

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Wednesday, July 3, 2019

UVM Extension Office

23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



Directors Business Meeting

In attendance: David Conant, Eric Clifford, Rachel Orr, Jeff Carter, Kirsten Workman, Brian Kemp, Marie Audet, George Foster

9:30 am Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

Kirsten reviewed the minutes from the June meeting.

Motion to approve June Minutes: Eric Clifford

Second: David Conant

Discussion:

Passed (6/0/0)

Membership Applications

Kirsten Workman

Addison County Chamber of Commerce (Rob Carter) – membership trade

Motion to trade memberships with Addison County Chamber: David Conant

Second: Eric Clifford

Discussion: Eric mentioned the Lake Champlain Chamber young professionals...perhaps do the same thing if this works out.

Passed (6/0/0)

Jed Davis - the idea of reciprocal memberships...member of one, member of all? Facilitate broader communication between groups. Lorenzo...and keeping message consistent so folks don't hear a different message. David suggested we talk to other boards and gauge interest.

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

Jeff presented the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss statement (YTD through July 3rd). Holding steady on balance sheet. \$25K of it is for CWIP grant. Net income from P&L is mostly for upcoming salary expenses for salary to complete grant tasks.

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: George Foster

Second: Brian Kemp

Discussion:

Passed (7/0/0)

Strategic Plan (Review and Discussion)

All

Potential proposal for CWIP capacity building could provide funding to help. We should apply.

Job Description

ADD NOTES FROM SLIDES

CIG Grant Proposal (Subcontract)

Jeff Carter

Jeff described a National CIG grant proposal to do on-farm research on Soil Health Management Systems. He is proposing that CVFC be a subcontractor that would make the incentive payments to the producers who participate. Part of a national movement to standardize soil health measurement.

Motion to approve accepting the sub-award: Eric Clifford

Second: Marie Audet

Discussion:

Passed (7/0/0)

Rural Vermont Request

Kirsten/Marie/Brian

Graham is asking if CVFC would be interested in participating in Statehouse to Farmhouse events. Marie attended the event last year and had a good impression. She also mentioned she has appreciated his approach about being more inclusive in his participation in the Dairy Water Quality Collaborative.

Interested in finding out more...Kirsten will reach out for more detail.

10:30 am Motion to adjourn Directors meeting and move to regular meeting: Eric Clifford

Second: Marie Audet

Updates and Discussion

Additional in attendance: George Tucker, Zapata Courage, Marli Rupe

Presidents Report

Lisa @ FSA – PLEASE DO YOUR CROP REPORTING. Due on July 15th, but they need time to correct and verify things, so come in by Monday, July 8th if possible

Program Reports

Jeff (Nate out of town)

CWIP Grant Update - Crop Patrols

Future...grassed waterways (and Buffers) at Brian Kemp's (August)

Tile Drainage Sampling

Sampling continues, but we don't have spring data back

Joshua Faulkner project in Panton is getting installed (former site will continue some tile sampling still)

Addison County Field Days – Drill Demo

Daily demos near the Sheep Barn

Crops Exhibit

Calf Hutch

Crop Insurance – Prevented Planting Update

Jeff

Reporting Deadlines – July 7th last day for reporting prevented planting acres

Planting Corn on prevented planting acres as a cover crop for 2019:

- 40,000 plants per acre (or more) population
- Encourage non-gmo varieties
- Narrow row conditions <30-inch rows
- Wouldn't meet criteria for EQIP cover crop

You can also plant other cover crops (sorghum, alternative

Fall – reporting cover crop to FSA. They will also be helping collect data on priority watersheds as a pilot for collecting conservation practices during crop reporting. Pilot project for just priority watersheds (east creek, mckenzie, jewitt, rock river, etc).

[Cover Crop Harvest Allowances - changes for 2019](#)

Funding Updates

VAAF [Clean Water Funding RFP](#)

Jeff

- Capacity building
- Collecting conservation practice adoption

VAAF [Farm Agronomic Practice](#) Funding – new

Kirsten

Changes to note regarding the FY2020 FAP program include:

- Maximum funding per farm operation increased from \$5,000 to \$8,000
- Drilled cover cropping rates increased from \$40 to \$45
- **COVER CROPPING APPLICATIONS DUE AUGUST 1! – recommended seeding dates apply (broadcast 10/1 and drilled 10/15)!**
- Strip cropping and cross slope tillage are no longer eligible practices under this program due to extremely limited number of applications
- Rotational Grazing is now an eligible practice under FAP - please see factsheet for program requirements, and note that a copy of the applicants grazing plan must be included in the application.
- This year will be the last year the Agency will provide funding for aeration tillage.

If you have questions, or are working with a producer who has questions about this program, feel free to refer them to Clark Parmelee 802-661-8284 or myself (802-622-4098).

