

# WILLOWSFORD CONSERVANCY TOWN HALL

DECEMBER 3, 2024

[WWW.WILLOWSFORDCONSERVANCY.ORG](http://WWW.WILLOWSFORDCONSERVANCY.ORG)

# **AGENDA & GROUND RULES**

## **Welcome & Introductions**

## **Board & Staff Presentations**

## **Open Floor for Questions & Comments**

- Speakers need to sign up via sheet or by link in Zoom chat
- We will call upon speakers in order they signed up alternating between in-person & Zoom
- Two Minute time limit will be enforced so that we can hear from as many of you as possible
- We will respond after every 3-5 speakers

# COMMUNITY COVENANT

## MISSION STATEMENT:

- ❖ Land conservation
- ❖ Farming
- ❖ Recreation (trails and amenities)
- ❖ Education

**BUDGET:** Transfer fees, assessments, HOA can disapprove

# HISTORY OF THE CONSERVANCY & BOARD

**2021:** Resident-led board established

**2022:** Focus on Strategic Planning

- Gathered info on infrastructure and equipment
- Conducted survey and focus groups (>1,100 responses)
- Shared plan with the community in November & December

**2023-24:** Implementation

- Expanded engagement across community with more programming, events etc
- Recruited new trustee
- Expanded funding
- Utilized savings for equipment and infrastructure improvements
- Conducted visioning and planning exercises for remaining infrastructure needs (~\$2M)

# 2025 REVISED OPERATING BUDGET

---

- Reduced budget by \$75k before assessment number changed
- Incorporated actual benefits numbers & actual number of staff planning to be on benefits vs estimates in earlier version
- Added employee contribution for our HSA plan
- Delayed start date for Land Stewardship vacancy
  
- Payroll & Benefits has only increased by 14% from 2024
  - o Increase in health insurance costs
  - o Business Manager in position for full year (2025) vs part year (2024)
  - o PT engagement associate with no benefits (starting late spring)
- Balance Sheet – Bank Accounts total \$426k (not \$528k)

# 2025 REVISED CAPEX BUDGET

---

## Land Stewardship (1.5% increase)

- Truck – cost increased over time period if financing vs buying outright
- Maintenance Barn – second bid was lower than first bid

## Farm (10% increase)

- Received quote from preferred architect
- Added contingency for construction based on community feedback
- Driveway estimate based upon input from several professionals
- Project manager – critical to navigate zoning, permitting, bids, and managing contractors. Cost savings since serves as GC and reduces labor from Farm Director.



# LAND STEWARDSHIP

---



WWW.WILLOWSFORDCONSERVANCY.ORG

# LAND STEWARDSHIP: CHALLENGES

---

**Staff Safety:** We have insufficient tools & equipment that make inherently dangerous work even more dangerous. Because of this, we are unable to perform all our responsibilities while ensuring staff safety.

**Efficiency & Efficacy of Our Work:** Against the pressure of changing climate, invasive plants & bugs, and the constant changing state of the land, it's essential to have the proper resources to accomplish work on over 2,000 acres of land efficiently.

**Protecting Assets:** Our equipment and materials are left to degrade in the weather. Without the proper facility for carpentry work, project preparation is done on highly-coveted fair-weather days instead of being done inside ahead of time.



# LAND STEWARDSHIP: SOLUTIONS

---

- **Providing Essential Assets**

- The purchase of a high-flow skid steer and additional attachments will expand brush hogging and grassland management capacity and allow us to begin forest management.
- Expanding the native plant greenhouse will drastically improve our efficiencies as well as increase stock availability for greater sales. The current greenhouse was built out of recycled materials.

- **Protecting Assets**

- Constructing a pole barn at our maintenance facility will allow us to do carpentry work in a proper facility and improve our capacity to store and maintain equipment.
- A new firewood storage facility will allow us to better store and season firewood for our community.

- **Retaining or Replacing Assets**

- Our F-250 truck is required for us to do any trail work, brush hogging, and anything that requires our equipment or heavy materials. It has been having frequent issues that put us weeks behind in projects while it gets repaired and has a known and major issue that could soon fail.
- A pond has a dam that is actively failing, putting the existence of the pond at risk and posing potential safety concerns.

# LAND STEWARDSHIP: IMPACT

---

- **Improved Land Management Capacity** will allow us to better restore the land to the benefit of the community, wildlife, and environment. In a highly developed area such as ours, not only does this create a natural refuge, but it increases the property values of Willowsford.
- **Increased revenue generation** from native plants and firewood sales help offset our expenses while also furthering our work in environmental preservation.
- **Greater educational value** to our community and generations of Willowsford kids, who will all have the opportunity to experience the natural world within their own community that few people get to have.

