

## **Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance**

January 25<sup>th</sup>, 2016

USDA Service Center Conference Room

10:00am-12:00pm

Present: Paul Doton, Beth Kennett, Amy Richardson, Ed MacGlaflin, Jason Johnson, Katherine Adams, Linda Corse, Steven Stocking, Tom Beaudry, Walter Gladstone, Jed Davis, Mary Childs

### **10:00am-11:00am**

#### *General Business*

The first CRWFA board of directors meeting started with a roundtable of introductions, donuts, and coffee.

Meeting minutes from the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting were reviewed.

Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary were elected. Below is a list of the positions and respective directors.

Chair: Paul Doton

Vice Chair: Tom Beaudry

Treasurer: Linda Corse

Secretary: Beth Kennett

#### *By Laws*

Jed Davis facilitated a discussion following up on the draft By Laws from the January 13<sup>th</sup> meeting. Below are highlights from the conversation. A final draft will be reviewed and approved at the next director meeting.

- Article III. Office- A place of business needs to be identified. See notes under “Structure”
- Article IV. Members-Definition of “farmer”- Provide a printed definition of a “farmer” in the bylaws, or make one available to maintain proper membership and focus of the group.
- Article V. Board of Directors- The group discussed voting board members and non-voting board members. This discussion focused on the flexibility of allowing non-voting members to serve in positions on the board. The group voted to allow non-voting members to be nominated to assistant positions only.
  - Mary Childs, White River NRCD, was elected as assistant to the secretary and treasurer

### **11:00am-12:00pm**

#### *Goals and Mission*

Jed Davis, Paul Doton, and Mary Childs organized a group activity to prioritize and identify the CRWFA mission and goals. Board of directors were tasked with placing colored sticky notes according to priority on each goal sheet. The activity identified the following as the top 3 goals for the alliance:

1. Build a cohesive group representing a broad spectrum of agricultural operations and community groups to proactively address environmental issues, especially water quality, in the Connecticut River Watershed.

2. Assist in implementing innovative farming practices through education and possible funding sources.
3. Provide farmers with a support network in the areas of legislative presence, media exposure and social media with collaborate with other organizations to more effectively achieve these goals.

#### *Document Sharing*

Mary presented Google Drive as an option for storing and sharing CRWFA documents. The directors asked to limit the “editing” ability to only a few directors. Currently, Paul, Jed, Mary, and Beth have editing privileges. Mary will share the google drive link with directors.

#### *Support Structure*

The directors spent quality time discussing the legal structure of the alliance. Background was given on the farmer’s coalition and alliances in the Lake Champlain watershed. One alliance acts as a lobbying group, while the other functions under the operations of grants and projects. This is an important distinction in identifying the CRWFA, and what legal entity to apply for. The general consensus was the CRWFA does not intend to become a lobbying group, but would rather support outreach, education, project implementation, etc., through grants.

The next step in formalizing the CRWFA is registering as a legal entity. One requirement is a place of business address. The group brainstormed several possible places and organizations that would allow the CRWFA to use their place of business. Below is a list of organizations that were discussed:

- White River NRCD (tabled as connection with government may not be ideal)
- Billings Farm (Jason Johnson)
- Yankee Farm Credit (Walter Gladstone)
- Vital Communities (Amy Richardson) *\*\*\*Please correct name, did not write it down\*\*\**
- UVM Extension

Directors will reach out to the organizations to learn more about the pros and cons of partnering with each group. Each will report back in the next board of directors meeting.

Paul discussed a CRWFA logo briefly. Due to time the subject will be re-visited at the next board meeting.

The next board of directors meeting will be Tuesday, February 9<sup>th</sup> 10:00am-12:00pm at the USDA service center conference room.

Meeting adjourned 12:05pm.

Respectfully submitted,  
Mary Childs