

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, January 8, 2020

UVM Extension Office
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



9:30 am Directors Business Meeting Minutes

In attendance: George Foster, Loren Wood, Brian Kemp, Jeff Carter, Rachel Orr, Marie Audet, Jed Davis, Peter James, Ben Dykema, Eric Clifford, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Lynn Coale, Matt Witten, Cheryl Cesario

9:30 am **Call to order & President's Report**

Brian Kemp

Annual meeting coming together. Rachel has been working hard on agenda. Nick Richardson (VLT) will be meeting with Brian, Marie & Jeff ahead of meeting.

Wetland issue...committee unanimously agreed to leave things the way they are and with VAAFM jurisdiction.

ACTION: send letter to committee (especially local delegates) for their work and for listening to constituents

PES...lots of work happening. We'll look at it later in the agenda

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

Kirsten reviewed the December minutes

Motion to Approve December Minutes: George Foster

Second: Rachel Orr

*Discussion: amend to include LFO Hearing update
(5/0/0)*

Membership Applications

Kirsten Workman

New applications – Maple Wind Farm, Bruce Hennessey, Huntington (Vermont Farer Member – Class 1)

Motion to approve: Brian Kemp

Second: George Foster

Discussion:

Approved (5/0/0)

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

68 members have paid dues

Balance sheet shows an increase

In the process of generating 1099's for end of year

Jeff will be paying ejc Consulting all at once (instead of monthly)...all agreed

Motion to approve December Treasurer's Report: Peter James

Second: Loren Wood

Discussion: Jeff can make lists of paid members to anyone interested. Jed...enlisting board members to reach out to non-renewals

Approved: (8/0/0)

Clean Water Grant Update

Jeff Carter

2018 received CWF Incentive Program. In 2019, we requested additional funding. Jeff distributed an summary of deliverables from the proposed work plan. Took a few minutes for those in attendance to review. Most things stayed the same, but additional funding to pay for new staff and communications consultant. Jeff is working with Nina on details.

Jeff needs a hiring committee and help. Now that the funding is secure...we need to make it happen.

Volunteers:

- Marie Audet
- Rachel Orr
- Peter James
- Eric Clifford
- VAAFM Representative – alluded to in communications with Nina
- Kirsten/Jeff

Date: Next couple of weeks first meeting

- **Communications Consultant...Send out RFP...** NEDP...Rene help get word out interface later

Opportunity to adjust some of the deliverables...before contract signed.

10:00 Member Updates and Discussion

Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)– Vermont Farmers Letter, Workgroup Draft Report

Jeff is alternate for UVM for the PES Working group. It has been revised multiple times already. Currently the recommendations include:

- Need two more years (with budget)
- Advance understanding of soil health...
- Evaluate and integrate new and existing tools (mostly existing models)
- Initial focus for services to be valued: Decreased flooding, reduced runoff, carbon sequestration
- Use VESP as framework
- Get \$\$

Only one mention of actual measurement at farm level.

Proposed Statement

Ben asked if the Farmer Statement being proposed is to 'override' the PES recommendation?

Group took a moment to read the proposed statement.

Marie: timing is critical, there is a lot of momentum (wetlands, auditor, etc), biggest message is of unification and action

Eric: agree 100% with marie, it will create less finger pointing down the road,

Peter: agree...except for mention of regulations (would be part of that)

Ben: bottom-up, farmer driven, empowering land managers...those statements may come back to haunt us – could raise the hackles of some of some of the academics/gov't folks...but agree to sign on

Loren: we should sign it...reluctant in the price tag, but agree (Ben addressed that with the idea that the investment per acre is actually very reasonable)

Lorenzo: boots on the ground to clean up the water means you HAVE to have farmers doing the work, not just more studies

Brian: Paul Doton's (CRWFA) didn't want them to sign on yet...shared their concerns. Scott Magnan (FWA) ... some worry that it is implicitly in support of LandStream and there are other options (indigoAg). The 'rush' is to have it part of the official record. He understands the concerns, but doesn't believe they are too likely to come to fruition.

Eric: if you look how far we've gotten, put in perspective. Not a contract...just a first date.

Brian: It will help with public perception to see all the groups working together. I don't want to be pressured into it, but don't want to be reluctant.

Lynn C: ACoRN will support, but devil is in the details, there could be a problem if there isn't agreement on the matrix for measurement/payment.

