

MEMORANDUM

To: Governor Peter Shumlin
From: Stephan Morse, Chair, Vermont Economic Progress Council
CC: Patricia Moulton, Secretary, Agency of Commerce and Community Development
Date: March 16, 2016
Re: Round 2 (FY16) Windham County Economic Development Competitive Grants

Below for your consideration are details on one of the projects applying for Competitive Grants through the Windham County Economic Development Program for the purpose of strengthening the economic development infrastructure of the region.

Two applications were considered only after Letters of Intent to Apply were approved by the Windham County Advisory Council. The VEPC Board met with the applicants and considered their applications against the approval criteria. The Board recommends funding the following project at the level requested, with conditions.

See grant details for the \$90,000 request from Strolling of the Heifers, Inc. and approval/disapproval signature block below.

APPLICANT DETAILS:

Applicant: Strolling of the Heifers, Inc.
Project Name: Windham Grows
Total Project Cost: \$341,236
WCEDP Grant Request: \$90,000 (26%)
RFP Section Addressed: 2.2.1 Business Incubators
Staff Project Description: Fund food and agriculture business incubator

Applicant Project Summary:

Windham Grows will develop the most promising business opportunities in the food and agriculture sector in Windham County. In a systematic approach, the project will seek out, evaluate, and provide development support for selected entrepreneurs. By providing entrepreneurs with the resources they need to gain high-value management skills, this project builds new dynamic businesses that create meaningful jobs, increase average wages in the food and agriculture sector.

RECOMMENDATION:

VEPC recommends that the project be approved for a grant in the amount of \$90,000, subject to the following conditions:

- Include in the grant agreement, as a condition of release of funds: Evidence that the other funding sources listed in the application have been provided or committed to the project.
- Include as a condition to execute a grant agreement: SOTH must review and revise their timeline to better reflect when funds may be available, and provide to ACCD.

- Include as a condition to execute grant agreement: SOTH must review and revise its goals and objectives, including the number of potential clients, to better ensure success of the project, and provide to ACCD.
- Include as a performance requirement in grant agreement: SOTH must provide ACCD with a detailed sustainability plan including steps that will be taken to solicit and obtain business sponsorships and implement a participant fee structure and/or agreements with an equity stake in successful participant companies.
- Include as a performance requirement in grant agreement: SOTH must provide evidence that it sought partnership participation of all the potential partners listed in the application and the VHCB Farm Viability Program and Vermont Agricultural Development Program (i.e. letters or communications with entities), and evidence indicating the level of commitment and services that will be provided by each service provider/entity that agrees to participate (i.e. commitment letter).

Approval/Disapproval:

WCEDP grant of \$90,000 for Strolling of the Heifers' Windham Grows Project:

 _____ **Approve**

_____ **Do Not Approve**

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Governor Peter Shumlin

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Date