

Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, March 4th, 2015
10:00 am – 12:00 pm
UVM Extension Office
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES

In Attendance:

Board of Directors: Kirsten Workman, Jeff Carter, Loren Wood, Brian Kemp, Ernie Audet, David Conant, Peter James, Marie Audet, Tim Kayhart

Staff: Nate Severy

CVFC Members: Art Huestis, Brad Lawes, Eric Severy, Matt Severy, Ben Gleason, Jim Bushey, Hans Vorsteveld, Jake Gosliga

Public: Julie Smith, George Tucker, Kristin Williams, Greg Burnhardt, Rico Balzano, Jane Clifford, Bill Nop,

10:10 am: BUSINESS MEETING CALLED TO ORDER (Jeff Carter)

Welcome and introductions

Introduced Guests
Reviewed agenda

Jeff Carter

Secretary Report

Approve February Meeting Minutes

Motion: Ernie

Second: Brian

Discussion: none

Passed without abstention or dissent

Kirsten Workman

Treasurer Report

Jeff presented Balance Sheet & Profit & Loss statement through March 4, 2015.

Motion: Tim Kayhart

Second: Loren Wood

Discussion : none

Passed without abstention or dissent

Jeff Carter

Membership Application Approvals

Motion to accept applications as presented: Loren Wood

Second: Ernie Audet

Discussion:

Passed without abstention or dissent

Kirsten Workman

Presidents Report

- Membership...Rico, Nate and Brian are reaching out to farmers in the south lake. There will be a meeting at the Hewitt Farm. Anyone else willing to host meetings let us know and we can coordinate.
- H.35...we'll get an update from Jane

Brian Kemp

- Louise Calderwood from VT Feed Dealers hosting a meeting. Can we come in with a unified voice with FWA. Two boards coming together, aligning our message could be powerful.
- WLEB proposal...letter of intent accepted, submitted full proposal.

Marie Audet: Update on VT Agribusiness & Feed Alliance has offered some government relations help. Discussion started at Farm Show to address farmer watershed groups. Critical to keep farmer base growing and help all the farm-based groups. Chuck Ross is facilitating discussion between: NOFA, CVFC, FWA, VAFDA. Meeting is at 1:00 on Friday.

- AAPs
- Increase Agency Staff
- Land-based approach (vs. input-based approach)
- Tile drainage study

UVM Extension Updates

Jeff Carter/Kirsten Workman

- No-Till Planter Clinic at Barnes Farm on 3/13/2015 at 11:00

Program Coordinator Report

Nate Severy

- Legislative Tour this spring
 - Pam Stefanek (OCNRCD) can pay for some of the bus.
 - Where, When, How?
- Farm/Field Meetings & membership recruitment
 - Passed out flyers/brochures to distribute
 - Hulett confirmed to host a South Lake meeting (Matt S. & Dean L. can work with Rico/Brian on farmer outreach)
- Coordinating with members on farm projects
 - Walk the walk with trying new farming practices...Nate will inventory what farms are currently doing on their farms.
 - If you want to try something new...let CVFC help you put a plan together, gather resources, monitor success/failure
 - Brian...important to maintain that inventory and quantify what we are doing (and then share that with other farmers)
 - Marie...important to our message in Montpelier
 - George Tucker can account for EQIP funded practices

Funding Proposals

- March 20th is the last signup date for this season's field-based NRCS practices
- High Meadows Foundation - organizational support
 - Just starting, CIG grant ending
- Funding for video
 - Two requests have gone unfunded for video project
 - Mt. Mansfield Media sharing what they have done
- Funding for equipment
 - Who pays for that
 - Might need to be 'shared'...CVFC.
 - Aeration
 - No-till drill
 - Need options available to farms of all sizes
 - Challenge to have equipment funding quick enough to get it on the ground.

- UVM Extension Matching Funds
 - NIFA – ¼ time....accomplishes both goals
 - RCPP
 - CIG & other Soil Health Funding
- VT Working Lands Enterprise Board
 - Submitted Feb. 27
 - \$33,000 request (HMF as match)

11:00am: Water Quality Discussion

All CVFC Members are urged to join the Board of Directors to have an open discussion about newest version of the water quality legislation being developed in Montpelier. We will give an overview of the latest versions of H. 35 and review potential funding ideas for regulating all farms and funding suggestions for farm inspectors (fertilizer tax, feed tax, pesticide registration fees, LFO/MFO/SFO permit fees, current use fees, parcel fees, acre fees, rooms and meals tax, others).