SEND TO CVFC LIST – all funding opportunities

VHCB [Water Quality Grants for Farmers](#)

Kirsten

The Vermont Farm & Forest Viability Program, a program of the Vermont Housing & Conservation Board, has Water Quality grant funds available for farmers to complete capital improvement projects. We will have two application rounds in the coming year, with deadlines of:

- Friday, November 8, 2019
- Friday, February 7, 2020

Eligible farmers can apply for \$5,000 to \$40,000 in water quality grant funds for projects which help farmers improve water quality, and are open to any Vermont farm who meets our eligibility criteria. Matching funds are required and may include federal or state grants as well as farmer cash, loans, and labor. Application materials will be available on our website by late summer at www.vhcb.org/wqg

Dairy Water Quality Collaborative Recap & Next Steps

Marie

CLF, VNRC all in attendance. Good introductions. Many folks do not know what farmers are doing. The graphs (from Jeff) showing practice adoption was shared is very helpful. The next meeting (July 31st) will be at Cabot and will be the environmental groups sharing their perspectives. Not ready for public vision statement...not sure where this may go.

Bruce Lisman gave her an update...Beth Pearce receptive. We need to tell Vermonters in a big way what's being done. Wants to put money into visible public projects, has ideas from other parts of the country.

Nick (VLT)/VHCB – should we give him some topics to touch on when he comes. They need agriculture to be profitable. **Follow up with him for a September meeting.**

Need to also invite the new CLF “Lake Keeper” when they are hired (Rebekah Weber is no longer at CLF)

Ecosystem Services Update

Jeff/Kirsten

Chuck Ross continues to have periodic conversations. Not as many people participating. Gund Institute has been talking with us.

LandStream...FWA is supposed to be drafting a letter to share.

Innovation Center for US Dairy initiative to measure ES. Could we tie into that? There are positive messages to share in Dairy...especially environmental. 'Showcase Dairies' that show dairies that have a net positive benefit to environment.

High Meadows Fund was a bust. No word from Leahy

VAAFM has an RFP out for study group...Meet in August, report by January (quick turnaround).

Jon Winston – WinRock (proposal for VT CIG PES)

Otter Creek Wetland Reclassification

Jeff/Brian

The Otter Creek wetland complex is being proposed for reclassification to a Class 1 wetland (15,000 acres stretching from Cornwall to Brandon). This would have implications such as larger buffer requirements. Driven by the Cornwall and Salisbury Conservation Commissions. Petition signed by folks in all the towns included in the Otter Creek wetland complex to send to state. Commissions wanted the Town Select Boards on board, most have asked that they talk to landowners first. It can move forward with or without select board approval.

Zapata Courage – a lot of inaccurate information going around. Fallow requirement, for example is not just one year. Cornwall and Salisbury came to DEC

Now a steering committee formed. Conservation Commissions, individual citizens.

500+ landowners, 15 miles, 15,000 acres, 8 towns....

The reclassification

Why? Recognize the floodwater storage. Is there any added benefit to the reclassification?

Are there any unintended consequences? Improving/maintaining crossings, access roads

A lot of ambiguity...are these 'farming' activities or not?

New rules were updated to include practices like animal trails/walkway

NRGP not being appealed by VDPA anymore, but a standing one from a municipality (for stormwater)...if holds will be addressed in November.

THIS SUMMER ONLY: staff member (Alexis) to complete delineations for water quality practices (not the whole farm), non-regulatory, interpret NRG. Funded/allowed through November 1st. alexis.degrabiele@vermont.gov (Zapata.courage@vermont.gov)

Brian...is NRCS still training with State? NRCS uses Food Security Act guidelines, which don't always match with State/Army Corps agree with. They are working to better understand how they each make decisions. Biggest areas of discrepancy are in conversions.

Flat \$200 fee + \$240 administrative fee (got rid of per square foot fee). Does not include requirements/fees related to Army Corps issues. Anytime you put 'fill' in a wetland (new). It is allowable to maintain/improve/replace infrastructure.

David...its to the point when there is any possible impact, we feel like we need to hire an engineer.

Changes – 50-foot buffer increases to 100-feet. If it is currently farmed (since 1990). Exemptions remain the same...but if you want a change in use away from food/forage production then it would be jurisdictional. No permanent structures in the wetland. Can't be in the buffer without a permit (and compelling justification of health and safety).

ANR is not pushing this...coming from commission

Legislature also enacting legislation...RAPs need to be amended to include wetland language.

Marli – how do we get the word out to farmers about the resources available to figure these things out without contention?

Can we mail out the 'notice' from Marli? Yes...Marli will update resources and get them to us for distribution.

Host a field day that gives a real life example.

Summer Work Group (meeting in August) for legislature to try and come up with a bill for January (get through the disagreement between agencies). If we want to be involved in that group, reach out to legislators.

September 17, 18, 19 – VAAFAM Legislative Bus Tours on farms. Include a wetland project.

Discussion with Marli Rupe, Agency of Natural Resources Ag Water Quality Section Chief

Marli will join us to discuss ANR's point of view on the currently contested '[Non-reporting General Wetlands Permit](#)' and wants to hear from farmers how they can have better relationship and why farmers are resistant to working with ANR. She also wants examples of bottlenecks in this process.

12:25 ADJOURN Meeting

Reminder: Next CVFC Board of Directors Meeting – TBD August BBQ

Upcoming Dates:

July 25th – Field Day at Borderview Research Farm