



STATE OF CONNECTICUT DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Office of the Commissioner



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

860-713-2507
www.CTGrown.gov

Connecticut Farm Wine Development Council

MEETING MINUTES

December 5, 2019

450 Columbus Blvd

2 South Conference Room E

Members Present: Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt, Jonathan Edwards, Hilary Criollo, Richard Ruggiero, Linda Auger, Rosemary Bove, Dr. Michael O'Neill, Cara Sawyer (on phone), Washington DaSilva

Members Absent: Jamie Jones, George Motel, Indrajeet Chaubey

DoAg staff: Rebecca Eddy

Guests: Mark Scherer, Robert Chipkin, Matthew Wheeler

- 1. Call to Order:** Commissioner Hurlburt called the meeting to order at 1:10 p.m. Commissioner welcomed Council members and introductions were made.
- 2. Review and approval of Special Meeting Minutes for July 23, 2019:** Motion made by Mr. Edwards to approve the minutes. Mr. Ruggiero seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.
- 3. Public Comment:** Mr. Chipkin commented on designated CT Grown wine program, feels that it is time to disband the program. Two different classes of wineries in Connecticut and new winery laws tighten market. Feels a united front of wineries with Passport program would be better suited. Ms. Auger commented that she agrees with some of what Mr. Chipkin says but for different reasons. CT Grown farm winery not in alignment with CT Grown program of 100%. Doesn't feel public acknowledges that designation. Mr. Ruggiero commented that if you are a legal winery, no need for additional tiers. Next few years he will reach over 51%, but not in favor of it. Mr. Edwards recommended that urban wineries should not be part of Passport, but need for tiers among farm wineries not necessary. Ms. Criolo reported that as a grower who qualifies for CT Grown designation feels that they earned it and are qualified to use it. Commissioner Hurlburt commented it was created in 2004 and percentage reduced to help grow the industry. Discussed marketplace changes over past 15 years in regards to farm wineries and breweries. Change in winery manufacturing permit will not be implemented until 7/1/20. Discussed reinvigorating CT Grown campaign in 2020. Discussion ensued over the CT Grown program and the history of the 25% and 51% CT Grown wine designation. Mr. Edwards asked if Passport booklet could have CT Grown



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Commissioner



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

860-713-2507
www.CTGrown.gov

designation for all wineries if they are meeting legal licensed farm winery requirements. Further discussion was tabled for a future meeting.

4. Reports:

- a. **Legislative:** Mr. Edwards reported that CVWA has hired a new lobbyist, International Government Strategies – Mike Rell and Jim Aman. Met with Senator Witkos in late November to discuss concerns over SB 647. Made proposals including 1. If it's a true manufacturer, no tasting room but can sell direct to wholesale bucking three tier system. 2. Urban wineries with direct consumer can't sell direct to retailer. Tweaking tasting room reqs for 100,000 gallons, cracking SB 647 open. Waiting on interpretation from DCP on original wine manufacture permit allowances. If original legislation did not allow tasting room, Senator Witkos would implement same for new wine manufacturers. As of 1/1/20 brewers can only sell Connecticut wine. Commissioner Hurlburt confirmed that agency submitted legislative changes to OPM and will share more at next meeting.
- b. **Financial:** Ms. Eddy reported that as of 11/29/19 the Council had expenditures of \$19,947.82, encumbrances of \$16,405.00, and a balance of \$68,538.63. Ms. Criolo made a motion to accept the financial report. Ms. Auger seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.
- c. **Big E:** Mr. Edwards and Mark Scherer presented the report prepared by Keith Bishop regarding 2019 Big E. Eight wineries participated – 17 is still the goal. Rented a frose machine this year which led to increased sales. Reimbursed wineries \$150 per person for tasting and reimbursed all shipping costs incurred by participating wineries. Discussed additional ideas for promotion and increasing sales in 2020, including logoed 6-pack bags and tasting glasses. Mr. Edwards made a motion that Jonathan Edwards Winery and Bishops Orchards are operators for 2020 and 2021. Ms. Auger seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed. Mr. Edwards commended efforts of Rebecca Eddy and Rosemary Bove to success of promotion and sales efforts.
- d. **Research and Education:** Mr. Ruggiero reported that \$900 is left in budget. Discussed a pruning demo, this time of year is appropriate. Commissioner Hurlburt mentioned NY Wine and Vineyard Foundation. Commissioner Ball suggested we reach out to them to replicate activities here in New York. Ms. Eddy will send information to Mr. Ruggiero. Mr. Edwards offered to host a demo day at his farm for cane pruning and agro-therm, a new machine with fans and heaters, which increased his yield by 25%.



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Commissioner



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

860-713-2507
www.CTGrown.gov

- e. **Passport:** Commissioner Hurlburt discussed creating a grant program to run the Passport program – loyalty card or app. Discussion ensued on possible alternatives for future. Dr. O’Neill reported that he is confident that the mobile app will be more user friendly in 2020. Discussion about additional app capabilities but that would require funding.
It was agreed to continue with printed books for one more year. Look at changes to prizes. Ms. Eddy suggested the Passport working group meeting to discuss prizes. Ms. Eddy will create a QR code sign to download the app for display in hotels and send an email to wineries for feedback on how many passports were not distributed to better allocate in 2020.
5. **Old Business:** Commissioner Hurlburt mentioned CPTV segment at Jonathan Edwards Winery that he participated in.
6. **New Business:**
 - a. none
7. **2020 Meeting Schedule:** The 2020 schedule was presented as follows:
 - a. February 6, 2020
 - b. May 7, 2020
 - c. July 2, 2020
 - d. December 3, 2020Ms. Criolo made a motion to approve the schedule as presented. Ms. Auger seconded the motion. All in favor. Motion passed.
8. **2019 Passport Prize Drawing**
 - a. Sixty names were selected for the 2019 Wine Passport drawing in accordance to the prize structure without incident. An additional 100 names were drawn from the mobile app user accounts established by July 1, 2019.
9. **Adjournment:** Ms. Auger motioned to adjourn the meeting. Ms. Bove seconded the motion. All in favor. The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Rebecca Eddy, December 5, 2019