# FARM: Why Ask & Why Now?

---

- Some context
- In 2021 Farm Director proposed a three-pronged approach to address farm issues
  - Improve soil health
  - Increase community engagement
  - Implement operational efficiencies
- Farm team has made great strides
  - Soil health is improving; yields are up, inputs down
  - Volunteerism and attendance at Farm events is robust
  - Non-capital-intensive operational efficiencies have been made
- Investment in facilities matching current and projected usage will improve Farm bottom line
- Need to address outstanding food and human safety issues

# FARM: Soil Health

---





# FARM: Community Engagement

---



WWW.WILLOWSFORDCONSERVANCY.ORG



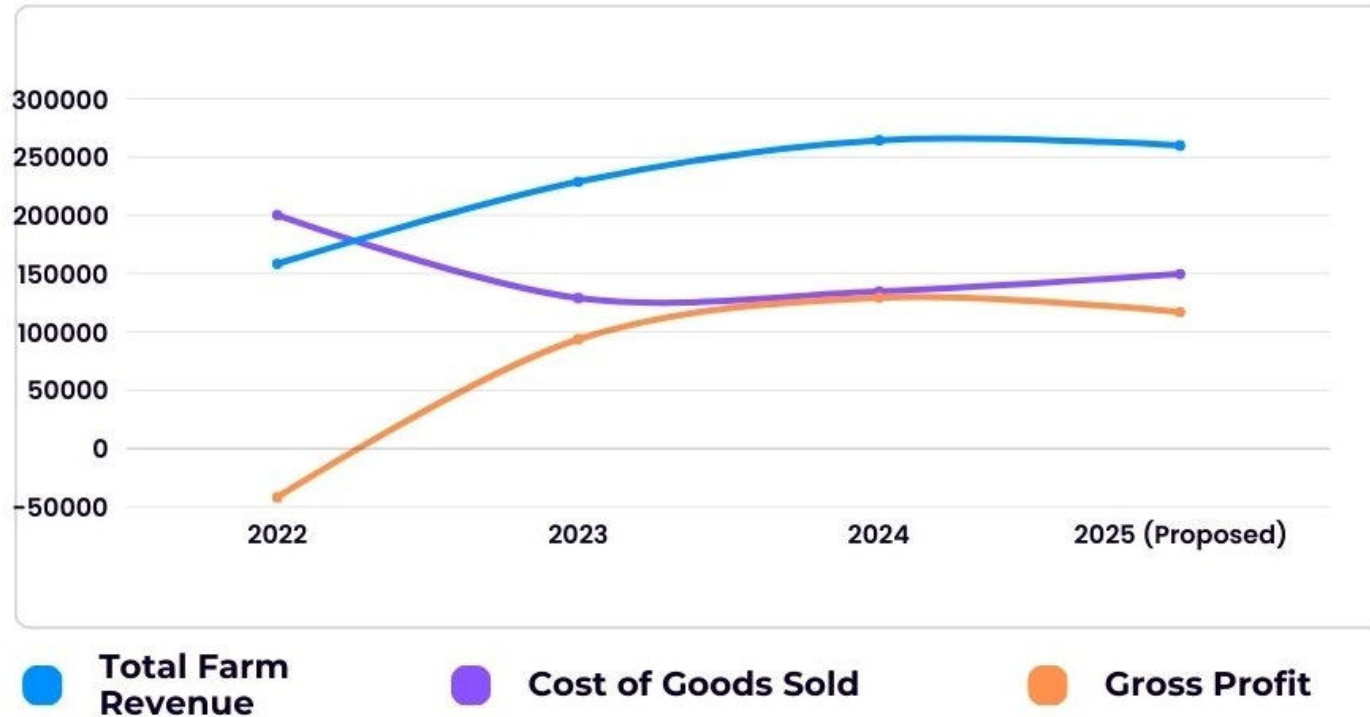
# FARM: Operational Efficiencies

---



