

Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition, Inc.

Tuesday, September 4, 2018
UVM Extension Office
23 Pond Lane, Middlebury, VT



Directors Business Meeting

Attendance: Louise Waterman, David Conant, Eric Clifford, Ben Dykema, Ray Brands, Chase Goodrich, Loren Wood, Rachel Orr, Lorenzo Whitcomb, Nate Severy, Jeff Carter, Brian Kemp, Kirsten Workman, Marie Audet, Jonas Hastings

11:20 Call to order & President's Report Brian Kemp

Secretary Report Kirsten Workman

There was no August Meeting, BBQ at Cliffords' camp. Kirsten reviewed the July minutes.

Motion to approve July minutes: Chase Goodrich

Second: Lorenzo

Discussion: none

Passed (8/0/0)

Membership Applications Kirsten Workman

Class 1: Vermont Farmer Member

Lyn DesMaris (Brandon, VT)

**submitted as a renewal...perhaps by mistake?*

Motion to approve membership application as presented Ben Dykema

Second: Rachel Orr

Discussion:

Passed (9/0/0)

Treasurer Report Jeff Carter

Jeff presented year to date Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss Statements through September 4, 2018. Several grants are wrapped up, final payments received and final reports submitted. Annual Meeting always a big ticket item, contract services (legislative updates, meals for events, etc), payroll, insurance.

Workers Comp insurance audit completed.

Jeff also presented a breakout for the VAAF-M-CWIP grant specifically.

- Additional donations to support DISC Leadership training
- Scope of work attached (w/ deliverables)
- 4 years of funding, broken up into 6-month reporting/funding periods

Motion to approve Treasurer's Report: Loren Wood

Second: Eric Clifford

Discussion:

Passed (9/0/0)

Grants Update

Jeff Carter/Nate Severy/Louise Waterman

Louise discussed budget and details for leadership training

- \$18,000 of CWIP funding for leadership development, need \$5000 more
- Asking CVFC to kick in
- Vermont Feed Dealers, Phoenix Feeds, Cabot already paid
- Co-Op Insurance and Yankee Farm Credit committed
- No from Cargill, no from NEDP (complicated)
- Also asked Tom Eaton, Poulin, Vermont Dairy Promotion, Lawes Ag, St. Albans co-op
- Otter Creek Brewing reimbursing beer for social, networking, dinner
- General membership training has 30 spaces (\$6000)
- Still need \$4000 dollars from CVFC budget
 - Should we wait for general DISC training until we have the funding?
 - Can we gauge the interest from membership now?
 - Perhaps Vermont Community Foundation has some funding?
- **ACTION**: check with contractor about scheduling, tentative/changes, see how many members we can get committed, and see if we can adjust funding to match scheduling.
- **Dates:**
- 11-7: DISC Leadership Training for Directors (after board meeting)
- 12-5: Strategic Planning Meeting (Directors) 1:00 – 5:00
- 12-13: Membership DISC Leadership Training, followed by dinner, networking, social

Louise will be ending her position at the end of the year (December 2018)

Nate discussed outreach and education efforts

- August 3rd Workshop:
 - 65 people, 48 were farmers
 - Middlebury Rec Center and Foster Bros. Farm
 - Demonstrated injector
 - Brian and Marie thought it was very good. Presentations were excellent. Would have been good to have coverage of the event
- Working with Becky Maden on some veg cover crop field walks
 - Elmer Farm (Middlebury)
 - Woods Market Garden (Brandon)
 - Dates TBA...late September/early October
- Working with Chery Cesario on workshop with Joe Hescoock about irrigation on pasture/hay crops
 - Economics
 - Feasibility
 - Forage sampling, irrigation records, fuel usage, labor
 - Fact Sheet/Case Study
- Other UVM workshops
 - Gypsum soil ammendments
 - Fall cover cropping and drill demo/how to

October Meeting Guests

Jeff Carter/Kirsten Workman

- Ian Hartman, VHCB Outreach & Partnerships Coordinator
- Abe Collins, LandStream

- Eric...have a written plan ahead of time then limit the 'meeting' time
- A 'policy' that we need a written summary
- Invite other guests to help us ask good questions
- 25 minutes...at the end if it goes over people can stay and have conversations

Events, Updates, Etc.

