

Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition, Inc.

UVM Extension Office
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



MEETING MINUTES: Thursday, March 2, 2017 Directors Business Meeting

9:30am

President's Report *Brian*

Brian gave a recap of

Secretary's Report *Kirsten*

Motion to approve February minutes as presented: Brian

Second: Marie

Discussion:

Passed (9/0/0)

Membership Update *Louise*

Going well.

Met with an Organic producer who felt there wasn't a place at the table for organic folks in our organization. How do we specifically address that? Similar issue with smaller farmers.

Using our language around regenerative practices to share with potential members

Phoenix Feeds....newsletter article. Use it as an opportunity to highlight cover crop work.

Some folks wondering if we didn't push back enough about RAPs. Not about pushing back, but making it work for farms.

Approve New Members *Kirsten*

Motion to approve new members as presented: Marie

Second: Peter

Discussion:

Passed (9/0/0)

EnSave	Craig Metz	Supporting Business Member
Soleno	Steve Martin	Supporting Business Member

Lapierre Farm	Andie, Claude, Gail LaPierre	VT Farm Member
Russell Tree & Beef Farm	David Russell	VT Farm Member
Misty Knoll Farm	Rob Litch	VT Farm Member
Daona Farm	Mark & Norris Brisson	VT Farm Member

Terry Norris	Individual Member
Lennert Petersson	Individual Member
Susan Isham	Individual Member

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Treasurer's Report *Jeff*

Jeff presented the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Statement through March 2, 2017

Out of date dues members are not receiving Legislative Updates. Follow-up letter to most recent folks (highlighting recent work).

Motion to approve treasurer's report as presented: Marie

Second: Peter

Discussion:

Passed (9/0/0)

Newsletter 2.0 *Jeff/Kirsten*

Kirsten shared the newest version of the CVFC newsletter.

Discussion:

Add a call to join for folks who receive it and are not members

Mail to members, can email more broadly. Put on the website.

How often? Monthly? Even if it is shorter, send it monthly.

How to get it more broadly? Use it as a tool to educate non-members.

Email to other organizations...NOFA, Equine, other watershed groups, legislature (secretaries of committees), co-op communication departments,

Farmer's Watershed Alliance panel

Select a Director to participate on a panel discussion at the FWA Annual Meeting on March 20th, beginning at 5:30 at the St. Alban's Elk's Lodge (44 Gricebrook Rd.).

- Brian Kemp
- Lorenzo Whitcomb

RAP Development Committee

VAAFAM has invited CVFC to participate in a committee to, "to review the templates, guidance, and other applicable documents that support variances, alternatives and management plans." We need to select someone to represent CVFC on this committee.

Brian asked Laura if we could we send different people by topic area?

Marie...could we have one person go to all and bring along others who are directly affected by topic area? Brian concurs with that idea.

David spoke with Tom...he's very informed and keyed in on these exemptions. We would like to be involved. They can provide 'backup' and/or attend

The full request is here:

The Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets recently finalized the Required Agricultural Practice (RAP) Rule. In drafting the Rule, the Agency spent significant time listening to the agricultural community to understand the challenges their

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particular operations would face. The product of these conversations was the inclusion of a series of variances, alternatives, and management plans in the RAPs that can be approved by the Agency to support unique circumstances on a farm where compliance with the Rule is challenged by real constraints.

The Agricultural Resource Management (ARM) division is forming a RAP Development Committee in order to review the templates, guidance, and other applicable documents that support these variances, alternatives and management plans. The goal of this committee is to have ARM staff develop draft guidance and procedure that would be shared with this committee in order to receive feedback. Following the feedback the Agency will work to develop final documentation for the agricultural community to utilize in putting together their requests for alternatives.

Membership of the committee is by invitation only as a means to maintain a group size that can be meaningfully productive. We hope to work with the organizations to review all members of the committee to get a meaningful distribution that covers portions of Vermont and types of farming operations. The ARM division selected the following agricultural organizations to comprise the RAP Development Committee due to their direct connection with the agricultural community and knowledge of the RAPs:

- Farmer's Watershed Alliance
- Champlain Valley Farm Coalition
- CT River Farmers' Watershed Alliance
- Rural Vermont
- Vermont Farm Bureau
- Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance
- Northeast Organic Farmers Assoc. VT

The committee is intended to be comprised of active farmers who are willing to gather input and disseminate information. Our request is that each agricultural organization select a representative to participate in the committee. The Agency anticipates that members will need to make a time commitment of roughly four hours for each of the following topics listed below. The structure of meetings will be to spend 4 hour blocks of time, with the first 2 hours finalizing review of a topic introduced at a previous meeting, and then utilizing the remaining 2 hours learning about a new topic to be reviewed at the next meeting. The Agency understands this commitment is significant and therefore we intend to provide each organization a per diem of \$50 for the time commitment to attend each meeting.

