

# Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, March 4, 2020

UVM Extension Office  
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



**In attendance:** Eric Clifford, George Foster, Loren Wood, David Conant, Ben Dykema, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Jeff Carter, Brian Kemp, Tim Kayhart, Brad Lawes, Ernie Audet, Bill Barnes, Terry Norris, Harvey Smith

**9:33 am Directors Business Meeting called to order**

## **President's Report**

**Brian Kemp**

Lots of things will get covered later in meeting...legislative  
VHCB Water Quality March 20<sup>th</sup> deadline

## **Secretary Report**

**Kirsten Workman**

*Motion to accept Secretary Report as presented: Ben Dykema*  
*Second: Eric Clifford*  
*Discussion: last names*  
*Approved (8/0/0)*

## **Membership Applications**

**Kirsten Workman**

No new members, but lots of renewals came in.

## **Treasurer Report**

**Jeff Carter**

Jeff reviewed the balance sheet and profit & loss. No liabilities. Expenses: annual meeting, end of year employee taxes, dues, copying/office, etc

Still negotiating the new Clean Water Fund agreement with VAAFM to add additional funding that will allow us to hire the Executive Director and communications consultant. Asked her to hold the November payment and move it forward. Also trying to get QuickBooks to reflect the 10% overhead we get from the grant.

Shared list of members who have not paid the renewal.

*Motion to accept Treasurers Report as presented: Loren Wood*  
*Second: Eric Clifford*  
*Discussion: Jeff wants to know who will be Treasurer during his sabbatical*  
*Approved (8/0/0)*

David mentioned liking and being used to the existing format...we should continue using that

## **2+2 Program reception 4/2/20 4PM-6PM– Request for support**

Request from Jane to support again, same level as before.

Additional supporters as well...feed dealers, and more

*Motion to support at same level in past: David Conant*  
*Second: Loren Wood*  
*Discussion:*

Approved (8/0/0)

**Update from the Executive Director Search Committee:**

- Marie Audet
- Loren Wood (Rachel Reed)
- Peter James
- Eric Clifford
- Jeff Carter
- Kirsten Workman
- Nina Gage

Job description was released on Monday...sent to Diane Bothfeld, Susan Brouillete, Erica Campbell, Rural Vermont, UVM Extension mailing list,

Others: Laura Hardie, NTCC mailing list, Dairy Producers conference list

Interviews....March 24<sup>th</sup> potentially

Also funding for communications consultant, will be hired once ED is on board.

**ACoRN Ad?**

Sure....

Lyn Coale wants to have a discussion with Brian about regenerative ag. He may bring Jeff with him

**10:00**

**Pay for Performance (PFP) program with NRCS** – Jon Winsten leads Advisory Group, March 5, Colchester  
Attending: Ernie Audet and Jonathan Chamberlin, Jeff Carter, Brian

Jeff:

PES has kind of gone three ways – LandStream & measurement, state & VESP, John Winsten. None of it has gelled yet

John W is funded by CIG/NRCS grant. FarmPrep, CEAP, payment rates, frequency, etc.

**Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)**

- CRWFA meeting and farmer discussion (Feb, 2020), Jennifer Byrne, WRNRCD
- Farm to Plate Brief on PES for Legislature, Nancy Everhart, VHCB

**March 10<sup>th</sup>** presentation at Senate Ag Committee Update about the working group results/report. Brian thinks that Bobby Starr wants to see VESP as the pilot project. New survey...brian is hoping to hear the results during this hearing.

Ben Dykema....why are we letting agency drive it, frustrating that we're not taking the lead role. Three watershed groups need to get together and hash it out and get on the same page. Simplify the strategy. We need to get together and really talk about it. Eric...we should do it NOW before things get busy. Call a separate meeting or invite to April 1<sup>st</sup>

Revised Act 250 – Harvey Smith pointed out the Ecosystem Service “natural capital” language in new Act 250 language. Gives more ownership to the state (and away from farmers). A lot of changes since the original language, but bought unanimous support.

Jeff asked if the ESP report will be turned into a bill. Terry Norris mentioned that a budget request was made, but small ask (\$50K) to keep it moving. There is still room to leave the door open to LandStream....if they're willing to play nice with State/Feds, there could be room for measurement. Chris Pearson could be very supportive.

### **CEAP program**

Tim Kayhart asked for a brief explanation of the project. Jeff gave a quick recap.

Dead Creek, Little Otter paired watershed study. Baseline data and then compare increased practices, potential innovative P removal. During April 1<sup>st</sup> East Creek/McKenzie Brook, Joshua will give a much better recap of the project.