All

- Addison Co. Ag Showcase – Bourdeau 9/6/18
 - Please stop by the booth and chat with folks
 - 10:00 – 2:00
- Vegetable – Cover Crop Field Walks in conjunction with VVBG
- Chris Bray has requested to meet with the CVFC.
 - Wanted to go over Citizens Right of Action (he has amended it)
 - Welcome to present us something in writing. Not committed
- RAP Development Committee Survey about Act 250
- Dairy WQ Committee Meeting in August had lots of Addison County input from farmers, TSPsshould
- NRCS Acting State Conservation (Chad) sent a thank you from our annual meeting, proud that Vermont farmers were being proactive, not reactive.
- Annual Meeting for Vermont Community Foundation is September 13, 2018 at AC Field Days
- Reach out to Joe Tisbert about joining VT Farm Bureau

Motion to adjourn: Ray Brands

Second: Loren Wood

Passed (10/0/0)

Meeting with VAAFAM Leadership

Additional Attendance: *Cheryl Cesario, Terry Norris, Chanin Hill, Kristin Williams, Lyn Cole, Alyson Eastman, Ryan Patch, Anson Tebbetts, Pamela Stefanek, Bill Kipp, Eugene Audet, Ed Schillawski, George Tucker*

12:30 pm

VAAFAM Updates and Leadership Structure

We will get an update on leadership staff transitions, priorities for the agency moving forward and a recap of the legislative session and its implications on agriculture in Vermont.

Legislative session recap (Sec. Tebbetts):

- Things were a bit touch for a while
- Citizens Right of Action did not go through.
- Thank you to Deputy Alyson Eastman, Ryan Patch for hard work to keep things in check, building coalitions
- Still on the table....next year's session. Rep. Deen has retired (chair of NR committee).
- Putting together legislative priorities
- Not sure where administration will go with position on fees
- Climate change and how farmers are part of

Leadership Changes

- Laura DiPietro now leads Water Quality Division
- Ryan Patch is Deputy Director
- Other shifting...Clarice Cutler replacing Mary Montour. Judson Peck replacing some old position

Next Week...Middlebury is Capital for the Day...Tuesday, September 11th

- Sunrise Orchards hosting meet & greet around lunch hour
- Agenda

September 26th...Chittenden County

Revisit Topics from Previous Meetings

- Communication between enforcement/inspection staff and farmers
 - Alarming letters/communication
 - Could be more specific, one on one, personal as opposed to corrective action notices via registered mail.
 - Don't need to be put on a pedestal, but a more personal
 - Follow-up after inspections...during an inspection issues seem no big deal, but then followed up with formal requests for 'plans of action'.
 - Things seem fine, and then you get "the badge and gun" approach.
 - Before a formal notice, a phone call/visit so we know what's coming
 - LAURA: we haven't been giving courtesy calls before Corrective Action Letter. We do try and deal with things with things in the field if possible.
 - LAURA: when there are records requests there needs to be documentation of follow-through. Need to be able to show that farmers are taking the steps to meet the RAPs.
 - Pamela...are we using the enforcement process to document P reduction for TMDL? Is the Agency tracking reductions in other ways. LAURA: for TMDL we need to show compliance. EPA has already modeled the impact. PAMELA: does the agency have a

set number of CALs? Ryan...no, the goal is compliance. The CAL is built to be a fulcrum to fix compliance issues before requiring fines and enforcement.

