

**MEETING OF THE  
ORWELL SELECT BOARD**

**October 25, 2010**

**7:30 p.m.**

**Town Office**

***NOT APPROVED***

**Select Board: Walker James  
Paula Barnes  
Carla Ochs  
Roland Simmons  
Miles Tudhope**

**Present: Allen R. Alger  
Robert G. Arnebold  
Glen Cousineau**

**Rep. Will Stevens  
Dennis Weyer  
Russell Young**

**Susan Ann Arnebold, Clerk**

**Following the BCA meeting, the regular Select Board meeting was called to order at 7:25 p.m. by  
Roland Simmons, Chair**

**1. CITIZENS COMMENTS.**

None.

**2. HIGHWAY REPORT.**

a. Road Foreman Report –Paula Barnes gave the report for Allen M. Alger. Jason D’Avignon will be trapping beavers for the Town. The required road signs were installed and an order for the balance of signs required will be put in this week.

Work is being done on grading and winter preparedness – plows, wings, etc. New tires will be put on the grader. A new culvert will be installed on Vail Road, Thursday. Garbage was found dumped over Old Sawmill Road and will be picked up by the Road Crew.

b. New Truck – The Road Crew went up to inspect the progress on the new truck. The delivery date is now set for about three weeks from today.

c. Access Permit Application – The Select Board reviewed an access permit submitted by Walter Phelps for Murray Road and checked by Allen M. Alger.

**Walker James moved to approve and sign an access permit for Walter Phelps for Murray Road, as presented. Paula Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed – 5 Yes 0 No**

As soon as the fee is received the permit will be mailed out.

**3. MINUTES.**

**Carla Ochs moved to accept the minutes of the regular meeting of October 11, 2010, as written. Paula Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed - 5 Yes 0 No.**

**4. PAYMENT OF BILLS.**

**Miles Tudhope moved to pay the General Fund orders in the amount of \$4,749.77, Sewer Fund orders in the amount of \$491.49, and the Town payroll. Carla Ochs seconded the motion. The motion passed - 5 Yes 0 No.**

**5. SEWER REPORT.**

Walker James stated that the old fencing at the Treatment Plant needs replacement. The cost is estimated at \$550.00. Discussion followed. The Select Board approved this repair, stating that there is adequate money in the budget for this work.

**6. TREASURER'S REPORT.****7. OLD BUSINESS.**

a. Delinquent Dog List Update – The Town Clerk reported that the warrant was served and all dogs on the unlicensed list are now licensed; no dog had to be destroyed. The Second Constable, Allen R. Alger and Animal Control Officer Dean Hanson did an excellent job.

b. Old Town Garage – The Select Board reviewed the draft of the commercial lease for the old town garage. Discussion ensued.

**Walker James moved to lease to Dennis Weyer at a rent of \$225.00 per month, the old town garage and to have the Chair sign the lease when ready. Paula Barnes seconded the motion. The motion passed - 4 Yes 1 No [Miles Tudhope stated that he has a problem with the procedure.]**

The clerk will type up the final lease and have it ready for signing as soon as possible.

**8. NEW BUSINESS.**

a. Green Up Coordinator – Roland Simmons will contact and confirm with Cindy Watrous about this position.

b. Vermont Health Trust – The Chair reported that the increase for 2011 will be 17-1/2% for the health trust plan the Town has for the Highway Crew. In addition, there will be some changes in co-pay amounts.

The Vermont Health Trust annual meeting is scheduled for Friday, November 12, 2010, after which the final information and plans will be sent out to towns.

**9. OTHER BUSINESS.**

a. Representative Will Stevens – Roland Simmons introduced Will Stevens and complimented him on his imaginative, colorful, and recyclable road signs.

Will Stevens explained programs he is working on one of which he spoke to the Speaker of the House about - to set the legislative session to 12 weeks, from the current 16 weeks. Several goals Will Stevens is working with - Ag economic development, Ag Policies, Land Use, land taxes, and emergency benefits, some of which are described on the sheets attached to these minutes.

*One event, listed on the sheets, to consider is the Future of Vermont's Working Landscape Summit to be held at the Vermont State House in Montpelier on December 10, 2010 to share in advancing the working landscape action plan for Vermont's future.*

Will Stevens answered many questions from the people present. The Select Board thanked him for coming.

b. Sewer Review – The Select Board will prepare to do a general review of the sewer rents for all users. The clerk was asked to work with the Chair in researching and gathering the needed forms and information to begin to draft a survey letter.

c. Animal Control Officer – The Select Board reviewed the hours and mileage submitted by Dean Hanson. After discussion, the Select Board will need copies of the ACO reports to be filed in the Town Office. The Chair will contact Dean Hanson about this matter.

d. Hold Harmless – The Tax Department confirmed by e-mail that the Hold Harmless check for Orwell will be \$48,354.00. This is slightly more than the 2009 amount.

