

# Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, January 2, 2019

UVM Extension Office  
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



## 9:30 am Directors Business Meeting

**Attendance:** Brian Kemp, Eric Clifford, David Conant, Terry Norris, Rachel Orr, Loren Wood, Tim Kayhart, George Foster, Louise Waterman, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Nate Severy, Jeff Carter, Kirsten Workman, Ben Dykema, Marie Audet

### **Call to order & President's Report**

*Brian Kemp*

Lorenzo & Brian attended RAP development committee meeting. Starting back up again...issues will include tile drainage, wetlands, etc. If you want to come, please let him know. There is plenty of room at the table for more input. Wanted watershed groups to file a complaint against wetland permit process. When we meet with Chris, let's keep our discussion future focused.

Jeff...went to the Nutrient Management Commission/Future of Farming. AUE/acre, crop rotations, reduction of herbicides, meet one more time and then report to legislature on January 15<sup>th</sup>. Report of future farming practices, convene two commissions.

### **Secretary Report**

*Kirsten Workman*

*Motion to approve December Minutes: Loren Wood*

*Second: Eric Clifford*

*Discussion*

*Passed (8/0/0)*

### **Membership Applications**

*Kirsten Workman*

None received this month

### **Treasurer Report**

*Jeff Carter*

Jeff presented the end of year profit and loss and balance statements. He also showed the profit & loss by class (all time)

*Motion to approve Treasurer's report: David Conant*

*Second: Eric Clifford*

*Discussion: none*

*Passed (9/0/0)*

*Jeff made a motion to assemble a finance ad hoc committee to review and approve 2018 income and expenses and associated financial matters of CVFC Inc.*

*Second: Rachel Orr*

*Discussion: Ben Dykema volunteered, George Foster and Rachel Orr*

*Passed (9/0/1) Marie abstained...she had just arrived*

## Strategic Planning Check-In

*Louise, all*

Louise is staying on a bit longer to help us finish this process. She reviewed the draft document

### Next Steps

- Need strategies for Goals 4, 5 and 6....review those already submitted and submit additional suggestions to Louise
- SMART goals for all 6 Goals. Goal #1 is complete. Louise can use notes to draft for other goals, need to pay special attention to timelines.
- Executive Director discussion, decision
- Action Plan for all the Strategies/Goals
- Taking threats/weaknesses (from SWOT) and tie them to goals/strategies
- Operating Budget
- Communicate at Annual Meeting...share 6 goals, stress importance of input (Louise)

### Executive Director discussion

- Revisit the position information
- Use savings to pad the beginning of funding?
- Committee to come up with numbers/description? (Eric Clifford) This will be main topic of February Director meeting. Eric Clifford, Jeff Carter, Brian Kemp

## 2019 NTCC symposium sponsorship request from UVM Extension

Motion to be a silver sponsorship: Marie Audet

Second: George Foster

Passed (11/0/0)

## 10:13 am General Membership Meeting

**Other in attendance:** Ernie Audet, Brad Lawes, Lyn Coales, Ray Brands, Dale Briggs, Cheryl Cesario, Chuck Ross, Ross Conrad, Jed Rubin

Brian: Future-facing conversations

## **LandStream Letter – Meeting with FWA/CRWFA** *Kirsten*

Kirsten reviewed the letter sent, signed on by FWA, CRWFA

## **CVFC Annual Meeting Update**

*Nate Severy*

January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2019

VFW-Middlebury

Secretaries Moore & Tebbets speaking

Tony Bates entertainment (\$200)

Invitations went out with membership invoices to members

Wider invitations will be sent out shortly...big list and special invitations

Will be in UVM Extension newsletter

Director positions, two have agreed to continue

## Program Reports

CVFC Directors Conservation Practice Inventory

Nate Severy

- Addison County almost complete
- Rutland/Chittenden coming in now
- Merritt working on GIS data, Jonas and Nate collecting data from farmers
- Will include directors information and East Creek/McKenzie Brook in presentation at annual meeting

Crop Signals schedule/topics

Nate Severy

- January 16<sup>th</sup>, Joanna Lidbck farm financial management and planning, UVM Extension field planning and record-keeping. RSVP for lunch
- February/March topics being confirmed now. Potentially keeping Kevin King here to talk about tile drainage with farmers in conjunction with his visit to talk
- April 17th – Spring cover crop workshop @ Barnes Farm Panton/Addison town line
- Brainstorm ideas??