- Tile Drainage
 - LCAR...pressure to have shapefiles, we're not getting them.
 - Legislative vs. Rulemaking process.
 - Thursday meeting with LCAR to present the latest draft of RAPs with new tile language
 - 7 changes...some in other sections (ie. field stacking)
 - Definition
 - 100 ft buffer field stacking
 - 100 ft from unimproved barnyards
 - 200 ft from vegetative treatment areas
 - Rodent guards
 - No NEW surface inlets (doesn't include diversion ditches, with permission)
 - 25-foot spreading buffer from existing surface inlets.
 - CLF was intent on sampling, outlet locations, requirement to reopen RAPs every 5 years
 - Tile Drainage Advisory Group reconvening this winter. Once data is in and aggregated.
- Getting more policy makers on farms...Gov. Scott, Legislators, DEC leadership, etc
 - Please try and make it to the meet & greet 12:15 to 1:30m@ Sunrise Orchard on 9/11
- CHERYL: milk sample results are taking a long time to come back (3 weeks or more) (ie. St. Albans Co-Op), hard to make management adjustments
- RAP Development Committee
 - Restarting after fall harvest season
 - NMP commission
 - Legislature issues
- Stormwater and Nuisance (traffic, odor, noise) Plans...still waiting for guidance?
 - If there is a date required, the permit should be changed
 - New permits have language saying to wait for guidance
 - Hoping to go through the Pivot process, not a lot of participation...it has been paused
 - NMPs are a big part...needed to pulled out from the permitting process?
 - Still on hold
- RAP revisions...schedule, items for revision, etc.
 - Only things changed were related to tile drainage...going to LCAR this week (see Tile Drainage)
- Partner Database
 - Had to revise to use without NRCS data
 - Mike Middleman left and created further delay
 - Goal was September, pushed back to later in the fall
 - Should we also be tracking unfunded practices that don't get implemented due to lack of funding? In addition the practices that get implemented despite lack of funding.
- LFO/MFO Permit Revisions
 - RFP for a consultant to help the agency for simpler Nutrient Management Plans. Enable farmers to have more flexibility on a field-by-field basis. Model it and justify that it will meet requirements. Two bids...and includes a report on the future of farming in VT (required by Leg.). Will take at least a year.
 - Then back to LFO
- Enforcement Updates
- Feed Program Reports no longer available and/or current (and analysis/enforcement)
 - Cary says its there. Did it move?

- Last online version was 2012
- Farmer example...6 months of testing showed significant discrepancies in protein.
- Local field reps
- Fines are low
- LAURA...feed program is not set up fertilizer
- Wetland General Permit
 - A lot of discussion the last
 - Treading water on changes
 - Governor's office directed ANR to remove Ag from the general permit
 - Would like to come up with an agreement before the session starts
 - Hoping to do better working with ANR on this issue
 - Probably headed to legislation
 - Need something practical/fair
 - After CVFC sent letter to Governor's office, Marli Rupe called Brian. He invited them on the farm and showed how it could impact him. Canceled an NRCS contract to improve crossings. Being told it will be 'good'.
 - Zero cost & non-reporting?...but it requires delineation, which has a cost.
 - The statue has been there since 1990s...what is the problem? Different interpretations.
 - Pause and think about unintended consequences.
 - If we can't get understanding from ANR, likely will need legislation
 - ANR has jurisdiction over presumptive wetlands....all of Addison County? Change of use gets hairy. A no-cost permit is really expensive if you don't get the permit first.
 - Benefits to water quality (Conservation Practices) are getting dis-incentivized
 - ANR may feel like if they permit an activity, it gives you protection
 - What is a farming activity?
 - What permits should be required?
 - Avoid putting numbers....5000 sq. ft.
 - HARVEY: need a statutory change in what constitutes a farming activity. Wetland definition is too narrow. We need to bring the farming community together to figure it out. Hopes leadership takes into account the complexities of the issue and comes to a good decision. Ag does not get rid of all the benefits of a wetland – infiltration, water storage, etc.
 - BEN: Does/Do landowner rights or right to farm have any implications here? Is it just about money? LAURA...doesn't believe it is about money. 78% of wetlands were disturbed. One the only ways they see to get it back is from ag....too late for development.
- FOIA requests
 - Law firm out of Manchester, VT requesting 'everything' about LFOs
 - CLF and Vermont Nat. Resource Council...all farms since 2016, how VAAFM refers cases to ANR (and all instances). Includes communications between VAAFM/ANR, inspection reports.
 - SO MUCH time spent on these requests takes away from doing the actual work if improving water quality
 - They have to be publicly posted – both the request and the resulting information (online)...This is a new process to be applied across all agencies.
 - First person to request information has to pay for it.
- Next revision of RAPs will include a NMP TSP certification program, housekeeping changes for language clarity. Preliminary work over the winter, draft, then next winter implementation

New & Emerging Issues

- Water issues? Let Agency know, they might be able provide assistance.
- Pricing issues...encourage you to go to website and make comments.
<https://dairyproposals2018.com/>
- USDA... 12 cents/cw on half of production assistance
- MARIE...opportunity. 7 days article about brewery waste clogging up sewage system....how can we can connect with digesters. Need to pay for transportation.
- Measuring co-benefits is important
- Next CEAP....October 2018. Priorities are: precision ag, conservation tillage equipment, cover cropping management equipment, manure, up to 90% cost share funding. Will need detailed bids.

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