### **Addison County Regional Planning - Tim Davis, Response about Clean Water Fund service provider**

Tim did respond. March 11<sup>th</sup> is the next meeting. Forwarded the request from the state in relation to water quality, but seemed mostly municipal. Harvey mentioned that the RCPs are reluctant to see it in statute, but are willing to entertain the idea at some level.

### **Updates about Agriculture and the 2020 Vermont Legislative Session**

Discussion with current legislators – Rep. Harvey Smith

Many of the bills passed were very vague...Act 250 good example. Trying to bring in a lot of ag requirements (slope, bedrock, flooding). Clean air bill...22-member board appointed and not responsible to report to anybody and included citizen right of action...will it really clean anything up?

Agency of Agriculture – VAAFM Deputy Secretary Alyson Eastman

### **Wetlands Rules**

Wetland study committee met to determine jurisdiction (ANR/Ag), determined that ANR did not have jurisdiction after a lot of testimony. In the end the committee came up with a letter clarifying that ag wetlands should be under VAAFM, and scolding the two agencies and instructing them to work together. Since then, Emily Bodecker recently left ANR, relations have improved. VAAFM has drafted the updated RAP rules, but in the meantime there has been question about temporary jurisdiction until the RAPs are revised? In contact with Michael O'Grady...do ANR permit requirements apply now until RAPs. ANR has not responded for more than a month to Michael to clarify. Permits for anything outside of immediate production area (but related to wetlands). VAAFM now has their own legal staff. Need to draft RAP rules that will pass through LCAR, threats of suits. DEC has changed delineation criteria. Would VAAFM be willing to share changes with groups like ours before changes go public. Leaves ag in limbo.

### **Groundwater Protection (Public Trust)**

Went through LCAR...asked ANR how they apply to agricultural activities (ie. Spreading manure). Asking for legislative interpretation. No one has taken it up yet, so likely won't move this year.

### **Pesticide restrictions –**

Chlorpyrifos (Lorsban) insecticide that is currently restricted, but they are asking for a sale ban  
Glyphosate, 4 bills on the wall despite agency data saying that it isn't in water. Is there any discussion about making it restricted use product?

Neonics? Seed treatments...if we lose this with chlorpyrifos, we will lose seed treatment and be back to pesticide boxes on planters.

Pesticide Advisory Council...pushing them to be more ambitious  
Margaret Laggis up there representing  
A lot of push from Rural VT (every day) and NOFA...no pesticides

### **Minimum Wage and Agriculture**

There is a study in the bill to see the impacts on agriculture. Direct impacts to service providers, but most of them are not paying minimum wage anyway. Currently ag and teenagers are currently left out. What about forestry? Tim Kayhart mentioned the 'trickle up' effect. When minimum wage goes up, other higher paid workers end up going up too...to avoid compression. Fear of losing benefits (housing, fuel, food, etc).  
40,000 current VT positions are minimum wage

### **Global Warming Solutions Act**

A lot of tax increases potentially needed to pull it off...

If it doesn't pass, environmental organizations are ready to sue.

Chris Bray...Act 250, Global Warming, TCI (carbon tax), and two others...will likely want to push through starting Monday.

Harvey shared what he spoke about at town meetings and legislative breakfasts.

- Benefits of ag to air, water, climate, economy
- Ag doing lion's share of P reductions
- Interconnections with all the programs (and ag)
- Need to do more of this...resources already exist...take the show on the road

Also hearing from septic pumpers that don't have anywhere to take their septage. He's worried about accepting unregulated products on the land that could have unintended consequences.

### **Manure Pits**

Brian has been called by more than one farm to take manure from farms who are out of storage. If anyone has space reach out. At least one applied for an exemption and was denied, another farm it is a recurring

What's the solution?

- Cover pits
- 250 days of storage
- 75% of it is management...if you can't deal with manure, you need to change something
- Less water containment
- Management is getting harder...very few custom operators
- More pressure on the agency to ratchet it down.

Issues to talk to VAAFM:

- Wetland rules and RAPs
- Ratcheting down on offenders...agency won't do it, don't want black eye, but instead all the farmers get a black eye

**12:10 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting:** Ben Dykema

Second: David Conant

Passed (8/0/0)

**Events Reminder:**

**April 1, 2020 - Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting**

**March 21 - Addison County River Watch Collaborative - Volunteer Training about farming**

Cheryl Cesario, Meeting Place Pastures (Cornwall), asking for other members to be there

**April 1, 2020 - McKenzie Brook/East Creek annual watershed meeting** after CVFC regular meeting

**June 27 - Breakfast on the Farm**, Gosliga Farm, Addison – Call for CVFC Members to volunteer to help