

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, March 6, 2019

UVM Extension Office
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



9:30 am **Directors Business Meeting**

Attendance: Brian Kemp, Eric Clifford, David Conant, Chase Goodrich, Tim Kayhart, Rachel Orr, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Nate Severy, Jeff Carter, Marie Audet

9:34 AM Meeting Called to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

Cornwall Town Meeting, Ruth Hardie talked about the Wetlands general permit. He wasn't aware there had been additional action. ANR keeps downplaying because of non-reporting components. There has been some legal action (VDPA?). We should keep it on our radar, if they are taking testimony we should pay attention.

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

Motion to approve February Minutes: Eric Clifford

Second: David Conant

Discussion:

Passed (8/0/0)

Membership Applications

Kirsten Workman/Jeff Carter

No new applications received this month. Jeff Carter gave an update that there are several members who have not renewed their membership (40 regular members, 13 business members = \$7,250). Dave Conant...we can't afford to lose members (not financially, but generally). Marie Audet...it might be a good time to recommunicate our goals and activities, that we are being proactive about communicating ag issues, we need the strength in our numbers and our voice

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

Jeff presented the balance sheet and the profit/loss through 3-6-2019. Getting taxes completed, moved over to Yankee Farm Credit, Renee moved over there so kept with same tax preparer. Payroll expenses will drop now that Louise has completed.

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: David Conant

Second: Eric Clifford

Discussion:

Passed (8/0/0)

CVFC Job Description Discussion/Approval

All

Kirsten discussed the revisions to the job description.

Tim Kayhart expressed making sure there are some parameters

Jeff...there should be accountability. Reporting

David...when you work side-by-side with someone everyday it isn't necessary, but because this person works mostly on their own, accountability should be an expectation.

Minimums....

Brian...Salary position....does it matter how many hours if they are accomplishing the goals?

Eric...I agree with monthly reporting. Should we include that in the job description? Chase...include it in the

Need to better outline the responsibilities and expectations, prioritize (*see notes...directors, communication, membership, fundraising*)

\$20,000 for half time = \$17.25/hour

Revised description back to board...3-13-19

Advertise....internal, networks,

MEMBERSHIP

Letter to members who haven't paid communicating we still want them and don't want the dues to keep

Strategic Plan

All

Ecosystem Services Update

Jeff Carter/Marie Audet

10:00 am Updates and Discussion

Additional Attendance: Brian Carpenter, Ross Conrad, Dan Barnes, Rachel Tomko, Jed David, Matthew Severy, Ernie Audet, Chanin Hill

Ecosystem Services Update...continued

Jeff Carter/Marie Audet

Jeff Carter gave an overview of all the moving parts and different players.

There is general consensus that farmers need to lead this and not let the state agencies take it over Marie described that the three farmer watershed groups are perfectly poised, it fits within our missions well

RCP...30% of the national funding is supposed to go towards this.

Dairy Water Collaborative...meeting today to finalize their 10 points of action, Gil Livingston spoke with Marie and vocalized the need to work together.

LandStream...lots of feedback about whether or not to use them to do measurements. Meeting with him next week to nail down more details.

Models vs. measuring...a lot of people are headed towards modeling, so we can't totally leave it behind. However, the models are flawed.

Ben Dykema had input about another company that could also do some of this...need more info?

Farm Prep...based on APEX, but modified to be more applicable to Vermont. More individualized, field-based,

Jed...interested in getting dollars to farmers sooner rather than later. Short-term answer is modeling, long-term answer is matching measurement with modeling.

Everyone saying the same thing with different words.

Lorenzo...start with an imperfect system so we can get started and then make improvements

Brian...what are people thinking/feeling? Do you feel comfortable? Is it moving too fast?

