

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, February 5, 2020

UVM Extension Office

23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



9:30 am **Directors Business Meeting**

In attendance: Brian Kemp, Jeff Carter, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Ben Dykema, Loren Wood, Eric Clifford, Marie Audet, Peter James, Rachel Orr, Robert Hunt, Cheryl Cesario, Kristin Williams

9:35 **Call to order & President's Report**

Brian Kemp

PES still moving along. Brian has been approached by John Winston regarding P loss on farms. He's looking for three farms/farmers – 'payment for performance' CIG grant. Marie mentioned UVM professor (Anju Krivov) who has been doing digestate studies has approached her to work with IndigoAg. Ben feels like IndigoAg is approaching it backwards. Scientific measurement over models...it still needs to be farmer-led. How do you make it happen...co-op model, needs a board, involve crowd-funding. So many perspectives from all the different groups (PES). We need to get the message out there that Agriculture provides benefits. Sonia Howlett trying to find out where farmers want to go next with this. Senate Ag is behind it.

Abigail ?, Addison Independent question about rolling back of federal environmental regulations (wetlands, buffers, surface water, etc). How will it impact the VT landscape? Brian took some time and Marie gave him facts. He emphasized that Vermont farmers are already above and beyond and we're not going to go backwards. Wasn't in the Thursday paper, maybe not Monday either. Perhaps not the answer they thought they would get. Marie appreciated that we exist to respond to these questions.

Anson met with 'water warriors' group. Listened, wasn't sure he made any ground. He left it that he will meet with some local farmers and then reach back out. He would like other farmers to go to them, and maybe even bring them to some farms.

Election of Officers for 2020

Kirsten Workman

Motion to nominate Brian Kemp for President: Loren Wood

Second: Marie

Discussion: Marie values his role and he has risen to the occasion to represent

Passed (7/0/1) Brian abstained

Motion to nominate for Marie Audet Vice President: Peter James

Second: Ben Dykema

Discussion: Eric asked if we could have two vice presidents to spread out work load? Example...Brian wanted to emphasize that all directors should have a voice or need a title to act on our behalf. Jeff mentioned that we could also have committees with chairs.

Passed (7/0/1)

Motion for President to cast one ballot for Secretary/Treasurer: Ben DYkema

Second: Peter

Discussion: Jeff mentioned that he will likely be on sabbatical June 1 – Dec 31, and will plan to address financial work during that period

Passed (8/0/0)

Brian cast ballot Jeff Carter as Treasurer and Kirsten Workman as secretary.

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

Motion to Approve January Minutes: Loren Wood
Seond: Eric Clifford
Discussion
(8/0/0)

Membership Applications

Kirsten Workman

None

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

Jeff reviewed the Balance Sheet... holding steady at \$58,000

Jeff reviewed the Profit & Loss...\$570 net income

Membership...half of the folks who have not paid dues, have not paid for two years. Do we want to make internal decisions?

Peter...If they are still farming, I think we should still get them information. Marie mentioned that once we have an Executive Director who can do some direct outreach.

Motion to send a second notice and remove if they don't pay by april: Ben Dykema

Second: Brian Kemp

Discussion: Marie, do we just send a notice or a communication about aht we want/need them. "We want you to continue, if you want us to wave your fee please reach out." Jeff...its an issue of skin in the game.

Cheryl...you should include the Annual Report.

Passed (7/1/0)

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: Eric Clifford

Second: Lorenzo Whitcomg

Discussion: none

Passed (8/0/0)

Annual Meeting Recap

All

Rob thought it was good. VLT ED was good, but disappointed there weren't more people there. I felt good about the Coalition speaking on my behalf as farmer. I struggle with land owners and neighbors and getting the message to them. Take-away is that the voice is out there and people are telling our story.

Marie....having the land trust Pres. talk about the importance of farming (and not just conserving land). A hand up...and I think we have a new partner. Their newsletter will be sharing this story in a newsletter that goes to 8,000 people. Should we maybe look at another opportunity for the communications training?

Organic certification...asked for VOF inspector for a letter about the threat of losing certification for not replacing nutrients. Landowner education is also important.

PUBLIC EDUCATION -

Public Notice from VAAFm – Otter Creek/S. Lake BMP

The VAAFm decision associated with Missisquoi is now being extended to Otter Creek and S. Lake Basin. Above and beyond the RAPs. Not sure what it will mean. There is no additional money if you are meeting RAPs.

Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative Volunteer Training

March 21st – Cheryl Cesario, Meeting Place Pastures (Cornwall), looking for other members to be there. Cheryl met with him after our last meeting and cleared up a few things. They host four of the sampling sites, so it makes sense to do it there.

We should help them set some of the agenda items.

Breakfast on the Farm

June 27th, Gosliga Farm, Addison

Getting CVFC Members there to volunteer.

11:00 Addison Regional Planning Commission – Clean Water Funding strategies by RPCs

Tim Davis, Addison County Regional Planning Representative for Ferrisburgh, joined us to discuss the potential for Clean Water Funds to be funneled through the planning commissions.

Introductions

Last 5-6 years working with regional planning.

State initially as looking at mandating taking responsibility for the lake cleanup dollars. State is looking for organizations who have experience giving out grant money. RPCs have done this with roads, energy projects and others. Determining if they want to be registered as a 'Clean Water Service Provider'. They have some concerns...they're need to be projects ready, and RPCs would have some responsibility for successful project outcomes. Direct ag projects would likely not go to RPCs, but the other projects will be connected. He believes that groups like CVFC could be involved? If RPC doesn't do it, who will? Ag consolidation puts more responsibility on less individuals for cleanup. His experience is working with the intersection of ag and Fish and wildlife. Example of septic capacity on farms to service villages.

Jeff: DEC just finished Otter Creek Basin Plan, DEC holds a lot of these dollars, new Otter Creek BMP requirements, does this tie directly to that.

He's happy to entertain questions/concerns and get answers from Adam at RPC.

- Peter...would RPC put money through town or directly with the ag producer?
- How will they set the priority for spending dollars?
- Can we keep the towns out of it? They are out of touch with ag and it would be very difficult to get actual farming practices funded/done...Tim doesn't think the towns would be involved on that level.
- What's left if ag and municipal don't go through...erosion, other projects, streambank maybe?
- Could projects that are working with NRCS engineers pitch projects for funding to RPCs if they had benefit greater than the individual farm?
- Marie...so far 90%+ of reductions have come from agriculture. How will this address that?
- Jeff...interface not being addressed. Examples...gully causing erosion to a farm or a larger culvert that directs more water to a farm field. Or the other way around...a farm field contributing erosion to a town ditch.
- Being innovative on farms is often met with more regulation. Can this help with this?
- Building relationships will be important. Get Adam here to have good connections.
- Accountability isn't a problem on farm projects...we do it with NRCS all the time.
- What is the timeline for money being disbursed – November may be when RPC has to decide?

Separate pool of money – VT FWS money for purchasing buffers that meet their delineation requirements. Immediately they are looking at lands that are adjacent to USFWS land. March meeting (2nd Wednesday) will be focused on USFWS buffer project.

Tim offered to be the point person and keep CVFC updated. Push questions forward.

NEDP

Need to get something to Rene by February 20th to get something out.

- Response to the Addi Indi potential article and the proactive role that farmers are already above and beyond federal regs, so rollback won't impact VT landscape.
- Connections and Collaborations – ACRWC, Chamber of Commerce, VT Farm Bureau, ACoRN?, other watershed groups

Other Updates & Announcements

- FWA Precision Ag Meeting – March 12th
- Farm Show – Farmer watershed group meeting
- Legislative Updates / Legislative Breakfast Schedule
- Green Mountain Dairy Commission – Feb. 13th farm finances workshop
- No-Till CC Symposium – we have one free ticket with our sponsorship

Executive Director Search

Jeff Carter

Jeff proposed to Nina an amendment to agreement. The amendment was approved, but agreement not finalized. Changed it up and resent an amended scope of work, with slightly lower ask but more refined job description. Nina is out of town until the end of next week.

Education/Outreach and TA would be in collaboration with UVM Extension, but more focused on organizational development and capacity building.

Next steps: hiring committee reviews, meet and then bring it back to the Directors. Hiring committee will meet Tuesday, February 11th at 9:30.

Questions: will they have a budget in addition to the salary?

Space...potential for more space in Middlebury office that we might be able to take an advantage of

- Marie Audet
- Loren Wood (taking Rachel's spot)
- Peter James
- Eric Clifford
- VAAFM Representative
- Jeff Carter
- Kirsten Workman

12:20 Motion ADJOURN Meeting: Peter James
Second: Lorenzo Whitcomb
(8/0/0)

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – March 4, 2020.

April 1st Meeting – will be followed by McKenzie Brook/East Creek annual watershed meeting