

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, April 3, 2019

UVM Extension Office
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



9:30 am **Directors Business Meeting**

Attendance: Marie Audet, Eric Clifford, David Conant, George Foster, Loren Wood, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Nate Severy, Jeff Carter, Kirsten Workman, Brian Kemp, Chase Goodrich, Rachel Orr, Ben Dykema

Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

S. 96 passed through House yesterday. Regional planning commissions to oversee Clean Water Funds, each watershed will have a technical committee to choose projects to fund. It also includes some language about paying for 'credits' for carbon maybe?

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

Motion to Approve March Minutes: Eric Clifford

Second: Rachel Orr

Discussion:

Approved (9/0/0)

Membership Applications

Kirsten Workman

Application received from Pikeside Enterprises as a Business Member,

Approved online (5/0/0)

Ben asked about accepting applications from out of state. Are they working in the area?

David explained their connection,

Update on letter sent by Jeff Carter to unpaid members

- 48 letters sent out
- 4 members sent in checks, no other responses

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

Renewed Godaddy account for a few more years.

Clean Water Fund grant payment came in

Will need to pay for tax preparation coming up

Motion to Approve Treasurers Report: David Conant

Second: Loren Wood

Discussion:

Approved (9/0/0)

CVFC Job Description Discussion

All

How does this fit with potential High Meadows Foundation ask? Could they be paired together to fund a full position. Could be a three-year project...help make a commitment to a higher caliber

- Ben: communicate with other groups to see if they would be ok?
- Brian: we can bring it up tomorrow and just see what they think.

Let's wait and see what happens with HMF and talk with other groups before we move forward

Seven Days Article

“Who Wants to Work on a Vermont Dairy Farm?” ([Click here to read the full article](#))

May meeting – potential conflicts

Cancel May meeting due to scheduling conflicts across the board. Eric asked for update from the meeting with all watershed groups and Tim Gieseke and have a conference call or email.

10:00 am Updates and Discussion

Additional attendees: Cheryl Cesario, Ernie Audet, Newtrient (x2), Ross Conrad, Peter James

Educational Program Reports

Crop Signals Update

Nate

March 20th – no-till, cover crop, manure training. 28 people attended, 5 people took the test.

NEXT Crop Signal Workshop – April 17, 2019

Cover Crop Workshop @ Barnes Farm (Addison/Panton town line)

Dairy Water Quality Collaborative Recap

Brian/Marie

Brian has been partially involved with this, towards the end got busy.

Originated by Will Raap, Roger Allbee, Gil Livingston to look at farm viability and water quality in the dairy sector. Working group was around 20 members – farmers, UVM, NOFA, DEC, VAAFM, VHCB, farm-to-plate, philanthropists, others. Wanted to get some recommendations to the broader public and legislature. They came up with 8 final recommendations. Payment for ecosystem services rose to the top. It started out being more focused on organic and grass-based, but evolved over time to much bigger than that. Meeting last week (invite only) – what to do next? Continuing on with new leadership? Took suggestions on who should move it forward? Could farmers and environmental groups come together with a common vision? Can we change the dialogue if we show them that the farmers are serious about fixing the problem?

Marie attended for the last meeting. Seems like things are aligning...future of Vermont agriculture report, but made it more of a call to action. They want to put the power back in the farmer hands. She likes the approach. Expanded the group of people who are supporting dairy. They identified that public support of agriculture is key. They want to build a body to move it forward. They are confident they can raise the funding to do it.

Vermont legislators (Ag) were in attendance

Vermont Dairy Summit Recap

Marie/Cheryl/Kirsten

Marie got an email right before the summit about ‘Dairy Vision’, a program that goes onto a farm that is struggling and provide them with a strategic plan related agronomy, financials, human resources, others. The lacking piece has been the implementation. There will be a new process that has some pre-screening. 244 people attended, 125 were farmers. The emphasized keeping an open mind for new ideas. Farm diversification and ecosystem services were well-attended. Taking advantage of the opportunities that present themselves.

Cheryl...an interesting pair of presenters, Mateo from Jasper Hill (local) and a New Zealand (global) producer,

Planning for the future, succession planning – there aren’t enough lawyers in Vermont to meet the need.

Capitalizing on the Vermont brand – can we build a Vermont processing plant? Vermont branding works in new England, but not necessarily in California.

Petition to have a national growth management plan.

Next steps...unsure

Wetlands Permit Update

Brian

Proposal for a \$200 permit general permit application (removed 0.75/sq ft fee), fee does not include delineation...hasn't been passed yet

ANR is supposed to be training NRCS for allowable delineation

Nutrient Management Commission Update

Jeff/Kirsten/Lorenzo

After first meeting, focus has changed from changing from changing the standard. It is an evolving rp

Dairy Reception and 2+2 Celebration Recap

Eric/Nate

Eric said it went well. CVFC recognized as sponsor. 2+2 families reiterated the importance of the program and the ability for kids to go to college. New class has 5/6 kids. Funding isn't always secured. Very impactful for long-term career goals.