The goal is to have this committee prioritize and then review the following topics initially:

- Tile drain management
 - Grazing Management Plans (GMP)
 - Allowing grazing in areas where GMP cannot work
 - Site specific buffers
 - Alternatives to the floodplain maps
 - Seasonal spreading plans
 - Management plan to determine whether RAPs apply
 - Removing a farm from SFO certification
 - Stacking siting location variance
 - Alternative NMP standards
 - Alternative cover crop planting dates
 - Winter spreading exemptions
 - Compost/Mortality siting location variances
 - Siting farm structure variances
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Thursday, March 2, 2017
Open Meeting with Members

10:00

Welcome & President's Report

Brian

Legislative Testimony/Hearings Recap

Brian, Marie, George, Ernie, Jeff

Brian, Marie Jeff, Ernie & George gave a recap the Legislative Committee hearings and testimony from February.

House & Senate Ag. House Ag, NR and energy,

Regenerative Ag Bill (S.43)

Testimony from out of state first, then CVFC

They were impressed how much outreach/education we are doing.

Asked us to do a bus tour...would pull other committees in.

We brought numbers with us. Imp

Plug for Extension (they wanted to know who was helping farmers)

Marie followed up with videos.

The original author (Jesse McDougal) followed up with Marie.

Does this cause more divide instead of bringing people together?

Instead of using a carbon tax to administer a program, use it on the ground.

Meeting with Farmer Watershed Groups...Feb. 10th

Senate Ag, House Ag met with all watershed groups

George gave personal experience about their work with no-till, cover crops

Encouraged them to attend events, bus tour

Receptive

Shared that they need to keep agriculture in Vermont competitive if they want to keep farming in Vermont

Only 2 members in Senate ag have been on the committee before

Tile Drainage Hearing...Mar. 1st

First hearing was cancelled

Very informative for legislators...joint senate/house ag

Eric Young (Miner) shared his results and his caution that the Midwest data is different than what we see here in the northeast. Tile drainage on our soils actually reduced total phosphorus loss by 10x.

Wanted to know we have good data

Also interested in bus tour...have a stop looking at tile (Peter Briggs offered)

Presentation about repealing RAP/Act 64 funding (*cancelled*)

VAAFM Listening Session

Good attendance

Don't want a division among farmers. Not going to promote one form over another.

Wasn't super productive.

Agency was respectful of all viewpoints.

New administration...seems like it is important that they 'hear' from the farm community

Upcoming 2+2 Reception

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Replacing the Dairy Reception from last year.

Do we want to sponsor?

March 30th at State House...display, financial support (\$300-\$400)

If we go, make sure our representatives know we'll be there.

Need more info from Jane.

Migrant Labor Discussion

Loren Wood has asked whether CVFC should make a formal statement in support of the Governor's response to federal executive orders regarding immigration and to emphasize the importance of these individuals to farms in Vermont. We will share a draft statement and decide if CVFC will comment as an organization.

Is this the organization to make a comment?

Not our position here.

The governor stance is strong and clear...individually, but not as an organization.

Spring Bus Tour Planning

We will start planning details for a Spring Bus Tour for legislators and others to get them out on farms and see many of the water quality and soil health practices our member farms are utilizing.

Invite other committees to attend...not just ag.

Session ends in May. (Before on a Monday or after the session ends)

Important to show: buffers, grassed waterways, planting no-till into cover crop, tile drainage

Follow up with Campion (Senate Nat.)

Microphone on the bus is important

JOINT between CVFC and UVM Extension (FAP workshop \$\$)

Manure Training Update

Nate

Nate described UVM Extension's work putting together putting a training program together for custom manure applicators and farmers/employees in March (St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, Middlebury). Farmer workshops in multiple locations.

No written exam yet

Have to follow the RAP rules

Full-time employees have to be certified...part-time employees could be trained by owner

So far...48 people in St. Albans, St. J were very unaware of how/why of RAPs

Farmer/Employee meetings:

March 21st...Shoreham

March 23rd...Pawlet

2 Franklin Co., Newport, Springfield also

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Education Updates

Updates on other educational efforts that have happened recently or are scheduled for the spring.

Breakfast on the Farm

Taking volunteers...July 22nd at Blue Spruce Farm; June 17th @ Fairmont Farm

Following RAPs in the Floodplain (Richmond/Orwell)

March 16th – Richmond

April 4th – Middlebury

NTCC Symposium Recap

175 attendees

Good speakers,

VDPC Recap

Excellent speakers, breath of fresh air, louse

Review Calendar

Others

Host a mock inspection...after first cut/corn June

Other Business

Time to address additional agenda items brought by members.

McKenzie Brook...setting up flow stations and rain gauges.

VAAFM Education Grant (\$18,606) awarded for Crop Patrols

Vermont P-Index being revised...ready by end of the year

Start testing it soon

New components

Jeff gave update to UVM Extension (new administration) about ag water quality efforts.

David...went to Tulare Farm Show...California weather causing serious environmental problems.

**12:17 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: Brian, Second: Lorenzo.
Directors Meeting – April 5, 2017**

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of