

# Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, December 4, 2019

UVM Extension Office  
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



## 9:45 am Directors Business Meeting called to order

**In attendance:** Eric Clifford, David Conant, Rachel Orr, Kirsten Workman, Brian Kemp, Jeff Carter, Ray Brands, Ernie Audet, Kristin Williams

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

*Brian Kemp*

Congratulations to Jeff Carter was just awarded Northeast Certified Crop Adviser of the year 2019.

Concerned about direction of CVFC and participation. We want the organization to thrive and worried about lack of participation with issues like wetlands and others. How to distribute the workload with the many requests. How do we keep a vibrant organization without over-burdening the few folks who always carry the load? Should we even be participating in all of these groups, meetings. Overwhelmed and afraid to be the only voice. As we consider the hiring of an Executive Director, we need to think about what they can/should do and how do we still be the face/voice of the organization. It's important to be there and represent agriculture, but it is difficult.

Eric...not sure how to respond always and makes it like he is well-enough informed to participate.

Grasping at the difference between our own opinions and representing the group.

Wetland stakeholder group problematic. Not enough ag participation, surveys aren't even being responded to, can't get through topics at meetings, had the last meeting during the Bridport hearing. Ecosystem service thing is similar. Timeline is too short to come up with anything meaningful.

Have we drifted too far into the political? David...what's happening right now may not be matching up with our original mission. They system is driving us that way, but it's not what I wanted. It bothers me. We sit back and let four people do a lot of the work, but I don't know what to about it. Then once you're outside the loop, you have a hard time getting back in and speaking about topics.

### **Secretary Report**

*Kirsten Workman*

*Motion Approve October Minutes: Ray Brands*

*Second: Eric Clifford*

*Discussion:*

*Passed (6/0/0)*

### **Membership Applications**

*Kirsten Workman*

*New applications (none)*

*One renewal*

*Summary of Addison County Chamber of Commerce membership (reciprocal)*

*Jeff & Kirsten met with Rob Carter to brainstorm better ways to interface with that organization*

### **Treasurer Report**

*Jeff Carter*

Very little activity financially. Workers Comp update. No payroll.

Balance Sheet \$54,000

Profit & Loss \$20,000 ordinary income, \$16,000 from CWIP grant (not currently being spent), this will be added to new agreement to add hire

*Motion to approve Treasurers Report: David Conant*

*Second: Eric Clifford*

*Discussion: none*

*Passed (7/0/0)*

### **ejc Consulting Contract Request**

*Jeff Carter*

Do we want to approve contract from ejc Consulting for \$5,500 to keep us apprised of legislative information? There is value, it comes straight to us instead of having to seek it out, things are moving so quickly. Last year there were some times when there may have been differences in perspective, but that's okay. It is still valuable to have ears up there. If we do it through constant contact, it can be tracked. Communication can be improved both ways...Jane would like a head's up if we are heading up.

Motion to approve ejc contract: David Conant

Second: Peter James

Discussion:

Passed (6/1/0) – one abstention (Eric Clifford)

### **Annual Membership Meeting**

*All*

Bylaws stipulate that we have to have an annual membership meeting. It has an annual cost of about

*Date: January 22<sup>nd</sup> (backup January 15<sup>th</sup>)*

*Location: VFW - Middlebury*

*Agenda:*

Business Meeting:

Annual Report

Financial Report

Elect Officers

Julie Moore – wetlands feedback, get members back into the loop,

Gil Livingston....different perspective

Invite Leahy, Welch – they can be on the agenda if they want.

Invite – Chuck Ross

General Invitation to all

Entertainment? It does draw some people, some levity, people enjoy it, references from Tony Bates?, Chris Roeloffs plays guitar/sing

What are we about? Comradery, teaching farmers, issues

*Popcorn presentation – pictures of what is working w/ questions*

*Glyphosate & GMO...contradiction with conservation practices like no-till, cover cropping*

*Roundtable Discussions – topics by table – manure, cover crops, GMO/glyphosate*

Action Items:

*Determine who's terms are expiring?*

*Secure date/menu*

*Send draft of agenda, request ideas to Directors*

### **Strategic Plan Deliverables Check-in:**

#### **Goal #1: Promote and train membership on innovative farm practices that are adopted by 100% of the CVFC membership**

Change the format of meetings....monthly business meetings, quarterly issues meetings with bigger group

#### **Goal #2: Raise public perception of farmers as worthy environmental stewards of the land and waterways**

New England Dairy Promotion is offering to help.

Milk Matters on Channel 5 news...with Danielle Goodrich

Glyphosate & GMO issues...contradiction with no-till and cover cropping,

#### **Goal #3: Acquire stable funding for Coalition staff and programing to include executive director, program manager and treasurer**

Executive Director / Program Coordinator Hiring

- Role:

- as a facilitator to keep track of things and get directors/members to things and pay attention and brief others

Advisory Board

### **Vermont Farm Show Exhibit**

We did not reserve a space at the Vermont Farm Show.

Need folks to volunteer, bring crops, we'll put up CVFC stuff at Crops Exhibit

### **NTCC Symposium Sponsorship**

February 26, 2020 – Exhibitor \$300

Moved: David Conant

Second: Brian Kemp

Passed: (7/0/0)

## **Updates and Discussion**

### **Program Reports**

*Kirsten/Jeff*

CWIP Grant Update – waiting to hear from Nina

Addison County Riverwatch Collab. Grant

### **Dairy Water Quality Collaborative Update**

*Marie*

*Why are you (still!) at this table, focused on the intersection between farming & water quality?*

Not really sure sometimes...is there any progress, outcomes?

Farmers need to stay engaged in the discussion to not get rolled over.

It is our mission/vision.

Is our time better spent on wetlands, PES, and other issues with more direct impacts.

*What have been our shared successes to date and what potential lies ahead?*

Not sure in terms of DWC...people still at the table.

Address trust issues between disparate groups.

Farmers have been making progress....lots of practices implement, farmer watershed groups.

**Wetlands: Public Hearings and Legislative Study Committee**

*Brian/Jeff*

See them

**Vermont Soil Health and Payment for Ecosystem Services Working Group**

*Brian/Jeff*

Can it be simplified?

Who can put it in place and make it happen?

Where does the funding come from?

Are there examples around the world?

What about a private system....direct from buyers/consumers to producers? As opposed to

Current discussions is to propose a pilot to try something, but what is it? VAAFM believes it has the authority/statute to do it. Still no discussion about the markets, the money, who's paying? Most farmers want to believe that it will be additional revenue, but likely it will be a substitution with payment for performance.

**LFO Public Hearing**

*Kirsten*

Kirsten gave

**VAAFM Manure Spreading Exemption & Updates**

There was a period of shut-down, agency (Laura/Ryan) phone's ringing off the hook, then decided to issue blanket exemption. The problem was two weeks lost. How are folks doing?

We don't have enough storage. Ground has not been ready since mid-October. How do we get more manure out in the summer, too much reliance on custom operators with short windows?

Part of it is economics...

Part of it is management...

Not enough repercussions for when it

**Other Updates or Business**

*All*

**12:20 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: Ray Brands, Second: Eric Clifford**

**Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – January date needs to be rescheduled due to New Year Holiday (TBD...January 8, 2019?)**