Legislative Breakfast Update

All

Rachel Orr attended Shoreham...Hardy and Bray were only representatives in attendance

Schedule:

3/11/19-PLATT MEMORIAL LIB SHOREHAM

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 NEWHAVEN

4/22/19-TOWN HALL WHITING

4/29/19-Grange Hall 82 Post Office Hill Rd. GRANVILLE

10:45 Other Updates & Business

All

David & Lorenzo attended the Champlain Valley Equipment event in St. Albans, heard for St. Albans senator (Cory Parent) whose perspective was that if they didn't lose any ground it was a win. Sits on Senate Natural Resources.

Brian...mentioned to Lisa G at FSA about collecting information about conservation practices during crop reporting and she seemed receptive.

Hannaford Career Center, Sustainable Ag Class, doing a debate on Act 64/RAPs, Brian and Rob Hunt met with students and emphasized the importance and potential impact.

11:00 Legislative Update

Jane Clifford, ejc Consulting

This session has been disappointing. 42 new legislators, lots of duplicity of bills, more than 1,000 bills introduced...about 100 will have been truly looked at. Lots of social issues (gun rights, abortion, minimum wage, paid family leave) that tend to take a lot of attention. Not always a good understanding of financial impacts.

Paid family leave does not have an ag exemption. Anyone who has one employee would be required. Payroll tax for employer and employee, 12 weeks @ 100% pay, would be run through a private insurance company. Complexity will come to bear...could be just a few hours.

Minimum wage may not go through until next year...also no exemption for ag/forestry (which is a change). Discussion between 2023/2025 implementation

Act 250 - House Natural working on since day one, re-write of Act 250 as a result of commission created two years ago. Been around for 50 years...is it still working as designed? 30,000 permits issued since inception, how much more capacity for continued development. Language getting rid of ag exemption and elevation changes were removed. Lots of discussion about climate change in this newest revision.

S. 160 – ag economic development bill. Senator Starr’s attempt to support ag industry, but also get a better understanding of the dairy processing world. Passed senate and is now in house. **H.525** passed house and is now in senate. Both bills recognize the impact of the loss of dairy farms on the rural economy.

Wetlands – language in both bills (s.160/h.525). If the current un-numbered bill dies, it could still be added to those bills at the last minute. Discussion on a daily basis, not sure it will go anywhere. Senate Natural will have to see anything that Senate/House ag puts together.

S.96 – amendment on the floor on Friday takes the Regional Planning Commission language out and alludes only to “appropriate entities”. It originally had a per parcel fee, but no other members (than Bray) were willing to approve it. Non-regulatory money that would go towards clean water. ANR wants to have more accountability for how money is spent and if it is working. Pushed from Auditor’s office and EPA. Passed senate, now in House....no funding mechanism yet. House Ways & Means has it, trying to come up with a funding mechanism. Jeff pointed out that this is the money that has been put into the Clean Water Implementation Fund (CVFC has grant, UVM Extension has multiple, etc.). EPA has a requirement that we need a funding source by July 2019. Environmental groups agreed with Governor’s proposal, EPA also tentatively agreed. Everyone seems disappointed that this bill has no funding mechanism.

S.58 Hemp Bill - \$3,000/year registration fee, passed Senate and in House.

Asked for folks to come up to Montpelier. It’s been a difficult environment to be in this year.

Brian...we do need to show a voice, even if there’s a little interrogation,

Marie...maybe some committees outside of ag/natural. I.e. technology committee,

Jane – also economic development when S.160 or H.525 go there

11:45 – Newtrient

Chris K and Jamie? – S. 96 and funding. Newtrient has been focusing on how ag can tap into it. They have been working on a mechanism to show accountability for the use of those dollars. FarmPREP could be used to show impact of potential projects for P reductions. They have been in contact with CLF and NRC. They are focused on Phosphorus (not all Ecosystem Services). Have had conversations with larger corporations, worried about whether or not they will really pay. We’d like to do a pilot project regardless of whether the bill passes. The modeling work should be complete by summer. If bill doesn’t pass (or maybe if it does), they would need to find a way to fund the pilot project practice implementation. By fall they hope to have a pilot project ‘package’ to shop around. Senator Leahy \$\$, private companies, philanthropic organizations, others?

11:30 Ecosystem Services Discussion

Jeff/Kirsten/Others

- Presentation from Abe Collins & John Norman, LandStream regarding measurement technology and methods ([You can see the slides here](#))
- Recap of Tim Gieseke presentation at Dairy Summit, introduce April 4th meeting
- UVM Extension discussions
- High Meadows Fund potential funding for collaboration/planning/etc.

- Some context about FarmPREP and models the Agencies seem to be leaning towards
- How does this fit in with legislative items coming through???

12:10 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: George Foster

Second: Ben Dykema

Approved (10/0/0)

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, May 1, 2019 (tentative)

Upcoming Dates:

- April 4 – CVFC/FWA/CRWFA Meeting with Tim Gieseke (1-4 PM, St. Albans)
- April 17 – Crop Signals: Winter Grain Cover Crop Trials Field Day – Barnes Family Farm (Addison/Panton town line, 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM)
- May 13 – Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative Ag Water Quality Meeting
Addison County Regional Planning Commission, 3:00 – 4:30
- May 15 – Crop Signals: Soil Amendments on Alfalfa (*Location TBA, 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM*)