

Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, April 4, 2018
UVM Extension Office
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



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

Directors Business Meeting - Directors only please

9:30am Call to order Brian Kemp

Secretary Report Kirsten Workman

Motion to approve March minutes: George Foster

Second: Loren Wood

Passed (9/0/0)

Membership Applications Kirsten Workman

Class 3 – Supporting Business: Maple Ridge Meats (Benson, VT)

Motion to approve membership application as submitted: Brian Kemp

Second: Eric Clifford

Passed (9/0/0)

Treasurer Report Jeff Carter

Jeff reviewed Profit & Loss statement and Balance Sheet (year to date)

Motion to approve Treasurer's report as presented: David Conant

Second: Peter James

Passed (10/0/0)

One more Keep Local Farms payment,

High Meadows Fund Wrap Up/Report: tracks membership, how this project leveraged supplemental awards, outreach, lessons learned. Total grant award ended up being \$80,200.

Rene Manning will do taxes by May 15th.

Independent Contractor Conservation Jeff Carter/Louise Waterman

Money used to pay staff has to go through UVM because of our tax status 501(c)5. Until the current contracts with funds running through UVM, we should continue as is with staff being employees. If CWF grant comes through, we will need to reassess. Nate should probably stay as an employee, there is not the benefit for him. Louise's position is more appropriate as an Independent Contractor.

Moving forward, CVFC could contract with UVM, which is the opposite situation currently. Currently around \$6000 annually goes towards additional employee costs (– payroll service, worker's comp, insurance, etc. New grants have an updated 'true cost' of employees.

Eric Clifford...looks forward to the conversation. Could open up some opportunities for when we need expertise for short periods of time.

Grants Update

Jeff Carter/Nate Severy

Still haven't heard from state about Clean Water Fund. They have not been awarded.

Current CWF funding ends at the end of the month. Final Report due in May.

Workshops coming up:

- April 11th - No-till cover crop @ Monument Farms
- April 19 – alternative manure systems @ Alan Brisson's
- End of April – cover crops @ Woodnotch Farm

UVM Grants:

- East Creek/McKenzie
- Gypsum
- P Mass Balance
- ACAP
- Manure Injection
- Cover Crop/No-Till Economics
- Pending: CWF Grant for UVM Extension
- Equipment
- FUTURE: WLEB for custom cover crop business development

General Membership Meeting - All are welcome

Additional Attendees: Jane Clifford, Ray Brands, Ed Schillawski, Bill Barnes, Lynn Coale, Brad Lawes, Ernie Audet, George Tucker, Cheryl Cesario, Gerard Vorsteveld

10:00am – Called to Order

Presidents Report

Brian Kemp

Lots on the schedule, so we'll move right along.

Positive news from EPA...Vermont is meeting the Phase I goals, ag doing all of theirs.

Legislative Update

Jane Clifford

Jane introduced herself and her services. Thanked us for being proactive and having members at Legislative Breakfasts and speaking up. Also for sending folks up to Montpelier for lunch meetings. Met with Ginny Lyons last week and talked about tile drainage. Was positive. Week before met with Chris Bray, Chase shared projects they are working on. Sat with a water quality working group for a bit.

S. 260 – Funding Water Quality

Now the only funding language about funding is a 'study' – via a legislative committee. After two years, funding disappears, per parcel fee will be analyzed as part of that study.

Review of RAPs and report of future of funding, Lake Carmi pilot project,

Conservation District funding for implementation, less capital

Citizen Right to Action, law suits (not just ag related), not legal to include agencies,

The funding portion had lots of supporters from all sides, but other stuff got added and no one would stand up and get it removed

Passed out of Senate Ag and Nat. Resources, Now in House Nat. Resources, Jane asked for Senate Ag to see it too (pending), that would be a time to testify. Would Governor veto if passed?

Conversations about moving jurisdiction to from VAAF to ANR continue.

H. 730 – Lake in Crisis

Secretary already has authority to do much of this. This creates funding to do it and creates a public component where they could petition the secretary to do so.

Basically puts language of the CLF/VAAFM agreement

It is in Senate now, they haven't taken any testimony. If nothing happens by next Friday (April 13th), it won't go. It has not been on the senate agenda yet

H. 903 – Regenerative Ag

Started out with a new labeling program, now encompasses the State's VESP

Passed the house, now in Senate, coalition members tested in support voluntary VESP prog.

H. 904 – Misc. Ag → S. 276 got added to it.

More forestry items got added when S.276 was added

H. 911 – Education Funding

Creates an income surcharge on tax bill, but removes \$60 million in property taxes

Requires two tax bills get sent out (property, education)

Not sure if it will fly, discussion will continue about reducing pressure on property taxes

New federal tax laws, taking away exemptions

Passed House, in Senate finance, taking testimony

S. 197 – Toxic Substances

Unlimited liability to the farmer/business if an employee was harmed by a

Insurance companies are saying they wouldn't be able to insure that circumstance

Result of PFOA issues in Bennington (Sears, Campion)...became an emotional issue in senate
Agriculture has a small umbrella (but not a big one)...if there is an EPA reg. # could be exempt, unless there is a discharge.

IF passes, ag will end up being impacted as an 'unintended consequence',

Passed out of Senate, hoping it sticks to the wall in House Judiciary

H. 915 - Pollinator Protection

Seed dealers will need to have untreated seed available

Most of language is regarding a study

Started as a ban on neonics

2+2 Program will have a full slate of students, celebration at State House on April 10th, 4-6 @ State House, plus proclamation in memory of Bob Parsons

Ben Dykema...can a DEC or VAAFM inspector making decisions? No, they investigate and then it gets reviewed. Only exception would be a 'direct discharge'.