- Ben wants all three farmer groups to get back together and have discussion
- Eric...may have seemed negative at the outset, still feel a little bit out of the loop, much more positive because there are so many players, that makes him more comfortable. Still need more information
- Marie...we're on the right side of science. Our practices are good for water quality, climate resiliency...but it's EXPENSIVE. Maintain the momentum, build consensus,

- Jeff reviewed the practice implementation numbers, trends, strategies. Agencies are only telling their individual parts of the story...not the whole picture, doesn't account for farmer implementation without \$ assistance.
- David...if we could backup a few years couldn't all three groups could have had synergy between the farmer groups from the beginning? It's imperative that we get together and talk together – the sooner the better. ONE voice. We're so good at doing things ourselves in our businesses, it's hard to lose control and hand it over. Want to make sure we have the same goal. What and who are the right avenues, approaches, people? EQIP and BMP will be drying up. Questions about where the funding is going to come from to pay for this?
- Ernie...Juan Alves mentioned at their farm that it is happening in South America
- Ross Conrad...can we expand ES to include other things beyond water quality and climate resiliency...like biodiversity, pesticide residues, others...YES! How do we get the groups to speak with one CLEAR, aligned voice.
- Marie...chuck Ross (UVM Extension) has offered to help bring some resources to help
- Jed...federal EPA is encourage state EPA offices to get behind this idea, focus on practices that are 'stackable'
- Nate...speaking with farmers most folks don't understand what's happening, how/when do we inform/educate more farmers about what's going on? Do we need to wait until things are more settled? Need to get the word out better. Brian...how do we bring the basics together and communicate that to broader membership (and others). Marie...we can communicate the talking pints
- Ross...can Extension put out press releases to educate everyone, including citizens, they are the constituents? Need to be proactive and have it come from farmers
- Marie...while we can't talk about specific proposals and funding mechanisms, we can talk about the societal benefit of agriculture. Be the leaders of the conversation.
- Can we take the basics from the joint hearing as a basis and put it out from there.
- Jim Wallace...Newtrient. Owned by 12 dairy co-ops, tasked with taking on environmental challenges facing dairy industry. Started engaging with state of Vermont 3 years ago, water quality, awarded grant for a protocol to create a pathway for 'credits'. The clearinghouse could act to bring together buyers/sellers, 2nd/3rd quarter of this year calibrated/validated model for a tool evaluate credits, prioritize investments, help facilitate the flow of money. FarmPrep is still evolving. Marie...emphasized that it is land generic and doesn't exclude anyone. Need to do a better job communicating to farmers
- Difference between trading 'pollution' and 'pay for performance'.

Educational Program Reports

Water Quality Partners Meeting

Jeff/Marie

No-Till Cover Crop Symposium Recap

Kirsten

Crop Signals Recap & Update

Nate Severy

Febuary Crop Signal "organic Crop fertility", 16 people in attendance

NEXT Crop Signal Workshop – March 20, 2019 (also manure certification training/exam)

Upcoming Dairy Reception @ State House at 4:00 – 6:00 (3-27-19), CVFC sponsored

ACORN Organic Grain Corn production workshop with Vermont Tortilla Co., March 13th 8:30 at UVM Extension Office in Middlebury...\$700/ton cleaned and delivered

Wetlands Permit Update

Brian/Jeff

No new word...but need to keep it on our radar

Nutrient Management Commission Update *Jeff/Lorenzo*

Meetings start tomorrow. Lorenzo representing CVFC, Jeff/Kirsten will be there. Matthew S...more uniform would be valuable for custom operators.

Legislative Breakfast Update *All*

Those who have attended will give recaps, and we will identify who can attend future meetings. Schedule:

3/11/19-PLATT MEMORIAL LIB SHOREHAM – Loren/Rachel
3/18/19-AMERICAN LEGION MIDDLEBURY - GOVERNOR’S BREAKFAST
3/25/19-CONG. CHURCH, MAPLE ST. SALISBURY
4/1/19-AG LUNCH, Grange Hall BRIDPORT
4/8/19-CONG. CHURCH WEYBRIDGE
4/15/19-CONG. CHURCH NEW HAVEN
4/22/19-TOWN HALL WHITING
4/29/19-Grange Hall 82 Post Office Hill Rd. GRANVILLE

BREAKFASTS START AT 7:00 AM PROGRAM BEGINS AT 7:30 AM AND ENDS AT 8:45 AM
LUNCHEONS BEGIN AT 12:00PM AND END AT 1:45 PM. PURCHASE OF BREAKFAST NOT REQUIRED TO ATTEND BUT HELPS OUR HOSTS TO DEFRAID THE COST OF OPENING THEIR HALL

10:45 Other Updates & Business *All*

Vermont Dairy Producers Conference Eric
Others?