# FARM FINANCIAL TRENDS

## Farm Revenue 2022-25

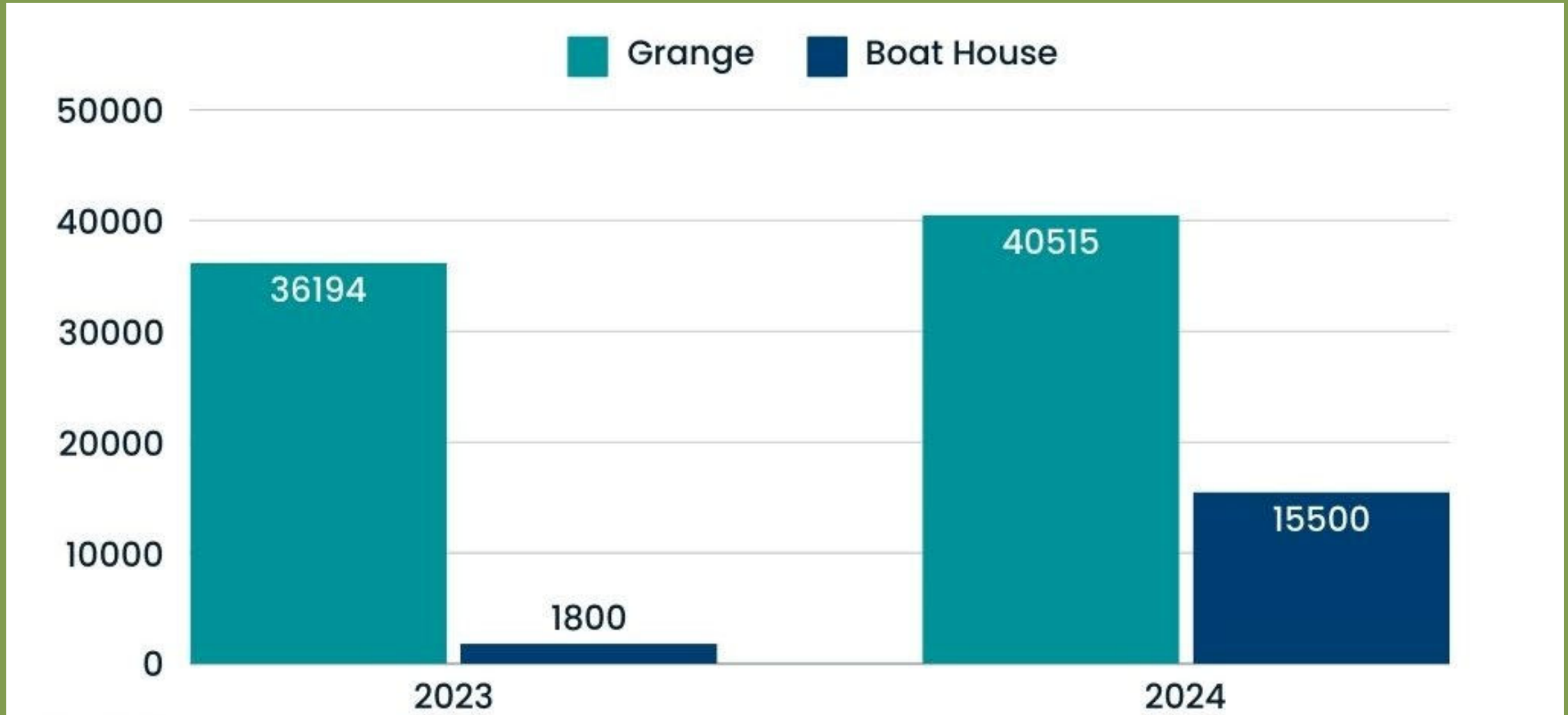


## Sales Growth 2022 to 2024:

- Eggs 424%
- Vegetables 209%
- Purchased Goods Sold grew 60%
- Total Revenue grew 67%
- COGS decreased 33%



# Revenue Increases from Farm Stands



# FARM FINANCIAL TRENDS

## 2024 CSA & Online Sales

- 419 shares purchased (note that some households purchase more than one type of share, such as a Farmer's Choice and an Egg Share)
  - o **47% growth from 2023**
- Largest growth in Custom Share option
  - o **112% growth from 2023**
- 603 unique customers (Shares and Online Orders)
- Approx 75-80% are residents / Approx 21% of households order Shares or Online

1,000s of customers shop at the Grange and Boat House Farm Stands

Over 1,000 people attended events & programs this year

Harvest Market (600-700 people)

