

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, June 3, 2020

Virtual/Remote Meeting due to COVID-19 Protocols



9:30 am **Directors Business Meeting**

In attendance: Brian Kemp, Jeff Carter, Brian Kemp, Marie Audet, Rachel Orr, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Ray Brands, Eric Clifford

Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

Relief packages from feds/state.

Busy with field season...going well

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

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

Motion to approve May minutes: Motion Brian Kemp

Second: Eric

Discussion: correction...PES workgroup item was really (Jon Winston's grant with CIG-NRCS (pay for performance), correct David Conant's last name

Passed (6/0/0)

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

- Review May financial reports
Same as we were before in accounts, invoiced VAAFM for two deliverables - semi-annual report and hiring executive director (\$80K) \$59,000+ in account with accounts receivable of \$80K

Motion to approve Treasurer's report: Marie Audet

Second: Brian Kemp

Discussion:

Passed (6/0/0)

Check-In & COVID-19 Updates

All

- General check-in...how are you doing?
- COVID Relief programs update.
 - Federal programs
CFAP – sign up at FSA, January 15 – Apr 15 numbers of animals on farm, plus product sold (beef, dairy, etc.), plus total animals on hand May 15
 - New state program announcement, relatively simple to complete. For dairy, pounds of milk, cull cows.
Still lan

- Are programs accessible and working?
- How does CVFC proceed in a post-COVID landscape?
 - Outreach to members, what assistance can we provide
 - How do we proceed with education/outreach, events and farm visits?
 - Marie: on the farm feeling better moving forward than we did a month ago, still not open to the public
 - Brian: similar, on the farm we are more comfortable, but when we go out still careful. Worry that zoom is getting old and we might lose participation. Might prefer
 - Eric: see what happens around 4th of July, see what happens, make a decision,
 - Lorenzo: leaning towards meeting in person,
 - HYBRID option

10:00 Executive Director Welcome – All Members invited to Join

In attendance: additionally joined by Jed Davis, Paul Doton

.Brian introduced welcomed and introduced John Roberts. He's really looking forward to having a full-time person. Things had languished a little bit and excited to have John build our organization.

John:

- Excited for this opportunity
- CVFC has a lot of potential. It is a scary, but interesting time. Lots of potential to move in a positive direction.
- Will be lots of work and lots of communication
- Working with Kirsten/Jeff
- Will link up with Nina Gage to make sure grant is running smoothly
- I hope you all feel comfortable reaching out to me about anything. Communication will be key
- john@champlainvalleyfarmercoalition.com | 802-989-6712
- FIRST order of business will be to reach out to all the members individually and see what
 - Make sure everyone is accessing potential financial assistance available. There is a lot. We can help them
- Legal issues and environmental advocates – how and when do we engage?
 - Counter with steady, accurate information
 - Water Warriors, doesn't seem like a good place to engage on the Facebook page
- Marie – keep ears out for new folks who might have the ear of the legislators
- One thing coming out of this COVID situation is that people are more connected to their food security
- Membership – reaching out is good, looking at regions where we have had lower participation (southern VT, headwaters Otter Creek), make sure they know that we have a positive
 - Will email everyone as an introduction
 - Follow up with phone calls
- Monthly reports:

- Recap of meetings with members
 - Grant activity update
 - Legislative update
- John will share the 10-point list he is starting from.
- Jed Davis...also reach out to supporting business members and partner farmer watershed groups. Would love more partnership between them.
- Paul Doton...make sure to reach out to Laura Hardy and Rene Thibault
- Jennifer Burn from Vermont Law School
- Social media?
 - Facebook
 - Instagram
- Website – include press release about John
- Marie
 - Resources for farms in transition
 - Buffers! Reminding people, especially in high traffic areas.
- Key practices to focus on – being proactive:
 - Buffers
 - Grassed waterways
 - Livestock exclusion
- Eric...would like John to regularly reach out to non-farming organizations (ie. Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce) ...could be some good synergies. Good for public relations and some additional working relationships/resources.
 - Associated industries
 - Lake Champlain chamber of commerce
 - Vermont Businesses for social responsibility
 - Audubon (David Mears)
 - Lorenzo...might help keep finger pointing at bay
 - Jed...board could support by serving as liaisons to some of these organizations
- Jed...we have had a very active board of directors, with new ED be flexible about meeting structure
- Keep highlighting relevant issues that CVFC is working on to stay relevant to the members
 - CAFO
 - RAP review
 - Things that make sense, but are not ‘allowed’ per rules

Other Updates/Issues

All

- July agenda – media/communications consultant. John & Kirsten will draft a proposal for approval by the directors to move forward.
- CAFO – ANR/DEC....meeting with farms who ‘need’ a CAFO permit. It would be double jeopardy...would still need LFO and RAP. Reaching out to individual farms (MFOs?) and requiring them to apply. Chip wants to meet with farmers. Could just be another version of the power struggle between ANR/VAAFAM.
- Wetlands working group– all meetings have been cancelled. Still trying to work on the issue.

11:32 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: Ray Brands

Second: Marie Audet

Passed (6/0/0)

Next meeting – July 1st, 2020

Will check in a couple weeks before