



**STATE OF CONNECTICUT**  
**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**  
**Office of the Commissioner**



Bryan P. Hurlburt  
Commissioner

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## **Connecticut Food Policy Council**

### **SPECIAL MEETING MINUTES**

December 11, 2020 1:00 PM

MS Teams Meeting

**Meeting was called to order by Commissioner Hurlburt at 1:08 PM**

**Members Present:** Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt (DoAg) Bill Seedman (DSS), Monica Pacheco (State Department of Education), Flavia Pereira ( DOT), Marcia Pessolano ( DPH), Robin LaMott Sparks (End Hunger CT!), Patrick Doyle (KNOX), Molly Devanney (Highland Park Market), Jiff Martin (UCONN),

**Members Absent:** Lynn Peccerillo- Hills (DAS), Susan Pronovost (Brass City Harvest),

**DoAg Staff:** Erin Windham, Cyrena Thibodeau, Lindsay Raymond, Jaime Smith

#### **Old Business:**

##### **a) Use of CIA funds**

Erin shared PPT presentation to review ideas for funding and asked for questions and feedback.

Bill- Thank you for the work to move forward. Technical assistance sounds good and he approves encumbering \$50,000 for 2 years to fund a study.

Jaime recognized the additional funding that we receive and noted that that can go towards our efforts in the future.

Robin- Shared that End Hunger does outreach to towns, including Norwalk, Hamden, Stamford, and Danbury. Technical Assistance is desperately needed. Farmers markets and stands don't understand that the benefits are available. There was discussion on readers at markets and Robin mentioned that the markets should look into wireless readers.

Jaime- Technical assistance should be directed to farmers as well and we should use results of the survey to determine how to use the money for grants.

Erin shared that she is looking into incorporating SNAP acceptance information into the farmers' market meetings and certified farmer trainings for the upcoming season.

Patrick- Underscore need for technical assistance. This is a great investment. Fellows- Suggest encumbering funds for research to follow the study so we have funds available to do that work.

Jiff- Investing in technical assistance for the producer community is a great idea. The council should be thoughtful about who engage to deliver the technical assistance. Noted that this is a large amount of money to invest, so we have to go all the way and proceed with caution. We don't want to duplicate the efforts of Hartford Food Systems.

Commissioner Hurlburt- Echoed that it is a lot of money and it needs to be done in conjunction with what Hartford Food Systems is doing. He noted that we don't want to work in a silo and the RFP should recognize other efforts taking place. Regarding the grants, he offered that it might make sense to do an RFP for an organization to come in and do the training for us suggesting that maybe this ties into the FMPP grant that CFSA has. It has to be the right organization for the job.

Jiff- Before we do the RFP maybe we could look at other state reports to see what they are doing.

Molly- Suggested that from a marketing point of view, we should push SNAP acceptance the same as we do M/C and Visa. We also need to remove the stigma which increases the hesitation for people using the benefits.

Commissioner Hurlburt asked if this was included in the marketing efforts for urban markets and Jaime indicated that it was.

Robin- We are looking into the new GUSNIP grant and will be meeting to discuss.

Bill- Offered that DSS is happy to provide any information.

Bill made motion to approve the spending plan as discussed. Seconded by Robin. All in favor. None opposed, no abstentions. Motion passed.

Monica- There are a large number of P- EBT benefits being distributed through schools. There will be a 2<sup>nd</sup> wave coming and approved to start summer EBT program. She noted that technical assistance would be helpful in redemption of the benefits.

Bill- 27.4 % increase from March until now. State numbers indicate that there are 41.4% more SNAP dollars out there now. CSDE and the emergency benefits are really bringing the numbers up.

**b) Website working Group:** Erin call for working group – Jiff, Molly, and Bill are interested. Erin will reach out.

**Next steps:** Compile food action plans from NE states and send a synopsis to Jiff for review for presentation at next meeting.

Monica made a motion to adjournment which was seconded by Bill. **Meeting adjourned at 11:50 pm.**

Respectfully submitted by Erin Windham, AMIR I, December 15, 2020

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