

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, June 5, 2019

UVM Extension Office

23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



9:37 am Directors Business Meeting

In attendance: Eric Clifford, George Foster, Ben Dykema, Rachel Orr, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Nate Severy, Jeff Carter, Kirsten Workman, Ray Brands

Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

Brian called the meeting to order and gave these updates

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

Approve April Minutes

Motion to approve the April Minutes: Ben Dykema

Second: Eric Clifford

Discussion: these are high quality, we should share them more widely. Kirsten will send out to all members (including Business members) at the conclusion of meetings. And other key partners.

Passed (7/0/0)

Membership Applications

Kirsten Workman

None received this month

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

Just deposited the newest check from VAAFM for CWIP grant fund to work on that project. \$508,000 in total income over the last 6 years (includes grants, contracts and membership).

Motion to accept treasurer's report: George Foster

Second: Lorenzo Whitcomb

Discussion: Jeff has renewed our digital footprint for the next few years...website, domain, email, etc.

Passed (8/0/0)

10:00 am

Additional attendees: Jed Davis, Matthew Biette, Rachel ? (seedway), Kristin Williams, Matthew Severy, Jane Clifford

Updates and Discussion

Field Practice Data Collection

Jeff

Meeting with NRCS next week about how to move forward with FSA to collect conservation practice information when farms complete crop reports. Probably start in Addison/Rutland Counties.

VAAFM is putting out an RFP to collect/verify and input data into the Partner Database.

NRCS Water Quality Science Meeting

Jeff

Current state of science in agriculture and water quality. Lots of information. Our state NRCS is being very proactive.

Program Reports

Nate

CWIP Grant Update

Nate presented the last grant report to VAAFM that spanned the timeframe of 11-15-2018 to 5-15-2018. So far we have held 11 workshops with 289 attendees (the original proposal said we would deliver 10 workshops with 175 attendees). This quarter we did a lot of work on the Strategic Plan.

Challenges...how do we expand our audience? We seem to be reaching the farms already engaged in conservation practices. Evaluations are showing that we aren't seeing a big change in knowledge. Identify strategies and reach folks who aren't/can't make it to a meeting/workshop. Perhaps videotaping field days and other ways to engage folks. Also emphasize water quality credits are available at the workshops might help.

Going forward we will continue to do Crop Signal workshops. Late July pasture walk being planned at Chalker Farm. Wrap up the Strategic Plan. \$152,528 remaining to use over the next three years (out of the original \$242,360).

Strategic Planning Progress

We need to finish the plan. We need to look at it get it finalized this next quarter. Nate and Kirsten will 'dust it off' and send out to Directors for review and keep it on the monthly agenda.

Dairy Water Quality Collaborative Recap & Next Steps *Brian/Marie*

Original group has wrapped up, but the next iteration is starting. The final report was released (shared here and at Dairy Summit). They want to continue the discussion.

Marie Audet has joined the group as a coordinator. It is taking a bit of a new direction.

- Report of Future of Farming in Vermont (UVM Extension, VSJF, VAAFM, others)
- Fed into Dairy Water Collaborative recognized that this could be a crisis.
 - Recognize that without dairy, other ag sectors will suffer
 - Economics and water quality need to be connected
 - Report had 8 recommendations.
 - Identified VT needs a leader to coordinate the many efforts...bring in all the constituents
- Gund Institute presented (through a graduate student course) proposal. Phosphorus-based, still has some issues
- Upcoming meeting on Monday to bring more folks into discussion...."Farm & Water Coalition"
 - Need additional allies (environmental organizations as well)
 - Worried that we will lose our working landscape without buy-in from groups outside of agriculture
 - Without farmers, they aren't going forward. Need buy-in.
 - Long-term process
 - People really do not know how much farming has evolved to address these issues.
 - Other questions

Ben...we still have a big lift to educate people about how the 'system' works. We need to be prepared to educate the public if we participate in these kinds of efforts. Good information

about the how/why. Also need good information on the importance of food production. Also need an answer to the why other farms are NOT doing it.

Lorenzo...we also need to focus on enforcement along with education. If education isn't doing it, sometimes it might take enforcement.

Could discussions about practice challenges be brought to a group like this...manure storage, spreading restrictions, stormwater collection, environmental implications of trying to follow the 'rules'.

Wetlands Permit Update

Brian

Final hours of legislative session, wetland jurisdiction is staying as is. Exemption is staying under Agency of Ag (for now). Marli Rupe has reached out and asked to explain ANRs point of view and wants to hear from farmers how they can have better relationship and why farmers are resistant to working with ANR. She will join us at the July meeting. She wants us to be candid. She also wants examples of bottlenecks. Need to explain why/how the farmers feel like pawns between VAAF and ANR.