Jed: We need to emphasize the idea that the goal is getting money back to farmers

Motion to approve signing on to letter: Loren Wood

Second: Eric Clifford

Discussion

Approved (10/0/0)

Jeff: The PES workgroup did prepare a report that does explain what they are talking about and giving ag more credit than we gotten in the past.

Jed Davis – Farmer watershed groups meeting at VT Farm Show

It has been exciting to see the three farmer watershed groups work better together. It has been members/representatives of the three (mostly dairy) watershed groups and some other folks (agency, co-op, etc). Can the three groups take over the coordination and drive the agenda (dairy co-ops will still help).

Brian...it sounds good, we would still appreciate the 'push' and coordination.

Eric...would be a good time to get updates and annual report info

Thursday, January 30 @ 8:30 @ Farm Show

Wetlands

Brian Kemp

Big win. Wetlands committee that reviewed whether ANR should take over regulating ag wetlands had a unanimous vote to leave it with VAAF. Wording will get re-worked when RAPs get opened up this year. We will send a letter of appreciation to whole committee, but with emphasis on our local folks.

Eric: in the letter, invite them to the annual meeting and thank them there.

Jed: share the letter with the other groups.

10:30 Letters to the Editor

Rene Thibault, New England Dairy Promotion

Rene Thibault, New England Dairy (check-off program). We've gone through a re-branding to be more clean ON the communications team to work with local media to share positive stories about dairy farms in Vermont. Recently worked with CRWFA to give a spotlight on all the work their group did in 2019. We want to take all the good work that farmers are doing and get it to the public. Also hoping to work with the FWA to do the same thing. USDA governs check-off rules...ie they cannot lobby. However, they are trying to increase presence at the state house to make sure good information gets in front of legislature. Working with Farm Bureau to get monthly fact sheets into mailboxes at the state house.

Comes from a TV news background, if you're doing something cool let him know.

Marie: we can assume that the public knows very little. The first one can be more broad level, then maybe get more specific.

They also are doing some TV ads and hope to continue to do that.

We will send the CVFC annual report to Rene, share last year's numbers too

11:00 Addison County River Watch Collaborative

Matthew Whitten, ACRWC

Director of Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative. For the last few years we have wanted to work more closely with us. Recently awarded a VAAF grant to do better outreach and work with farmers. We monitor 6 rivers with 30 sampling sites for water quality parameters. We are looking to do more strategic sampling. We will be adding a farm visit to the volunteer training to understand RAPs and (March 21st). Would a CVFC member host? DEC has cut back on the number of samples that can go to their lab (turbidity, in particular). Board members looking to work with farmers to use less precise (turbidity tubes) measures. Another objective of funding is to improve communication with landowners, so we will improve both notifications of sampling and reports with data. The PES project is very interesting.

Brian: after going to your annual meeting, it would be great if you could share practices with members

Training: 40 people come to training, probably 20-30 would stay later to do this. Maybe more than one farmer/operator at

2020: Lewis Creek, New Haven River, **Middlebury** River, Little Otter Creek, **Otter** Creek, **Lemon Faire**...emphasis rotates every two years, but there are sentinel sites on all of them. Moving forward, we hope to be able to be more responsive/flexible. If you have any input on locations that need monitoring emphasis, let them know as it will shape the sampling plan.

First Wednesday of the month (April – September). Lewis Creek Assoc. is the fiscal sponsor.

Annual Membership Meeting

Jeff/Kirsten

Kirsten will update on Directors who's terms are expiring and confirm nomination/election procedures.

Notice should include language about eligibility, emphasis, and language about commitment.

Deadline for ballot...with short bio and why you want to be on board. Do you agree to....(language from bylaws).

Peter...how do we encourage younger members to engage on board. Could we change the bylaws? Can more than one person from a farm serve as director?? Does it need to be spelled out or can we just operate that way. Could be a policy that gets approved? Bring it up at the annual meeting...emphasize the desire to involve younger members.

Motion to approve a policy that an alternate be allowed From the same farm to serve on Board, if both member and alternate are in attendance, ther is only one vote per farm: Eric Clifford

Second: Loren

Discussion: with the intent of encourageing younger generational involvement in the board (Marie)

Passed (9/0/0)

Other Updates & Announcements

Jeff Carter – Vermont Farm Show call for display products...drop off at office or call Kirsten to pick up

Rene – Saturday is National Milk Day, Friday morning request to have a reporter their in the morning.

11:52 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: Peter James

Sedond; Ben DYkema

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – February 5, 2020 (will elect 2020 Officers).