Orwell will also receive a payment of \$390.51 for Lister training.

**10. ADJOURNMENT.**

**Miles Tudhope moved to adjourn the meeting at 8:55 p.m. Walker James seconded the motion. The motion passed - 5 Yes 0 No.**

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Ann Arnebold

Clerk of the Board

INTRODUCTION: Several months ago I read in a New York newspaper that the auditor of accounts in that state had made a statement on how important the dairy industry was in that state. I approached our State Auditor with the question of what did he think about Vermont and the importance of our dairy industry? As a result of a further discussion with him, it was suggested that a group of non agricultural successful business people be assembled with the challenge of coming up with three ideas of what might be done to address the loss of working landscape of which the dairy is a major activity. The group was briefed on a number of issues and reached the following conclusions relative to what might be done going forward. What follows was presented to me yesterday at the St. Pierre Farm.

Roger Allbee

## RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS VERMONT'S WORKING LANDSCAPE

To: Mr. Roger Allbee, Vermont Secretary of Agriculture

From: Kent Anderson, Bruce Lisman, Angelo Pizzagalli, Ernie Pomerleau, Amanda St. Pierre, Michael K. Smith, William Stenger, Jerry Tarrant, Joe Juhasz, Tom Salmon

Re: Secretary of Agriculture Business Advisory Project

Date: October 19, 2010

Following your lead and initiative to approach the State Auditor's office in March to help with the crisis in the dairy industry, State Auditor Tom Salmon assembled this group with a basic charge to "unearth three ideas, concepts or strategies to preserve the working landscape and increase agricultural related profits by \$500 million by 2016."

The results of this project and work from June to September 2010 indicate that Vermont could benefit from the following:

1. Establish an Agricultural Business Development Cabinet. The system in state government is comprised of too many silos. If we expect to foster true synergy, it has to happen beyond agriculture. Good ideas need the ability for implementation (energy, agriculture, economy, tourism, food, capital, marketing, research, employment, image) and sustained attention. The purpose of this cabinet will be to gather, coordinate, and implement the "good ideas" that emerge from various segments of our working landscape – agriculture, dairy, agri-tourism – with the effort of economic development and labor force training to enable a unified team approach to development in Vermont.

Structure: Create a body of individuals with diverse experience including agriculture, business, and energy, along with the academic and political communities, to gather ideas from farmers and others and evaluate them in a manner similar to that of a venture capital company. Simultaneously creating a relationship with UVM/VTC, creating idea teams of college students to do the necessary due diligence, and creating business plans for those ideas, the cabinet believes has the greatest potential for success.

Farmers are thinking of ideas to improve their operations every day, and to have the cabinet or even the micro-business development programs of the community action agencies, that can contribute their business experience, horsepower and sustained attention to do feasibility assessments and crystallize business plans for public and ideally private investment for worthy ideas. This sustained effort may be what is required to sustain Vermont's working landscape. This may be how we can help the mini-entrepreneurs find a place in the market place when they come to the next idea or "next big leap."

The cabinet can create a common purpose and plan for Vermont. The agricultural development cabinet could be established to

foster a synergy and linkage between economic development projects, tourism, capital, energy with a fully funded marketing and advertising plan to promote the BRAND as well as the BUSINESS.

Perhaps the cabinet can foster a strong synergy and role clarification between UVM and its R&D, Vermont Tech and its raw talent and hands-on approach, and the untapped potential of high schools as an ag feeder system and workforce change agent.

- The cabinet could pursue discussions with Dr. Ming Goo (UVM) and the potential of the Asian markets.
- The cabinet can help fill the hole in marketing, distribution and website/retailing for the specialty products made in Vermont. What can we do to fill this hole to help farmers who want to open retail for delicious cheeses and yogurts while working 16 hours a day to keep afloat?
- The cabinet could encourage agri-tourism as an intentional investment. Study the Swiss model of painting farms and clean cows. It could review programs like the Bells pilot program with work camps (West Danville farm).
- The cabinet could explore using Housing and Human Services dollars to pay farmers for alternative, sober living work camps (regeneration stations), study "Brand Marketing" PROMOTED from travel/tourism budget.
- The cabinet could promote cow power, green living, Vermont's image, digesters, algae, and other new energy technologies.
- The cabinet can help address issues around the difficulty of transition planning for Farmers and Children that want to take over the farm.
- The cabinet could work to increase profit margins for farmers by looking into the feasibility of another try at an in-state large processor for round the clock operations with its products lined up and its marketing and distribution better thought out. It could seek federal workforce funds (WIA) to pay students to work on farms for credit.
- The cabinet could encourage work toward FOOD independence and marketing our products through their use at hospitals, schools, prisons, colleges, which would also promote the Vermont brand.
- The cabinet could review the cooperative structure in Vermont. Determine if it can be revised to enable farmers to retain a greater share of the retail price of their products. Can we create conditions for the cooperatives mission and role to be modified?
- The cabinet could also consider legislation to modify the provision of the current use program concerning farm income – non-farm income criteria.

