

## Vermont Cheese Council Executive meeting – Wednesday, October 01, 2008 held via telephone conference

**Present:** Laini Fondiller, Diane Bothfield, Andy Kehler, Linda Miller, Ellen Ogden, and Mark Fischer

### **Discussion:**

1) Proposed Dept. of Ag budget request for \$36,000. Diane stated that the proposal needs to show itemization of line items to be increased and why there is a change from previous budget. The major increase is in promotion specifically indicating that this is accomplished by the coordinator answering telephone and email inquiries, directing patrons to cheese houses, and attending promotional events. Declare these events specifically in the proposal. The pitch is that we will be refocusing efforts on the VCC member promotion including new brochure. Keep admin side out of the request for VT Dept of Ag.

Review of proposed budget:

- Andy has a call in to Alison Hooper for Cheesemaker Festival/VBC budget items.
- Website maintenance needs to be increased from \$500. Andy has not seen a bill from Alysa so had no basis to determine cost. Ellen thought the cost is more like \$200/month. **ACTION:** Increased budget to \$2,400.
- Brochure line item needs to be increased. Perhaps we should find out from Tim Newcomb what the cost per unit would be for printing 25,000 brochures. Ellen guessed it was about 20 cents/copy. **ACTION:** Andy changed to \$5,000.
- Diane stated that she still has \$13,000 to send to VCC. **ACTION:** Andy to send email requesting this from Diane for dispersal.
- Merck money does not appear on this budget. **ACTION:** Laini needs to contact Vermont Farm Bureau to request it be released.
- Discussed events. Currently Ellen does not charge VCC for her time spent at the events. Somewhat redundant to have the Coordinator costs in Events and in Coordinator: Promotion line items, but Ellen felt it was worthwhile to be able to show that there was a cost for both the Coordinator and Cheesemaker(s) at these events.
- Mark asked Andy to include the increases we discussed and Laini asked that he attempt to reduce some line items such as seminars/dinner/group events a bit. Andy stated that just adding the events/etc. as well as newsletter/brochure together, that comes to over \$30,000. This can be used to justify request.
- Ellen will develop a "Contract Bill of Services." This list will allow VCC to see what costs are associated with contracted items. This can then be included with Dept. of Ag. request and will be helpful for Merck funder.
- Merck \$30,000 with \$3,000 to 10,000 earmarked for grant writing, remainder was for marketing.

**Andy will include the following items with the proposal for \$36,000 and send to Diane Bothfield by October 15:**

Ellen list of Proposal of Events throughout year

Website/newsletter/brochure costs

Major Cheesemaker Festival Event

Ellen's Contract Bill of Services

2) No date yet for meeting with VIAC. Diane is still working on setting this up.

- History of VIAC/VCC relationship discussed. VCC desire was not to have a structured program that dictated that all cheesemakers must go through programs. Tension comes from VIAC providing technical services only on an hourly basis. VIAC expectation is that all VCC members can/should partake in programs. VCC actually pays for programs that are "discounted" for VIAC classes. Discussed the desire for the revenue from the Festival could/should be earmarked for VCC members and held by VIAC which could then be drawn from instead of showing up in our budget. This would be a true scholarship program as a result.
- Discussed Mark Fischer's Farm Viability Grant and shared with three other farms. How much is DJ or Marc available? VCC asks for services and VIAC gives classes. As a Cheese Council, we need to determine what members want. It was suggested that we come up with a proposal for five sessions to be held around the State @ \$500 per session. **ACTION:** Put out a survey about what VIAC classes/areas which VCC

members would like to attend. This would help to put together programming. Preface it by stating that we are trying to establish a relationship. How much time can you commit? What time of the year? Laini will start this document. Send to Exec Council for feedback, then out to members.

- Membership 2009. Offer various opportunities that include qualifying for upgrades including VIAC classes or on-farm consultation. This would give a better sense on what needs are by the members.
- For VIAC/VCC meeting, we need to get a handle on what VCC members would like.
- Listeria and safety protocol discussed.