

**Connecticut River Watershed Farmers Alliance Board Meeting**  
**11am-1pm October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2016 at the WRJ USDA Service Center**

Board present: Paul Doton, Steve Stocking, Beth Kennet, Linda Corse, Jed Davis, Bill Emmons

Members present: Kevin Kaija, Rob Howe

WRNRCD Representative: Marina Welch, taking minutes

UVM Ext. Representative: Dan Hudson

*Welcome at 11:10am*

**General Board Discussion**

Election of Vice Chair-

Tom Beaudry had stepped down and position has been open. Asked if the board should wait for the annual meeting in January. Motion was made to nominate Bill Emmons.

Bill Emmons elected as Vice Chair. Unanimous. Accepted

Linda Corse with the Treasurer report-

Current balance: \$965.01

Last statement balance: \$1,267.23

Mailbox fee, stamps, Vermont filing fee, four members have joined since the last meeting (\$200 in dues)

**Action:** Need resolution to Citizens Bank for signature authority for Marina Welch

Report accepted.

New Members to vote on: Robert Bassett, Jenn Colby, Ted Robbins, Rob Wheeler

Accepted.

Class 4 advisory members to vote on: Dan Hudson with UVM Ext., Marina Welch with White River NRCD, Carl Majewski with UNH Ext.

Accepted.

Update on web design from Beth Kennet- still in the works

**Action:** Beth will check into a payment question from Linda regarding domain name fee through 'Go Daddy' search engine

**Discussion on Agency of Ag Grant-Organizational Development category**

-Will be a 2 year timeline

-Note made that an organization has to have operational documents for non-profit status-board accepted to include this in the proposal

-Discussion on needed trainings: Laura Hardy is covering PR, yes to grant writing, yes to budgeting, maybe to board cooperation, maybe to PII, general fund pool for trainings that board members are interested in, discussion of acronyms (put in handbook?)

-Equipment CRWFA might want? Rainfall simulator? Stream table? Use funds as leverage to go to another private donation for a piece of equipment? Eventual fundraiser?

-Ask for a pool of funds to go towards an eventual match. Tine weeder air seeder? Soil probes to lend out? Possible amount of \$5,000 would need to be used by the end of the grant agreement in partnership with other organizations towards the purchase of a piece of equipment.

-Discussion on events to include in the proposal: partnering with UVM to do the winter series 'Agronomy Plus'? Could discuss things like mastitis, farm management, succession planning. Everybody is in every session, not a break out work session. CRWFA would be helpful to talk about what farmers want to learn about. Board decided that 5 events per year as a goal is reasonable.

Dan made mention that two events are coming up in November in NH. The board wants to host an event in NH through proposal which there would be funding for.

-Notes on wording in proposal: eliminate 'dairy', need to change sentence about Vermont's clean waters to 'enhance' 'improve' watershed

-Other goals to include in deliverables:

Currently 26 members. Goal of 50 members in 2 years.

Goal of 200 farms on mailing list.

Partner resource assessment-part of board education (who is where, how does CRWFA tie in)

**Action:** Marina will send out a template for a support letter for the board. Marina will write a WRNRCD support letter. Dan will do one for UVM Ext. Eliza will write one for WCNRCD.

### **Ryan Patch visit to discuss Environmental Stewardship Program at 12:30pm**

-Been creating for 3 years at the request of farmers. A cooperation between UVM Ext, NRCS, DEC, LCBP, VACD, the Districts, and Agency of Ag. It's been a discussion on strategies to meet water quality goals in state. It's a program that recognizes and incentivizes farms that go above and beyond.

-Pilot program rolled out by the end of the year. 1-2 years long. It will solicit applications of all types and sizes of farms throughout state. Natural resource assessments will occur documenting baseline conditions.

Output—if farmers meet quality criteria in many categories, they can be certified through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party that they are an environmental steward farm. It's just recognition that they are implementing the plan developed through this program. They will receive a sign to put up on their property and might be recognized through another event or through a publication.

-Questions/Concerns:

-Does difficulty of the land give a farmer a boost when competing with a farm that's on flat land? *Capacity of soil compared to its use will be looked at.*

-Is there a fee? *No fee for pilot program. Going forward, some of the costs might be on the farmer. But not sure yet.*

-Is this a requirement from the EPA? *They have demonstrated to EPA that this is happening, but it's not required by them.*

-Is there a limit to the number of farms? *Not sure on a number cap. The pilot program will work with 10-12 farms doing assessments. Not all will get recognition.*

-This is similar to other recognition programs that don't give out awards/plaques. Is this a 'leave me alone' award? *This isn't an award. It's an ongoing recognition and branding program for public/neighbors rather than to boost sales. It could be looked at as a leave me alone sign for those that are getting pressure from neighbors/public.*

-Why isn't there just recognition for those farms that are meeting the RAPs? *Perhaps there will be bronze, silver, and gold levels depending on if they are meeting the RAPs or going above.*

**Upcoming Dates**

November 5<sup>th</sup>-Conservation District meeting in Burlington-Linda could go with guidance

November 10<sup>th</sup>-White River NRCD Annual Dinner- maybe Bill will attend

November 16<sup>th</sup>-clean water fund meeting in Montpelier

November 26<sup>th</sup>-Ben Machin's farm visit with UVM Ext. 4-6pm

November 16<sup>th</sup>-Grafton county office event: covering a few topics

November 21<sup>st</sup>-cover crop meeting at Grafton county office-then field visits

Next meeting: Thursday November 17<sup>th</sup> 10am-12pm

Annual meeting either January 10<sup>th</sup> or 17<sup>th</sup> at Public House near Quechee Gorge

*Meeting adjourned at 1:10pm*