



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

### SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES

June 16, 2020

9:30 AM

#### [Join Microsoft Teams Meeting](#)

[+1 860-840-2075](#) United States, Hartford (Toll)

Conference ID: 940 227 615#

**Members Present:** Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt, Jonathan Edwards, Cara Sawyer, Jamie Jones, Dr. Michael O'Neill, Linda Auger, George Motel, Hilary Criollo, Indrajeet Chaubey, Washington daSilva

**Members Absent:** Rosemary Bove, Richard Ruggiero

**DoAg staff:** Rebecca Eddy, Jaime Smith, Lindsay Raymond

**Guests:** none

1. **Call to Order:** Commissioner Hurlburt called the meeting to order at 9:33 a.m. Commissioner welcomed Council members and introductions were made.
2. **Public Comment:** no public present for comment.
3. **Mitigating COVID-19 Disruptions**
  - a. **Big E:** Rebecca Eddy provided members an update regarding the status of Big E and recent conversations with DECD and other states. Commissioner Hurlburt added that it is still a very fluid situation dependent upon testing numbers and trends in the Commonwealth. Jon Edwards reported that he has been communicating with Keith Bishop and Mark Scherer regarding the operation of the wine booth and concerns regarding financial viability and staffing resources. Discussion among Council members ensued regarding consumer behavior, how to visually represent wineries to visitors without staff and support of not attending in person this year provided no negative ramifications towards future participation. Further discussion about hiring a production team for a two-minute video loop – source existing footage where possible from wineries.  
Jonathan Edwards made a motion that the Farm Wine Development Council does not staff either booth space in the CT Building at the Big E in 2020 and utilizes the existing funds of up to \$8,000 to incorporate a video display and associated technology addressing visitors to encourage a visit to Connecticut wineries. George Motel seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.



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- b. **Research and Education:** Rebecca Eddy reported that programming is on hold as of now with possibility of a virtual meeting in future if warranted by industry. Jamie Jones recommended holding off until later in year.
  - c. **Passport:** Rebecca Eddy provided a status update regarding passport including that it had not yet been printed and update regarding mobile app with request for feedback from Council members on how to proceed. Dean Chaubey indicated that he was in favor of a digital only Passport this year to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Jamie Jones suggested refocusing program to reward those visiting the same winery multiple times (loyalty reward style). George Motel offered that not all wineries have a large local base to draw from and need to be inclusive of all wineries. Dr. O'Neill spoke on the merits of the digital app. Rebecca Eddy advised the Council that if they reallocated the funding set aside for printed Passports and app maintenance in 2020 and utilized the existing app only for the 2020 Passport they could launch by July 1 and utilize funds to work with a professional developer for a fully functioning app in 2021. Jon Edwards reiterated the importance of having the Passport program in some way and that touch-free would be ideal. Jamie Jones agreed with not printing and spending the money on professional development of app. He asked Commissioner about using state funding to promote program. Commissioner Hurlburt responded that all need to utilize best practices in order to mitigate transmission risk of COVID-19 but also need to reinvigorate economy. Jon Edwards made a motion to not print the 2020 Passports in lieu of utilizing the existing app for the 2020 program year and earmark up to \$25,000 for the development of an improved app for the 2021 season. Linda Auger seconded. Dr. O'Neill commented that this is a positive way to take advantage of the situation for future betterment of the program. All in favor. Motion passed.
  - d. **CT Grown ad:** Discussion ensued about ad in Connecticut Grown magazine, continue inclusion of Passport program and consider adding a QR code for the Passport app to gauge effectiveness.
  - e. **Marketing Promotions:** Rebecca Eddy reminded the Council that \$20,000 was earmarked for promotional efforts. Discussion ensued about utilizing for the promotion of the passport via social media and radio. Rebecca will gather proposals for consideration.
4. **New Business:** Commissioner Hurlburt introduced Jaime Smith as the new Bureau Director for the Ag Development and Resource Conservation and Lindsay Raymond as the new Grants and Contracts Specialist. Updated Council on pending AMIR hires



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to refill vacant positions in Ag Development to better distribute workload among employees.

5. **Adjournment:** Jon Edwards motioned to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 10:55 a.m.

*Respectfully submitted by Rebecca Eddy, June 16, 2020*