Wagon Tours

Yoga

Meet the Chickens

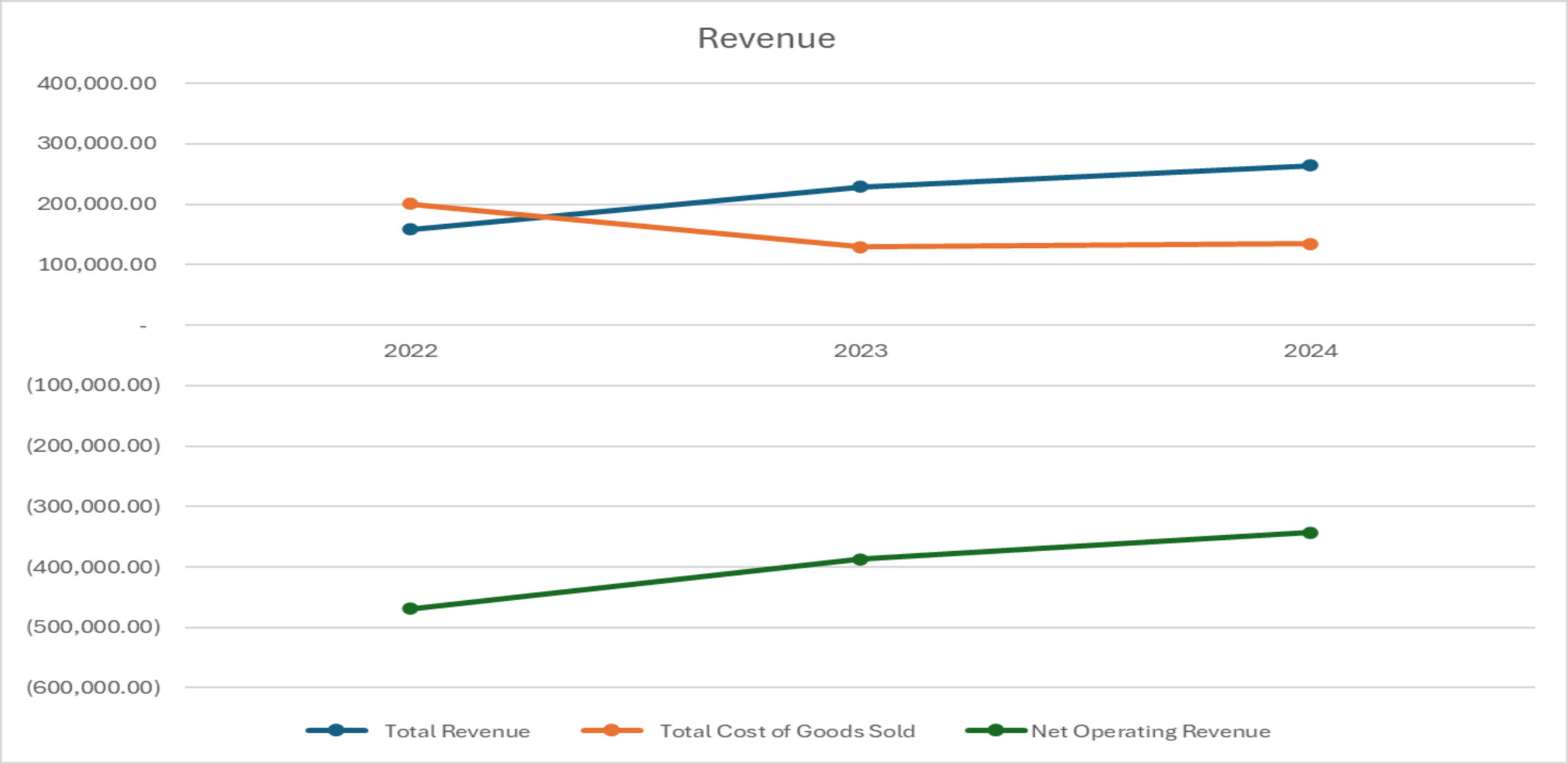
Culinary Programs

Volunteering

- Wagon tours

WWW.WILLOWSFORDCONSERVANCY.ORG

# Trending in the Right Direction





# Revenue Increases from Capital Investment

---

## Packing Shed

- **Classroom** with restrooms will enable us to host camps, field trips, programs, tours, and event rentals which will generate **approx \$20-30k** for first full year – once established the potential is **\$50k-\$75k +** per year
- **Year-round Farm Stand** open 4-5 days per week (staffed in part by volunteers) with wider variety of products will enable us to generate **approx \$80-100k** in revenue per year

## Maintenance Building

- Housing onsite would enable us to hire 2-3 Fellows/Interns and grow more, reducing Farm staff weekend hours by 50%
- This building will enable us to prolong the life of \$100ks already invested in tractors and other equipment. Storage space would enable us to save \$ in bulk purchases