



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Commissioner



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

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Connecticut Food Policy Council

MEETING MINUTES

May 20, 2021

2:00 PM

Members Present: Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt, Marcia Pessolanno, Willard Seedman, Susan Pronovost, Robin Lamott Sparks, Lynn Peccerillo-Hills, Jiff Martin,
Members Absent: Patrick Doyle, Molly Devanney, Monica Pacheco, Flavia Pereira
DoAg Staff: Jaime Smith, Erin Windham, Cyrena Thibodeau
Guests: Cortney Ahern, Deborah Brandon, Hamsa Ganapathi, Jenna Nicol, Jennie Hirsch, Latha Swamy, Lucy Potter, Meg Hourigan, Martha Page

- 1. Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 2:05 PM by Commissioner Hurlburt
- 2. Review and approval of meeting minutes from March 11, 2021** Motion to approve was made by Sue Pronovost. Seconded by Bill Seedman. No comments, suggestions, or revisions. All in favor. Motion passed

Commissioner Hurlburt gave an update on proposed ARPA funding noting that there are 2 items of importance- 1. \$1 million is being proposed for food pantry support to purchase food through emergency feeding networks. No program designed, still need guidance and more conversations. 2. \$3m is being proposed for food system infrastructure to increase capacity. This funding is yet to be approved and no details have been discussed around awarding of funds.

- 3. DoAg Request for Proposal Process: Lindsay Raymond, Grants and Contracts Specialist**

Lindsay Raymond shared a presentation on Contract and RFP process.

- 4. Public Comment**

Chelsea Gazillo- Spoke to ARPA and what Massachusetts is doing. MA Food System Collaborative had a nice write up that she will share. Is there anything we can do to support? Commissioner Hurlburt shared that he and Lindsay have looked to MA will be speaking with Commissioner LeBeau. He shared that letting your legislators know what you like is the best thing that people can do to support the efforts.

Martha- Is there any opportunity to consider using some funding that would allow a partnership with MA or RI on something. Commissioner Hurlburt: Not sure that in our ARPA there is but USDA will be rolling out other programs. Looking at mid summer announcement for that. DoAg is working with UCONN on slaughterhouse development and will look at this holistically as a region.

WLA and Farm Viability Alliance are joining forces to ask for funding for a project on business technical assistance There is a letter circulating to sign on. If interested reach out to Chelsea. Chelsea shared that FINE has received funding from AMS to do technical assistance and outreach for USDA grant opportunities specifically to socially disadvantaged farmers.

5. Old Business

A. CT Food System Alliance Update, Hartford Food System- Meg Hourigan

Currently assessing plans such as SHIP and others to see how the action plan would fit to avoid duplication. We are looking at indicators and equity and ramping up advocacy work as well as following up on our summit. Looking at performance measures and framework. And are hoping to complete the framework by the end of year. We don't want individual items but something more complete and integrated.

Martha- We are also working in the regional work to determine what a regional food system looks like. Looking at other states is a good way to understand what we're doing here and gives a good deal of support from other states. As we plan for regional work, we look at how that will inform the CT plan in terms of regional work.

Jiff- Can you describe the work on the Food Action Plan in 2022? Meg- We are still trying to finalize what the timeline will look like. Something to react to and look at. Martha shared that they are looking for the creation of the plan in 2022 but would be surprised if it were finished in 2022.

6. New Business

A. Discussion on the state of the FPC and long-term direction

- a. What is the FPC trying to accomplish?
- b. What do you all see the FPC'S role is?

Cyrena briefly went over the thoughts for this and asked attendees to begin thinking on it. More information will be shared.

7. Board Member Updates

Bill Seedman, CT DSS- Bill Thanked Erin for sharing out info on Food Solutions, racial equity challenge which was shared throughout DSS.

Bill stated that SNAP continues to respond to food insecurity. Last month 220,041 SNAP households comprised of 376,581 and total SNAP issuances of \$129,105,247 including P-EBT and SNAP Emergency supplements. Furthermore, President Bidens' executive order now allows for all SNAP households to receive an additional \$95.00.

The Commodity Supplemental Food Program (CSFP) is expanding from 2706 slots to 2849 slots. CSFP has been provided to low income seniors in partnership with Connecticut Food Bank and Foodshare who are now merging which will reduce the administrative burden at DSS.

Robin Lamott Sparks, End Hunger CT!- Shared that Summer meals will be starting soon and waivers in place through next school year. Put in for CRR \$ to use Cares act funds for doubling. The Full Shelves initiative is up and running. The big challenge will be an increase in prices and shipping.

Sue Pronovost, Brass City Harvest- Labor is an issue with BCH and farmers. College kids accepting only jobs for 8-9 weeks and she believes this will drive up prices on farm.

Jiff Martin, UCONN Extension- CT FTS Collaborative introduced legislation for CT Grown for CT Kids Grant targeting FTS and FTECE. They are waiting for bill to be heard. This will be under DoAg and CSDE. More information to come. They are partnering with CSDE for a push on summer meals.

Lynn Peccerillo-Hills, CT DAS- DAS is hearing the same regarding labor issued from contractors and is also seeing price increases.

Debra Brandon, CT DPH for Marcia Pessolano- Intern Alicia has joined the meeting today.

Commissioner Hurlburt, CT DoAg- Farm to Families Food Boxes will be concluding at end of this month. The agency found homes for over 700,000 food boxes. We are working with emergency services and DSS to get additional non-perishable food boxes out. Food Bank and Foodshare will announce on Monday regarding mass distribution. The ARPA proposal will include local food. USDA announced TEFAP awards to a CA based organization for the CT contract. DoAg has a call on the schedule to CT farms and opportunities to partner.

Motion to recess public session was made by Robin Lamott Sparks and seconded by Sue Pronovost at 2:58 PM.

8. Executive Session began at 3:04 PM

9. Meeting was adjourned at 3:45 PM

Respectfully submitted by Erin Windham, AMIR I, May 25, 2021