11:00 CVFC Members Chanin Hill (Four Hills Farm) & Brian Carpenter (Champlain Valley Equipment) lead an informational discussion about the Vermont Dairy Producers Alliance (www.vtpda.com).

Chanin is the Secretary of VT DPA. They have been having trouble getting members from this area because farmers don’t understand how this is different from CVFC. More legislative, they have someone on Montpelier all the time, keeping an eye on all the things going on not just ag/ANR. The cost was reduced to \$250/year. Example...December rule-making change regarding wetlands, hired lawyer, able to keep it from going forward. Regular updates about the bills and what’s moving forward

Brian Carpenter...members of CVFC/FWA and VT DPA. Different messages going to state house. VT DPA came out of the attack that was coming down on farming. Legal representation, made an investment. We don’t see it taking the place of CVFC or FWA...but augmenting with a constant presence at the state house. Not just franklin county, not just dairy issues, not just specific farms. More flexibility because we’re not tied to government funding (UVM Extension, Agency), or even co-ops.

Ross. Could the CVFC be a member instead of individual farms as members? We would need a member as a liason.

Marie...their farm is a member, she sees value. She feels like VDPA has more of a reputation of being ‘defensive’, CVFC more pro-active. More positive message.

Brian K...initial concerns were similar to VT Farm Bureau. Things have/can change. Ross's point is a good one that the communication needs to be active. Don't want to send mixed signals up on Montpelier on issues.

Chanin...we would like your input, your membership.

CVFC Members can contact either Brian C or Chanin with questions, concerns.

Jeff...how often do you get together? Quarterly, more often during legislative session especially when issues come up, by phone usually, weekly legislative updates. Lobbyist may call on specific issues to individuals.

David...do you have a directorship? Yes. 7 directors, and some bylaws.

Green New Deal...

- Lots of misinformation
- Beef Industry working hard

Vermont Dairy Producers Conference

- Attendance was down, shy of 300
- 20th anniversary
- Lots of good evaluations, attendees and vendors

Marie

- Lots of Connecticut visitors
- Their farms are about to have new water quality regulations, many farms are out of phosphorus balances
-

David....How do we get directorships for all three watershed groups together? Marie advocated for taking Chuck Ross up on his offer to coordinate. Before folks get busy. Conversation about how we become more unified. After March 25th...but not too far into April. Waitsfield office of AgriMark, May 27th before the dairy reception.

Ad in ACORN publication...\$250

Motion to put ad in the publication?

Matt Whitten....ACRWC

Invite to April meeting, need report ahead of time.

11:58 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: David Conant

Second: Lorenzo Whitcomb

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, April 3, 2019

12:30 Please join NRCS & UVM staff, and farmers for a meeting, **“The State of the McKenzie Brook and East Creek Watersheds: a watershed planning group meeting to explore the progress and needs of these watersheds for improved soil health and water quality.**

The McKenzie Brook has been the focus of prioritized technical and financial support from the Vermont Agricultural Water Quality Partnership over the past 4 years with 1 year remaining for prioritized assistance. The East Creek was recently selected as a watershed of focus in Vermont and there are 4 years of prioritized funding remaining. These watersheds are at different stages in their individual strategic plans to protect and improve water quality and reduce phosphorus runoff from agricultural fields.

AGENDA:

- Hear about the great progress you, the farmers, have made in these watersheds!
- Did we reach the target?
- Hear from Tim Howlett, Champlainside Farm, on why and how he incorporates conservation practices into his cropping system and still gets 'everything done.'
- What does the future look like?

Come help us move this effort forward.

Lunch will be provided by Otter Creek NRCD

Upcoming Dates:

March 13 – ACORN sponsored Organic Grain Corn/VT Tortilla Co (Middlebury EXT, 8:30 AM)

March 20 – Crop Signals: Organic Crop & Fertility Management (Middlebury EXT, 10:00 AM)

March 27 – Dairy Reception & @ 2+2 Celebration (State House, Cedar Creek Room, 4-6 PM)