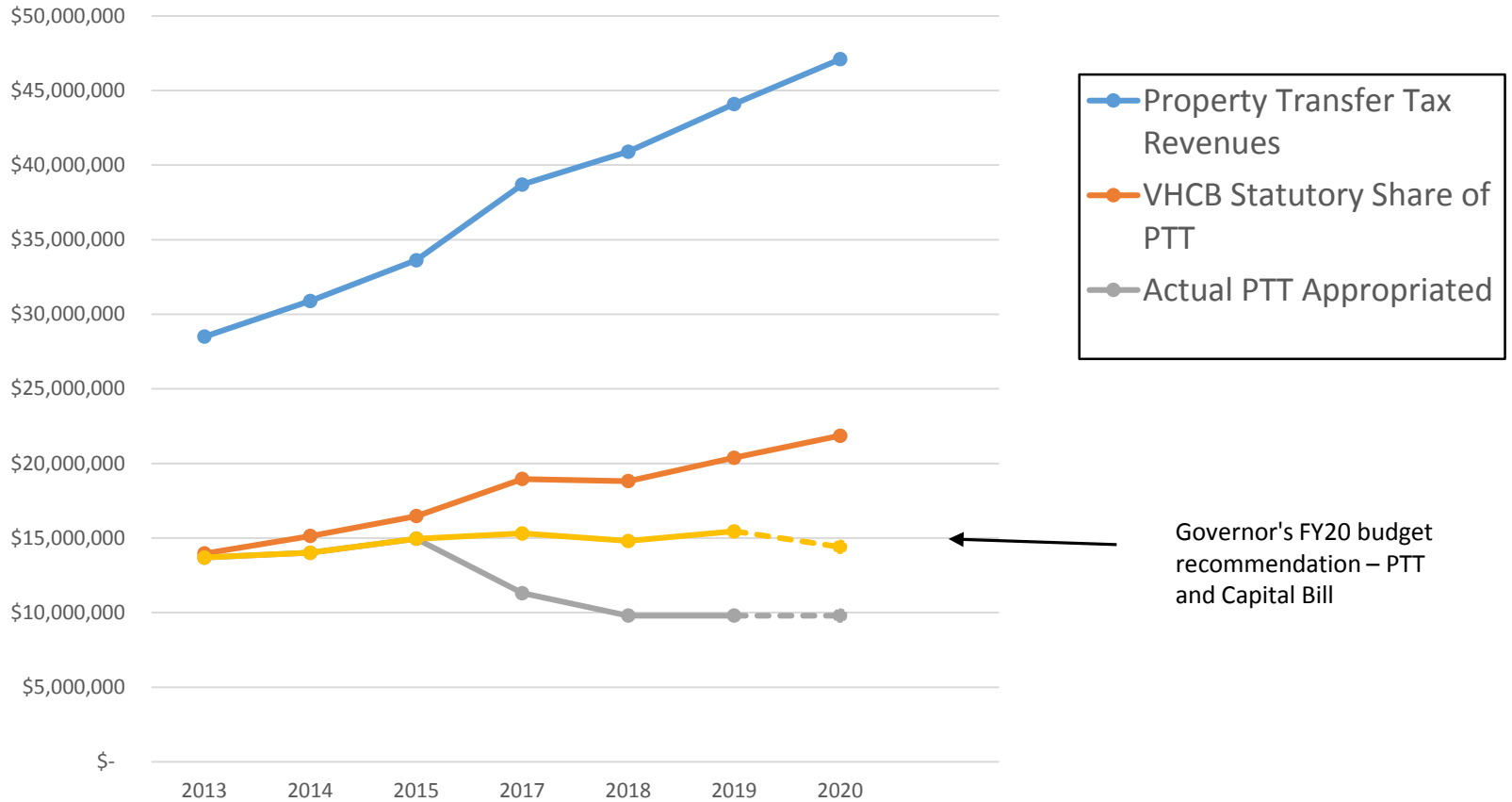


Towhead LCC, Danville

Isaac Pearl benefited from business planning, working with an advisor through the VHCB's Farm & Forest Viability Program. His advisor helped him refine his book keeping systems and analyze his business strategy and equipment needs. He can now easily track income and expenses, and is keeping information up to date, speeding up his tax preparation and informing decision making.



VHCB Appropriations 2013-2020



Willoughby Peaks Westmore



Gus Seelig

Executive Director

Jen Hollar

Director of Policy & Special
Projects

