

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Virtual/Remote Meeting due to COVID-19 Protocols



9:30 am Directors Business Meeting

In attendance: Kirsten Workman, Brian Kemp, Jeff Carter, Loren Wood, David Conant, Peter James, Marie Audet, Eric Clifford,

Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

- More activity than the last month
- Mandatory training for VOSHA for essential workers (ag included)
- Livestock Advisory – state concerned about culling of dairy animals flooding meat market. Could we spread out the cull rate by contract grazing the healthiest animals? Maybe process into ground beef and share with food hubs (local marketing). Who would hold retainership during the process? Diane Bothfeld is looking into it more closely. Money (state or philanthropic) to pay for grazing. \$1.25/day/head can add up pretty quick. Reaching out to grazing farms to identify capacity
- Conference call with Senate Ag – 4 farms from Addison, relief funding, etc. Hannah Sessions (goat dairy, cheese), will stevens (veg), Paul Stone (poultry). Beef isn't negatively effected yet...demand is high and smaller growers can't keep up. Hannah had to switch to online sales quickly. Stones shut down processing, fear of employee safety, wants advice from state regulators. Veg demand is high, but flow of Farmstand/safety.
- Bill out for relief out of senate ag...proposed by senate ag, \$50/cow.
- Payment for Ecosystem Services met last week: pilot study looking for funding, brainstorming for funding.

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

- Review and approve March meeting minutes (attached)
- No new member applications

Motion: Loren

Second : Brian

(all/0/0)

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

- Review March/April financial reports
- \$60517 in assets
- 10,000 dues, \$7000 expenses
- We have not invoiced the agency of ag for our grant yet.

Motion: Eric Clifford

Second: David Cnant

Discussion: none

(9/0/0)

- Discussion of Treasurer duties/responsibilities during Jeff's sabbatical

- Sabbatical is only .80 FTE
- He can spend some of that time on CVFC stuff

Check-In & COVID-19 Updates

All

- How are you doing?
- New requirements for OSHA Training, etc. for essential businesses
 - Most non-hispanic crew are trained
 - Already instituting protocols, workspace, distance
 - Waiting on Spanish version, translator has helped
 - 2 people/vehicle limits grocery shopping, in Chittenden county hannafoods does curbside pickup which helps, shopping 2-3 weeks at a time.
 - Resources are a little tight for PPE, but so far OK
 - How long will it go on? New norm, making it a part of everyday life.
 - STOP signs asking people to check in and stop, stopped selling compost, Employees ONLY
 -
- Resources available
- What assistance is most needed?
- What should CVFC response be for members?
 - As we get information through pipelines, make sure to share readily

Executive Director Search

Jeff/All

- Interview/Offer Letter
- Candidate's Response
 - Retirement benefits?
 - Uncertainty of funding, leaving a secure job
 - VAAFM CWF meeting on May 12th, agency waiting until after that for new funding, but there are internal discussions about reducing current contracts,
 - If he already has retirement account, we can just contribute
 - Phone – add a line to his existing account
 - Be careful about being too flexible with time
 - Security is main concern
- How do we want to respond?
 - **Give him until May 12th (June 1st)**
 - **Offer retirement, 3% of salary contribution**
 - **Add line to his phone, reimbursement**
 - **Computer already planned**
 - **50 weeks of work, 2 weeks of leave**
 - Quarterly reports (driven by grant)
 - Cons. Districts hire provide salary + a stipend for other costs
 - Reach out face to face – and on paper
 - Ben...wait until the 12th, then respond? Marie...want to keep moving. Loren...agree, just answering questions, not another offer? Peter....let's move it forward, don't want to offer more money down the road, but retirement, phone, etc. ok.
 - Send letter, Eric follows up after

Other Updates/Issues

All

- Gil Livingston: still looking for leadership of the Dairy Water Quality Collaborative, frustrated by lack of progress with environmental organizations, they still want farmer involvement/leadership, don't want to dismiss but unsure how to support it moving forward. Facilitator didn't really know where to go from here either. A potential for a new ED and could involve.

- May 29th deadline NRCS deadline for Conservation Stewardship Program.

11:00 ADJOURN Meeting

Motion to adjourn: David Conant

Second: Geroge, Ben