



Champlain Valley Farmer Coalition Inc.

Wednesday, May 5, 2021

Virtual/Remote Meeting

Meeting Minutes

In attendance: Brian Kemp, Kirsten Workman, Eric Clifford, Jeff Carter, Marie Audet, John Roberts, Loren Wood, Darren Ucinowicz, George Foster, Matthew Biette, Lorenzo Whitcomb, David Conant, Ben Dykema, Ryan Carabeau, Chuck Farr, Jed Rubin

9:30 am Directors & Membership Business Meeting

9:32 Call to order & President's Report

Brian Kemp

PES working group meeting twice month.

Breaking out into working groups – soil health, economics, program development. Farmer in each one. Brian in soil health, Paul Doton in Economics, Scott Magnan in program dev.

Soil health priorities – flood mitigation rising to the top of the list

Economics – where will money come from. Not a lot of excitement for carbon credits

Work through June, with recommendation to legislature by then. Alyson Eastman mentioned they have money to help fund it. Hoping for the pilot.

Secretary Report

Kirsten Workman

- Review and approve April meeting minutes (*attached*)
- Approve Membership applications
 - *None received this month*

Motion to approve April minutes: Marie Audet

Second: Brian Kemp

Discussion: add CAFO notes to the minutes

Passed (7/0/0)

Treasurer Report

Jeff Carter

- Review April financial reports (*attached*)

Motion to approve April Treasurer's report: George Foster

Second: Loren Wood

Discussion: none

Passed (8/0/0)

Communications Update

John Roberts (for Sarah Audet)

- CVFC Communications Update
 - John read Sarah's report (below)*
 - Farmer Forum will be added to the website.*

April Projects

- Added embedded events calendar to website with daily, weekly, and monthly views. Added community events calendar functionality so other organizations with events/grant deadlines

related to agriculture, water quality, soil health, climate change, and the environment can submit to the calendar (posts are moderated by me to ensure they meet the standards). As appropriate, a selection of events/grants deadlines will be posted to CVFC social media and included in the e-newsletter.

- Earth Day social media campaign that emphasized that clean water, healthy soil, and thriving agriculture is CVFC's mission on Earth Day and every day. Throughout the day, re-posted CVFC stories about No. Williston Cattle Co., Kayhart Brothers, and Smith Family Farm to illustrate farmers' efforts.
- Interview and story with Chase Goodrich published on April 27
- Monthly E-newsletter distributed on April 28
- Collaborating with WVTk on public education campaign. On a seasonal basis, CVFC will run ads on WVTk highlighting an agricultural practice that supports water quality and soil health. The ads will drive listeners to the CVFC website to learn more. John will then do a 10-15 minute on-air interview to discuss what's happening on farms that season and what farmers are doing to be good stewards of the environment. WVTk will provide CVFC with the recording to share on social media, website, etc. For May/June, the highlighted practice in the ad is manure injection. The interview will focus on no-till corn planting, rotational grazing, and manure injection. WVTk is an enthusiastic partner in this campaign.
- Ongoing member survey regarding interest in private online forum to share resources and support.

May Projects

- #Farm24VT is one week away! 60+ participating farmers, food producers, and agribusinesses. 23 hours (and counting!) worth of prizes to give away. Focus right now is on building audience through big advertising push and earned media (newspaper articles, television interviews, etc.).
- Develop and launch online forum
- Write a first draft of the June print newsletter
- Farmer story

Farm24VT Update – May 12, 2021

- If you haven't signed to participate or follow along, you can go here: <https://farm24vt.com/>
- Governor will sign and announce a proclamation that May 12th is Farm24VT Day!

Executive Director Report

John Roberts

- ISSUES Updates (**new/emerging issues*)
 - Water Quality Funding – VAAFM
Rooms & meals tax has been directed to CW \$\$, including BMP program. Legislature wants to use it for other projects, replace it with ARPA (federal relief \$\$). VAAFM doesn't believe that is actually an allowable expense. Committed to EPA to have a designated source of funding for ag WQ projects VAAFM is looking for farmers who have BMP projects slated, who this would impact and possibly do a media story. Brian mentioned his BMP project got turned down because of budget cuts. Loren Wood had several projects not get funded through BMP, they were able to get it done through EQIP.
 - Regulatory Certainty Discussions
 - CAFO (MFO)

Submitted letter/input. No formal response from ANR. We were the only organized group of farmers that submitted. Not a huge number of overall responses. There are still concerns (for us) why now, why this?

John is going to talk to EPA directly to see if they are pushing this directly.

He isn't sure what the final timeline is.

Marie...I strongly encourage writing a progressive letter that we would be proud to even get picked up by the media. Data are showing we are making improvements. Not saying we don't want to be regulated, but that we are making progress and want to continue being able to make that

David...feeling like we're being forced to make a choice – which is very uncomfortable. Would like to see that clarified. Why do we need to choose who our regulator is. The two agencies are not working well enough together to be able to be effective...not sure how that could impact this.

John will reach out to Scott Magnan for a discussion

Darren...EPA updates CAFO every 5 years. ANR is hoping to make the CAFO permit as usable as possible so that farmers do have an alternative to the current system (that has issues)

Brian...still caught in the middle, that is the frustrating part. Not knowing if a current 'acceptable' situation would not be acceptable with CAFO is concerning. Also encouraged John to reach out and share our ED capacity to move it forward.

- Vermont Climate Council
- Climate Economic Action Council (CEAC) - Addison Co.
- Farmer Voices (formerly Dairy Water Collaborative)

Education/Outreach Update

Kirsten Workman/Jeff Carter

Herbicide Education for Farmer Members – 3-part series

1. **4/28/21** - Glyphosate & Atrazine basics (Dwight Lingenfelter, PSU Extension)
2. **TODAY** - Herbicide & Sustainable Agriculture - Communicating to the public about the pros/cons of herbicides in our cropping systems and the role they play in sustainable agriculture. (*Dr. Terence Bradshaw, UVM*)
3. **5/19/2021** - Vermont Agency of Agriculture's role in herbicide use in VT – understanding how they track herbicide use, monitoring for ground and surface water contamination, and regulatory requirements for herbicide use in VT (*Doug Johnstone, VAAFM*)

Other Updates:

All

- DON'T MISS #FARM24VT on MAY 12th!!!
- Dairy Sustainability Alliance on Wed, May 19th from 11am-3:30pm ET. Attendance is free of charge but registration is required:

<http://alliancemeeting.usdairy.com/#/Summary>

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ADJOURN Meeting - Next Meeting...June 2nd, 2021