

# Champlain Valley Farmers Coalition, Inc.

UVM Extension Office  
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



**Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 2017**

## **Directors Business Meeting Minutes**

*Attendance: Eric Clifford, Louise Waterman, Ben Dykema, George Foster, Tim Kayhart, Loren Wood, Rachel Orr, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Kristin Williams, Nate Severy, Jeff Carter, Brian Kemp, Kirsten Workman, Peter James*

### **Meeting called to order at 9:34am**

#### **President's Report**

*Brian*

Lots of meetings lately. Laura DiPietro stopped by his farm to check in and had a candid conversation. He conveyed that communication can still be improved. RAP rollout was pretty quiet, coordinators took a while to be confirmed. She shared that the Agency really appreciates CVFC input...productive, receptive. MFO inspections should go smoother than LFO...working on process. Responsiveness is a priority.

Clean Water Day...blind-sided by ECHO a little. Didn't realize that there would be a 'march'...opted out of that part. Press Conference asking for funding for clean water long term from legislature. Don't wait for the two-year temporary funding to run out. Need to plan ahead. Brian conveyed the need for funding and on the ground, not administration.

Legislative luncheon in Bridport with Nate. Good attendance. Some farmers, many retired folks. Harvey kept it focused on ag. Brian made some comments. Diane Lanphear had a good discussion on budget and funding. Lots of comments about the value of Extension. UVM (bigger) mentioned making cuts, might be time to make sure they know we want them supported. Talked about RAPs, migrant labor. Citizen comments about biochar.

RAP Development Committee starts this Friday. First topic is floodplains. 1:00 – 3:00 at Williston office. Normally will be four hours. First two hours to review previous topic, second two hours to introduce new topic. We can bring two people per meeting. Lorenzo will join Brian for the first one.

Looking for more testimony in Montpelier. Misc. Ag bill...opportunity to stress the importance of funding the agency in the future with a line item instead of permit fees. \$250 fee for small farms is being foregone, so how will we make up that funding? Still in question...the fee was approved before Scott was elected.

#### **Secretary's Report**

*Kirsten*

Review March Minutes and Approve

*Motion to approve March Minutes: Eric Clifford*

*Second: George Foster*

*Discussion: none*

*Passed (9/0/0)*

#### **Approve New Members**

*Kirsten*

The following new members were approved via email.

Jeff Carter emailed all directors on March 17, 2017

6 votes to approve on 3-17-17, 2 votes to approve on 3-18-17, 3 votes to approve on 3-22-17

##### **Class 1**

*Rich Hulett, Deer Flats Farm LLC, West Pawlet, VT*

*Sam Dixon, Shelburne Farms, Shelburne, VT*

*Mark Lourie, Rupert Valley Holsteins, West Rupert, VT*

##### **Class 2/3**

*David Santos, Phoenix Feeds and Nutrition Inc., New Haven, VT*

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*Additional Membership applications to approve:*

**Class 1:**

Brian & Patty Wilson, Morningside Farm

**Class 3:**

PJ Carrara, Joseph Carrara & Sons, Inc.

*Motion to approve new members as presented: Peter James*

*Second: Loren Wood*

*Discussion:*

*Passed (9/0/0)*

**Treasurer's Report**

*Jeff*

Financial Statements...Jeff presented balance sheet and profit and loss statements through March 2017. High Meadows made their third and final payment for that grant. Dues are up. WLEB last payment received.

*Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: Brian Kemp*

*Second: Eric Clifford*

*Discussion: year to date, previous year, as opposed to monthly. Some projections for future. (Ben). In a year and half, we need to be finding more funding sources. Jeff is looking for more input for future planning, projections, strategic directions. Spoke with Eric Clifford and Ted Foster, maybe Ben could join discussion. Eric...need more involvement in the financial planning and awareness. Who could work with Jeff to understand the flow of funds? Ted Foster has agreed to work with Jeff in an advisory basis, with a board subcommittee who really look at finances. Rene Saenger would like to volunteer as well. Think about it this month, have Ted meet with Jeff and next month make a decision about a finance strategy committee. Jeff will also put together a flow-chart for funding sources*

*Passed (9/0/0)*

ACORN Local Farm Guide Advertisement. Jonathan Corcoran wants us to advertise in the guide. It costs \$250. Could it be in lieu of their free membership? Jonathan said that it is their major fundraiser. Change add up to be more o

Motion to approve a quarter page ad: Eric Clifford

Second: Ben Dykema

Discussion: color for free?

Passed (9/0/0)

**Dairy Reception and 2+2 Celebration at the State House**

*Eric/Jeff/Brian*

We originally didn't make a decision, Eric and David felt

Moved to pay: Peter James

Second: Loren Wood

Discussion:

Passed (9/0/0)

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## Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> 2017 General Membership Meeting Minutes

10:00

### **Welcome & President's Report**

*Brian*

Legislative luncheon recap

Clean Water Funding press conference

Laura D (VAAF) came to visit and talk with him.

Testify in Montpelier on misc. ag bill

RAP Development Committee

(See notes above)

### **Program Update**

*Nate*

Corn Planter Clinic at Gosliga Farm in Addison 4-6-2016

Working on Manure Applicator Training with Lindsey Ruhl and Heather Darby. Three in February/March for custom operators and full-time employees (~100 attended). Additional trainings for farmers and part-time employees (~140 attended). Across the Fence episode today about trainings.