Leadership Training recap

Louise

32 people signed up, 26 people attended. Went very well, got good feedback. Networking was good. Otter Creek donated beer. Lots of younger generation from farms attended. Conversations between people showed that they valued.

## Other Items

*All*

- **Harvey Smith**... St. Albans Co-op and Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance submitted appeal that will go through court system
- **Chuck Ross** (UVM Extension Director)...Ecosystem Service compensation conversation is happening all the time. How do we make it work in Vermont? Water quality issue is particularly pertinent, but we can't get there without successful farms. It will be advantageous to 'all of us' to figure out how to 'make payments' for those services. Ag is 40% of loading, but 68% of the solution. Brian asked about response to Abe Collins proposal...not a lot of talk. Harvey mentioned that accounting for practices is going to be the most important way to document. **Jed Rubin**...asked about how information about was collected. Chuck also mentioned the potential water quality impact when ag land is converted to developed land. Developed land is a much worse contributor (by UVM is in the middle of an ongoing EpSCOR project looking at land use modeling. Chris Koliba (Basin Resilience to Extreme Events... <https://epscor.w3.uvm.edu/2/node/3123> ) Chuck can forward information to CVFC if folks are interested in attending any future meetings. **Marie** can we connect this with the LandStream proposal, **Ben** they've had 7 years and \$30 million...why haven't we heard from them or been asked to engage? Ag has been represented by VAAFM, CALS, Extension. Could our practice inventory be used to inform these models? **Eric**...Dean Vogelmann retiring? Yes...and President Sullivan. President identified by April, Dean by July 1. I would be interested in participating if outside folks are invited.

## 11:00 Senator Chris Bray (D-Addison District)

<https://legislature.vermont.gov/people/single/2018/20396>

Senator Bray is Chair of the Senate Committee on Natural resources and Energy and also sits on the Senate Committee on Education, Joint Energy Committee, Legislative Committee on Administrative Rules (LCAR), the New England Board of Higher Education and the Canvassing Committee.

He would like to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of state programs that impact farm operations in two key areas:

1. **Profitability** — are state programs enhancing farm viability and in what ways? In what ways could they be improved? And in what ways are state programs working against farm viability?

Cheryl Cesario....DIG, WQIP have helped a lot of people. If the cost share requirement could be reduced, that would make it more accessible to more. Louise asked if there is enough technical assistance for producers to apply for these programs? Depends on the producer.

Loren Wood...FAP is working well, but outdated in caps. The cap needs to be raised above \$5,000. Eric Clifford echoes that...even small farms are maxing out. Lorenzo mentioned that maybe allowing it to be one cap/NMP instead of individual farm.

Eric Clifford...equipment programs are key. David Conant CEAP is critical, is underfunded (\$1 million for whole state). Ben Dykema...equipment is often required to stay on farm...why not let us share and leverage the resource. Brian...we need more ability for equipment that will work on smaller farms.

Brian Important not to get tunnel vision because it will get challenging for all farms to implement. Don't make rules requiring specific practices/methods. Sen. Bray...makes more sense to agree on a performance standard and not a specific way to accomplish it. Marie...don't take any tools away from us. Tile drainage is a perfect example. Lots of competing interests. Sen. Bray...lobbyists are an important part of the citizen legislature.

Loren Wood...understanding programs and knowing the details is important. Sen. Bray...the water quality and ag funding is some of the most complex at the state house.

Maintenance funding for equipment...

2. **Water quality** — in what ways are state programs supporting or making more difficult the progress of farms to meet the Vermont Clean Water Act?

Wetland General Permit (Brian)...this really impacts farmers and we can't wrap our heads around why ANR feels the need to change it. It has a larger impact on people grazing, but also heavy use areas, manure pits. It is an additional fee to farming that is not necessary. Engineering/delineation fee in addition to the permit. NRCS no longer able to provide this for us? Why? Marie...this could be the most impactful thing to us in the coming year(s). Projects are not happening because of this potential change. Sen. Bray...did ANR say why they are doing this now? They only said that it would be 'good for farmers.' Their take is we shouldn't have been exempt from the beginning.

Tile Drainage reports are critical. Rules need be made with our science/data here...not from other places. Sen. Bray...sits on LCAR, he sees those rules and voted on the tile drainage rule. Chuck...as a member of LCAR can you make sure that all rules that go through have had enough input from those that are impacted. Sen. Bray...agrees that communities need to be engaged in the making of laws.

We feel rushed...take more time.

Marie...We are the second most regulated state in the nation. That's okay. The RAPs will get us there, but let them work.