Nutrient Management Commission Update

Jeff/Kirsten

Lorenzo, Jeff and Kirsten have been participating in the Agency's work on looking at NMPs in Vermont and make recommendations for changes. The consensus was that the planning process doesn't need changing. Agency wants more of a shift to look at the implementation of the plan (vs. the plan itself). Could FarmPREP tool be a way to do that? Ended without a definitive conclusion, decision. Agency needing a better way to account for P reductions for TMDL. Can they also look on a watershed scale vs. a farm scale.

Phase II will start to review the Technical Service Providers and how/if they are certified?

Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative ReCap

Eric/Brian

Conveyed that we want better communication and more efficient communication of results.

Eric gave specific examples of how the relationship was not working very well.

ACRC sees their role as collecting the data and they do not have the resources to communicate with farmers or other landowners.

Responding to the Public about Farming Practices

Group Discussion

Social Media (Front Porch Forum) had another dust up in Bristol. Chanin Hill has been responding trying to explain farming practices. Non-farming public has legitimate concerns, the farming community has legitimate responses. Agency (Ryan Patch) provided some good resources from a similar experience in the Mad River. Hills are hosting an Open House in June.

Marie also reached out to Joe Allen to offer resources to help on the communication side. She connected him with Laura Hardie. But he was reluctant to put something out there.

Jeff pointed out the fine line of responding to the 15% of complainers vs. the 85% who are supportive. We do need to respond, but at some point need to forget about naysayers.

Marie went to the 2019 Dairy Sustainability Forum in Chicago. Technology is going to facilitate that we need to be better about telling our story. We need to get ahead of it.

Ecosystem Services Update

Jeff/Kirsten

UVM Extension continues to meet on a regular basis.

LandStream request for a letter of support...check in with FWA and CRWFA.

Measurement is still important...but other folks are bought in to the existing models.

Ben is willing to sign a letter.

Legislative Session Summary

Jane Clifford

Do not give up your clout...people are reaching to you because they need you. You may not need them. Other organizations need credibility...and they can get that from you. Use your voice for you...not to bolster someone else's initiative.

Could have been the worst session relative to respect, patience across the board. Frustrating and disappointing. Primary legislative agendas did not get passed...egos and personalities got in the way.

- Audit ANR capacity to regulate ag water quality. (H-525) Commitment to have ANR/VAAF to be in the same room and work together. Perhaps facilitated by Governor's office.
- Wetlands working group...3 reps, 3 senators working over the summer to come up with language both agencies can agree and provide clarity to ag community. Led by Senator Starr. Schedule pending.
- S-96. 3 to 4 year process, won't happen tomorrow. Non-regulated money...four different grant programs. The point is to get priorities from the grassroots up. Better project ideas/implementation on a local level. Doesn't have to be regional planning commissions who direct funding, but it could be. Nothing different next year or year after. Agencies can still apply for blocks of funding for current programs and still work the same as in the past. More personal responsibility comes with that process.
- S-37 Medical monitoring ended up passing. Employer using chemicals and employee gets sick...can go after damages. Broadest legislation in the country. Governor could still veto in January.
- Next year... minimum wage/paid family leave will be back, should get passed (possible veto if unchanged). Ramp up to increased minimum wage was a rapid ramp up, could be difficult to implement.
- Act 250 rewrite....big bill, lots of changes, not sure it can happen next year.
- Continue working with everybody to set a tone of collaboration.

August Meeting – Eric invited us to have a BBQ at the Clifford Camp.

12:48 *Motion to ADJOURN* Meeting: Ben Dykema

Second: Eric Clifford

Passed (5/0/0)

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, July 3, 2019

PLEASE JOIN US AT VERMONT NATURAL AG PRODUCTS (Foster Bros Farm) AFTER THE MEETING TO SEE Digested Organics NEW TECHNOLOGY SEPERATING NUTRIENTS FROM MANURE.

“Our process removes phosphorous and nitrogen from the screened manure and results in an organic phosphorus concentrate we will be using as a compost amendment. This concentrate is much easier for farmers to tactically apply to fields in need as the product has over 70% of the water removed. It could also be exported from the watershed.”

Upcoming Dates:

June 19

Crop Signals: Organic Field Crop Weed Control (*Location TBA, 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM*)

July 3

Next CVFC Meeting