Two floodplain RAP meetings. One in Richmond @ Conant Farm on Mar. 16<sup>th</sup> and one here in Middlebury 4-5-16. 36 people in Richmond, 30 in Middlebury.

Newsletter will be every other month. Next one is in May. We will have two member spotlights...one general, one highlighting research/demonstration. Calendar of events.

### **Spring Bus Tour Planning**

*Nate/Jeff/All*

We need to confirm 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.

Nate. Third week of May is ideal for legislature. It will be a busy time of year, but there will be lots to see. Getting people on the bus. Maybe get a schedule of folks to ride between farms. Also need to have members at each stop. No lobbying, educational and informative. Share what we are doing and why

- Manure
- Buffers
- No-till into cover crops

Start in Richmond/Williston area...Start at Conant Farm (parking)

Lunch, snacks, etc. by business members/sponsors

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## **Tile Drainage & P-Index Update**

*Jeff*

Jeff updated folks on the statewide tile drainage research group meetings and plans for managing tile drainage nutrient loss. Agencies have backed away a bit from the idea of not allowing tile drainage. The research is still coming out, they are feeling like they need more time for better local data. More of a 5 year timeline. Tile vs. no tile, no-till vs. conventional. St. Albans Extension did some tile drainage sampling and paired it with management. Farmers paid for the sampling. 20 farms, multiple fields, >200 samples. They would like some Addison County farmers to participate. LCBP \$200K into research.

The Vermont P-Index has been revised. The new version includes impacts from tile drainage. There is also a Northeast P-Index, UVM Extension working to ground-truth it and the possibility of a regional P-Index. Will be paired with Whole Farm P Balance.

St. Albans Extension just got a grant to do a tile drainage survey. Looks at management and BMPs. Are there questions members would like to have asked?

What about tile drainage edge of field studies with Stone Environmental? Only end of tile treatment project, but it got taken out.

McKenzie Brook Update...new rain gauge stations and two stream gauge stations (Huestis, Carlotto) in East Creek too.

## **Website 2.0**

*Kristin/Kirsten/Jeff/All*

Kristin & Kirsten shared the newest version of our website.

Jeff asked if a shorter URL would be better...consensus was no.

Input:

- Highlight actual practices. What, Why, How, pictures, etc.
- Links to 'bigger picture' information about the pollution issues in Lake Champlain.
- Pull in other news...ie.

## **Update from Senator Sanders' Office**

*Erica Campbell*

Erica Campbell is the newly hired staff member for Senator Sanders Vermont home office working on agriculture, food and environment issues.

Ginny Nelson hired by DFA as Farmer Ombudsman.

She was most recently at VSJF and Farm to Plate program. Worked with soil and water group, farmland access group.

Federal Update: Skinny Budget had big cuts to USDA, they are optimistic they won't be that drastic in the end. Research was called out to keep, rural development questionable. Gov. Perdue not confirmed yet, lots going on. Hopeful he is confirmed by Friday before recess. After recess, they will need to make budget decisions or there will be a shutdown. NRCS/USDA on hiring freezes. Margin Protection Program...proposed budget changes, house ag committee thinks estimates are wrong. Last couple of weeks, the entire VT delegation working on migrant labor issues. Met with ICE, felt better. Senator Sanders very concerned about the issue and making sure farmers and workers felt ok.

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## Other Business

- Pam Stefanek (OCNRCD)....town ditches interfacing with farm fields. Town (Shoreham) proposal to put in projects to deal with stormwater from roads onto farm fields. Grant funding through OCNRCD and the town. Would need to be in town right of way. Could apply through ERP funds. Need to identify the problems. Could be county-wide. CD meeting next Tuesday (4/11/17).
- Dairy Improvement Grants due May 17<sup>th</sup>. St. Albans & DFA members only.
- WLEB: Limited funds this year (\$800K funded this year). Less categories this year. Caps were lower. 65% for farm businesses/35% for technical service providers. Looking like continued support and perhaps some more funding in the new budget. Sec. Tebbits taking a more active role on board.
- Tom B. EnSave. Based in Richmond, lots of work outside of VT...leading provider of energy audits (and some implementation). Help states create programs also. SASCo working to expand services available. Energy efficiency implementation, solar installation, manure solid separation, anaerobic digesters, etc. Act as a facilitator to issue RFPs and get bids on behalf of farms. Transfer most of the cost of that service to the vendors. Farmers can end up paying a premium if they don't have a competitive bid process. 150kw size (500-600 cows). 30% tax credit secured for interested farm. Vermont has best option for incentives/funding mechanism. Franklin County has additional tax credits.
- Mike Pyle...what is our stance on labor. How do we help each other with a network of employees and standard practices that are above board? Erica...David Chapelle.
- Eric....Thank you

**REMINDER: NRCS EQIP applications for projects to be completed in 2017 are due by April 14<sup>th</sup>!**  
**Applications received after that date will not be funded until 2018.**

**12:06 Motion ADJOURN Meeting: Eric Clifford**

**Second: Brian Kemp**

**Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – May 3, 2017**