Jeff...you will be seeing a report on January 15<sup>th</sup> on the future of farming (nutrient management commission). Concerned that it is getting too specific. Marie...some of the legislative requirements that are coming out of bills are taking up too many resources of the VAAF who should be making sure that RAPs are being implemented.

Brian...every time something gets proposed, there seems to be pressure from environmental groups to push things through without due diligence. We don't even have results and were still making new rules, changes. Sen. Bray...tile example was fits and starts.

Citizens Right of Action. He won't be introducing, but it will likely be reintroduced by the original senator. I will keep you in the loop to see things as they come in. Brian...but we want to be heard and have our input. \

Act 250...report due Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>.

Brian introduced Senator Bray. Looking towards the future what are the challenges and issues.

Introductions:

Chris (elected in 2006, senate Ag, moved to other committees since. Education, Natural Resources). Lives on a horse farm in New Haven. Helping farming evolve, be profitable and keep working lands working, farm to plate. Share everyone's concern with the difficulties in dairy, compounded with regulations. Want to be in the room with you to discuss the challenges. I don't know the best way, but want to hear from you. I hope this is a continuing conversation. I work for you and I am interested in responding.

**11:30 Mr. Bruce Lisman**

<http://www.campaignforvermont.org/founders>

Mr. Lisman would like to present and discuss the 'Vermont Performance Bond' as an alternative for funding Lake Champlain 'Cleanup'. Please refer to the attached document with Mr. Lisman's outline and details.

Working with many of you on this project in 2015. Performance Bond is the punchline. Long-term financing to clean the lake over 20 years...\$billion still missing. Lake has been under duress for a long time...1950s mississquoi camping trip fish kill. Symptoms today that have developing for some time. People meanwhile feel like not enough is being done, and that often translates into vilification of farming and development. Small state, ability to fund big projects is limited. \$300 million give or take has been spent already. Did we get enough for it? Let's jump forward. Chesapeake Bay cleanup...\$5 billion spent every year. Cleaning bodies of water is hard and shreds budgets. We don't understand what's going on under the water. Iowa surrendered...governor gave up. How do we garner the emotion, passion and people willing to work on it to fix it? I want to do something outside of the box...bold. What we don't know hurts us the most. We need to pursue projects bigger than we're used to. We've been funding lots of little projects. I want the state to issue a \$40 million bond, call it a performance bond, state would have to perform to a standard, investors would receive less if it

performed and more if it doesn't. Can we issue a bond to clean the lake? Are we prepared to take a risk on big projects, and take the anger/emotion towards a fix. We would need to convince the state treasurer, ANR, VAAFM that this is the way to go forward. Start, finish, way to measure. Difficult, especially when it won't be 'done' in this lifetime. Three ideas:

- Offer to buy 6500 acres of impaired land and remediate it in 10 years. \$20 million to purchase, \$20 million to remediate. Lots of questions, but no one that has totally disagreed. Needs to be a group to study it
- Create a treatment plant to treat river flow, reduce phosphorus by 70%. What are the costs? Is it practical
- Manure trucked from farms to a central place...generate energy, byproduct, burned it (france)

Next chapter

- Need to study
- Spoken to treasurer, Ag. Sec, ANR sec., Governor....cleared to create an informal group to study it...able to make mistakes and think out loud.
- One group works to answer 'all the questions'

Marie Audet...have you talked to LandStream/Abe Collins? Supposed to, but our schedules haven't worked out yet.

What do you want from CVFC?

- Would like Marie to represent us on his group
- Interested in points of view, ask questions, provide criticism

Jed Rubin...would it be possible to get measureable results without participation from New York/Quebec? I would never say the performance measure is a 'lake that is cleaner'. More like number of acres acquired and remediated.

**12:17 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: George Foster**

**Second: Loren Wood**

**Meeting adjourned**

**Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, Feb. 6, 2019**

**Upcoming Dates:**

January 4<sup>th</sup> – CVFC/FWA/CRWFA Meeting regarding LandStream proposal (2-4, S.Bur. EXT)

January 16<sup>th</sup> – Crop Signals: Financial Planning (10-2, Middlebury EXT)

January 23<sup>rd</sup> – CVFC Annual Membership Meeting, Middlebury Veteran's of Foreign Wars

January 28<sup>th</sup> – VT Farm Show Crop Contest Entries DUE 12:00

January 29 – 31<sup>st</sup> – Vermont Farm Show (Champlain Valley Expo)