One final point to stress on the cabinet: In developing this Cabinet we are not proposing to add any more costs to an already strapped state budget. Dollars needed will have to come from other budget line items or it will have no monetary costs associated with its creation. Hate to have Vermonters read about another "do nothing state committee costing taxpayers more money."

2. Conduct a full scale evaluation of assets of the working landscape and analysis of existing markets and products. Engage the land trust.

We need to know what the playing field is. An inventory/analysis of all markets we now supply and those we do not now supply. This is critical information for any decision making process, and should include:

- All present and potential markets for products made from milk, including both eatable and non-eatable products.
- How large are those markets?
- Who are the consumers?
- Who supplies those markets?
- What are the economics of those markets?
- Is there an opportunity for Vermont farms to compete in those markets?
- What is the profile of Vermont farm assets?

3. As a pilot program, assemble a group of people with expertise in marketing/online/distribution and retail and roll up their sleeves to attack a situation (at 1-3 farms) and report back to the Ag secretary or Development Cabinet. There are examples Dr. Kent mentioned: drinkable yogurt company and Blue Spruce – going toward retail sites, etc.

An immediate intervention of a group into a farm will evaluate markets and assets and inform the discussion as the cabinet takes shape. "Some things could start right away that could move all the other points forward in a positive direction; both an immediate and long-term benefit." – Dr. Kent Anderson.

4. Target investments by the federal government. Approach our federal delegation to:

- Seek an opportunity to participate in a federal waiver program to allow Vermont to run its own show. Good for the farmers, good for the co-ops, good for profits, good for all. "Third time is the charm" is too simplistic to say, though. [This phrase to a business person, as one warns, screams of "pouring good money after bad." I agree it should be looked at and evaluated for better understanding of the market. But this reference to me implies that, "we'll try it again and

maybe this time we'll get lucky and it will work"... which is obviously not the approach this Cabinet or any focused business strategy would take.]

- Determine if the federal subsidy directed to Vermont could be more strategically used. Could it be the financial incentive to help change the Co-op situation to help align the missions of producers and processors?

Additional Comments by members of the committee:

I will risk political incorrectness to suggest that all dairy farms are not created equal. We should be careful not to assume all farms are salvageable.

1. Efforts will need to be led by a bright, highly motivated individual.
2. Clear early goals need to be established and results measured.
3. Much of the investigative work has been done. It should be used – not re-done.
4. We must be aware that the bottom line is to get money in the farmers' pockets soon.
5. Some recognition should be given to the fact that there is a limit to how much we can do to increase the value of our farm products beyond the value of similar products from other parts of the country. To keep Vermont pastoral may require direct payment.

**[Register Today](#) for the **The Future of Vermont's Working Landscape Summit** at the **Vermont State House** in Montpelier on **December 10, 2010**, and share in advancing the working landscape action plan for Vermont's future.**

This Summit will highlight the challenges facing the agricultural and forest-based enterprises that are at the foundation of Vermont's Working Landscape. Summit participants will review a Working Landscape Action Plan developed by the VCRD-founded Working Landscape Steering Committee. This draft platform will serve as the focal point for advancing working landscape enterprise development in Vermont and, at the end of the day, for the founding of the Vermont Working Landscape Partnership. The Partnership will be a volunteer network coordinated by VCRD staff to support the implementation of the Action Plan.

Register today and join state, federal, non-profit, and business leaders from throughout the state to advance the working landscape action plan for Vermont's future and add your name to the list of key stakeholders as a member of the Vermont Working Landscape Partnership.

**When** Friday December 10th ~ 9:00am to 4:30pm

**Where** Vermont State House  
Montpelier, Vermont

**Fee**  
**\$25**

**[Click HERE to Register](#)**

**-OR-**

**[View Event Website for More Information](#)**

Online registration deadline: December 6, 2010

Feel free to contact us for more information at 802-223-6091 or [info@vtrural.org](mailto:info@vtrural.org)

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