Jane Clifford will join us to update us on the latest activity from the Vermont State House

Motion to adjourn the meeting: Ernie Audet

Second: Loren Wood

Passed without abstention or dissention

12:32 PM Meeting ADJOURNED

Next CVFC Board of Director Meeting - April 8, 2015 Middlebury, VT

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1:00 Mount Mansfield Media previews: What's Your Watermark?

MMM previewed a rough cut of their new documentary project about water quality in Vermont featuring many CVFC Members...to be aired 3/22/15

Water Quality Discussion – Jane Clifford

Executive Director of Green Mountain Dairy Farmers (AgriMark, St. Albans, DFA)

- Governor put the gauntlet out....water quality is a priority
- TMDL Preliminary Report...what shaped H.35. Required by EPA that VT submit something (VAAF, ANR)
- House Fish & Wildlife Committee spent 5 weeks to craft, then passed their version H.35 - result of those discussions (committee of jurisdiction for water quality)
 - Ag participation has improved/impacted the legislatures view of agriculture. Agriculture is stepping up, at the table.
 - Don't want to lose that...have to keep it up
- House Ag Committee Amendment passed on Feb. 27 (10-0-1)....only addresses the sections that deal directly with agriculture (21 pages).
 - Unanimous vote is noteworthy
 - Two major pieces removed:
 - All funding proposals (gas tax, rooms/meals tax, permit fees, fertilizer tax, feed tax)
 - Current use penalty for AAP violations, and failures to comply with enforcement
 - Findings (Section 1)...very committed to making sure they have good findings to support legislation
- Bill now goes to House Ways & Means...will have to raise money to implement
 - Ag committee submitted 10 recommendations for funding
 - 199-100 = Tier 1 SFO (\$500)
 - Below 100 = Tier 2 SFO (\$250)
 - Off the table...\$1/acre farmland. How do they implement it. Compared to permit fees. All property in state...not just farmland. Raising taxes probably a no-go.
 - What is a small farm??
 - Parcel/parcels houses 4 horse, 5 cattle, 15 swine goat sheep deer, 50 turkeys geese, 100 laying hens, 250 broilers, quail.....current AAPs
 - 10 or more acres
 - House FW also submitted recommendations for funding
- Senate = S.49...was a mirror to H.35, but is now taking on a different slant
 - In Senate Nat. Resources (Chris Bray)...they have a copy of CVFC letter, opening the door. No testimony yet.
 - Will have until Mar. 20, will then pass to Senate Ag for a week and then to Senate Finance
 - After they resume from break, there will be testifying opportunities.
- This is what we have at the moment, but we don't know what we'll end up with
 - Could be the last bill passed this session, likelihood for fast changes at the end.
 - Make sure we are having conversations and are 'there'
 - If Gov. doesn't like it....can veto. Many of his requests are not in the current bill
 - How do we implement it
- Other sectors
 - Gas tax to fund municipalities and roads costs

CVFC Input on Major Points to discuss FWA, CVFC, NOFA, NE AFA for March 6 Meeting w/ Chuck Ross

1. Move ahead on AAP re-write
 - a. Yes...already said this
 2. Move ahead on development of SFO definition and certification
 - a. Priority before everything else
 - b. All farms included...tiered approach
 3. BMPs required Hold firm on the need for available funding for BMP implementation. H 35 suggests allowing the requirement for BMP construction even if funding does not exist to support implementation. This is a MAJOR change in Agency policy.
 - a. This is just clarification of what is already happening.
 - b. VAAFM has already shown a commitment to helping farms (technical/financial assistance) to get this done. NRCS has \$\$
 4. Move ahead on sub-surface tiling study
 - a. Ag work group (meeting on April 8th)
 - b. Support a study, report back with farmer/community input before changing AAPs
 5. Incremental increase in number of Agency staff. Hold off on full staffing until after a study can be completed of possible funding sources.
 - a. VAAFM needs to enforce AAPs now...inspection...show our credibility as an ag community/industry
 - b. Support the emergency/cease & desist...need a pot of money to help effected farmers in those cases (ie.paying to empty pit)
 6. Maintain focus on land based approach, not input based approach to funding. Support of a summer study to gain a greater understanding of the possibilities and implications of various funding strategies.
 - a. Does a tiered permit fee get at this in a different way? More equitable ...not all farms who affect water quality feed animals. Important have a good SFO definition.
 - b. Either permit fee or feed tax...not both
 - c.
- ADDED:
7. *Bring back current use language...as a way to have some teeth to enforce AAPs*

Drafted at CVFC March 4, 2015 Board of Directors Meeting...with input from other farmer and agribusiness members:

CVFC Board

CVFC Farmer Members

CVFC Supporting Business Members: Eric/Matt Severy (Matthew's Trucking), Brad Lawes (Lawes Ag), Jim Bushey (Bordeau Bros).