Tile Drainage Rules, Studies, Etc.

Jeff Carter

Jeff reviewed recent press releases and reports. EPA report card and VAAFM Partnership Updates

Farmer Survey – Heather Darby is doing a farmer survey for tile drainage:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/UVMTileDrainage>

Water Quality Sampling

UVM extension is sampling, 40 total farms, 10 in Addison County
Miner Institute
Stone Environmental, previous studies
UVM – Don Ross/Joshua Faulkner

Stone Environmental Project

Looking for 5 sites in Addison County, full year, continuous sampling/flows
Kip Potter (kpotter@stone-env.com)

Public Hearing on VAAFMs proposed rules for subsurface drainage

<http://agriculture.vermont.gov/rap-tile-rule>

(April 5, 2016: 1 PM – 3 PM at the Middlebury American Legion)

Water Quality Sampling & Watershed Planning

Addison County Riverwatch sampling, this year will be Lewis Creek/Lemon Faire
Then Middlebury River, Little Otter Creek

East Creek/McKenzie Brook Project Updates

Jeff Carter

New project has started

NRCS has been facilitating meetings to draft the watershed planning

First step to inventory the practices that have already been implemented, use the existing model to show progress since 2010 (already)

April 16th is next East Creek Meeting

April 18th is next McKenzie Brook Meeting

Farm Structures, RAP Section 9 rules, town zoning

Marie Audet

We need to pay attention to Section 9 of RAPs. It is completely different than how we have been working with towns prior. You need to have WRITTEN permission and have sketch provided. Verbal permission is not enough.

Moving forward:

Contact town, submit site plan/sketch

Contact Inspector at VAAFMs before any construction

If in floodplain,

What about NRCS projects...

READ Section 9 IN RAPs:

http://agriculture.vermont.gov/sites/ag/files/pdf/water_quality/RAP/Final/Required-Agricultural-Practices-Regulations-11172016-CLEAN.pdf

Governor's Climate Action Commission Update

Marie Audet

All of the practices we have been working on for water quality are good for climate change resiliency. We need to elevate the story about the 600,000 acres of cropland and the benefit. Food security, greenhouse gas. reductions, ag land is 4 times cleaner than developed land. DEC folks recognize that we NEED to include farmers in the climate conversation. Organic matter is going up on their farm. If everyone can accomplish that, we offset car emissions.

Event Recap

Northeast Climate Hub Meeting @ Rutgers (Kirsten & Jeff)

Water quality practices are climate change practices. There are some good resources.

Addison County Farm Bureau Legislative Breakfasts

Middlebury one ended up being about gun legislation and marijuana legalization.

George and Ross Conrad attended, but it wasn't a good opportunity to talk about farming. Senators didn't show up

Vergennes – Gerard also invited Chris Bray

Shoreham – Rene Saenger, Loren Wood, Harvey Smith spoke. Loren invited Chris Bray to come to farm, gave him his cell phone number

Salisbury – Chase Goodrich had

Brian thinks attendance has been effective, Chris Bray seems more engaged

Chris Bray's cell phone - 802-371-8183

Legislative Lunches @ the State House

Vermont Law School Forum

Winooski NRCO RAP Workshop

Media/Conflict Training

Others?

REMINDER – Upcoming Legislative Breakfast Schedule:

4-9-18	Bridport	Grange Hall (LUNCH)	(Pamela Stefanek, Marie Audet)
4-16-18	Weybridge	Congregational Church	(Peter James, Bill Barnes?)
4-23-18	New Haven	Congregational Church	(Phil Livingston)
4-30-18	Whiting	Town Hall	(Kylie Quesnel, Rachel Orr, Brian Kemp)
6-4-18	<i>Bridport</i>	<i>Grange Hall</i>	<i>(Volunteers?)</i>

*Breakfasts start at 7:00 AM, Program at 7:30, ends at 8:45

*Luncheons start 12:00, and end at 1:45 PM

Upcoming Events

April 5th: VPR News & Brews – The Milk, The Land, The Future

April 5th: Tile Drainage RAP Rule Public Hearing (1:00 – 3:00 Middlebury American Legion)
George Foster, Ben Dykema, Gerard Vorsteveld planning on attending

April 10th: NRCS East Creek/McKenzie Brook Project Audit Meeting (Middlebury Inn)

April 10th: Dairy Reception & 2+2 Celebration (Cedar Creek Room, State House, Montpelier)

April 11th: Crop Patrol - No-Till & Cover Crops – A System Approach (Monument Farms)

April 11th: Addison County Riverwatch Collaborative Annual Meeting (3:00 @ Middlebury Inn)

April 16th: East Creek Priority Watershed Meeting (10:00 Orwell Fire House)

April 18th: McKenzie Brook Priority Watershed Meeting (10:00 UVM Extension)

April 19th: Crop Patrol – Alternative Manure Systems, Allandra Farm

April XX: Crop Patrol – Cover Crops @ Woodnotch Farm

▪ **Other Business**

- April 20th – Last NRCS deadline for cover crops, erosion control for 2018 crop year, or for other practices for 2019 crop year
- Marie - Only 36% of small farms have sent in their Small Farm Certification applications. What can CVFC do to promote: include links in the newsletter, have forms at workshops.

12:10 Motion to ADJOURN Meeting: George Foster

Second: Brian Kemp

Passed (10/0/0)

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, May 2, 2018