



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Bureau of Ag Development & Resource Conservation



860-713-2501
CTGrown.gov

Connecticut Food Policy Council

MEETING Minutes

March 10, 2022

1:00 PM- 3:00 PM

Via WebEx
Recording Available:

Members Present: Commissioner Bryan P. Hurlburt, Willard Seedman, Susan Pronovost, Jiff Martin, Patrick Doyle, Molly Devanney, Monica Pacheco, Priscilla Cotto, Martha Page, Lynn Peccerillo-Hills

Members Absent: Marcia Pessolano

DoAg Staff: Erin Windham, Cyrena Thibodeau

Guests: Whitney Butler, Molly Stadnicki, Lucy Potter, Meghan Hadley, Gary Wallace, Meg Hourigan, Ashely Krebs, Chelsea Gazillo, Tessa Lasswell, Shana Brierley, Jenna Nicol, Jennie Hirsch, Alison Ghiose, Kim Boulette, Ellen Mei, Zachary Roth, Shannon Yearwood(CSDE),

- 1. Call to Order:** Meeting was called to order at 1:04PM by Commissioner Hurlburt.
- 2. Review and approval of meeting minutes from January 13, 2022.** Motion to consider minutes was made by Martha. Seconded by Sue. Need correction of Patrick's last name (needs an O). All in favor. Motion passed
- 3. Public Comment-** no public comments.
- 4. Old Business**

- A. CT Food System Alliance/Hartford Food System-Update, Meg Hourigan**
 - a. CT Food ACTION Plan [Draft plan framework](#) to review and comment on
 - b. Using the Whole Measure for Community Food Systems to frame the Food Action Plan. Working with Windham Food Network and Hartford FPC to bring in work they are doing around planning.
 - c. Gathering stories and assessing existing plans and data that exist as well as collecting feedback on the framework.
 - d. Martha: continuing partnerships that we have at the regional level. Explicit connection between local food policy councils and carrying out the work identified in plan.

- B. **Food Policy Council Grant Guidance Comments-** Erin shared screen and went through guidance. Will be shared out after for additional comments.
Comments: Tiered approach for payment, can more than 25% be allowed for salary not just in category 1, change in language around groups who have open awards with DoAg, limitations in DEEP community garden grant- add in language around community gardens.

5. New Business

- A. **LFPA-** Cyrena provided updates, CT DoAg is close to submitting plan to USDA. Comment period is currently open for administration of funds and competitive grant program. Please comment and share the request through this link. Additionally, we have a call out to farmers to express interest in selling products through the program. Please share with any producers, this link.
- B. **Marketlink,** Whitney Butler presented on technical assistance and support that Marketlink has to offer to producers and farmers markets to accept SNAP benefits. Whitney's presentation will be shared out to council. Please spread the word to your networks. General email: info@marketlink.org, Whitney.Butler@marketlink.org or to book a phone call appointment visit <http://marketlink.youcanbook.me>
- C. **End Hunger CT!** presentation from Molly Stadnicki on CT Fresh Match. EndHunger is partnering with DoAg and will be able to expand CT Fresh Match program to more markets this year and increase doubling at existing markets. Additional funds for outreach as well. Visit www.endhungerct.org/farmers-markets for more information or contact mstadnicki@endhungerct.org.

6. Board Member Updates

Bill-This will be my last meeting, retiring shortly. Serving 217,000 households, 373,000 individuals. Almost distributed \$100 million in February. Almost everyone gets an additional \$95 to max benefit amount. Exploring raising the gross income limit to 200%, has for a long time been 180%. This would allow us to serve more people, in the region would join VT, MA, and NY. Think this would be an additional 4,000 households. Would also allow those individuals to participate in SNAP employment and training services as well nutrition services. Was able to maintain the current caseload for commodity supplemental feeding program for seniors. It's been great working with you all and serving on this important council.

Martha- No additional updates to share.

Jiff-Solid Ground distributed almost \$70,000 in small stipends to new CT farmers for infrastructure purchases and other needed investments. Is about 42 farmers who will receive these funds. Exciting to get to share these federal funds with farmers. Hard part is the ones who didn't get funded, there is so much need for these funds. Thinking of how to do it again.

Molly-Likely going to see higher prices at the grocery stores.

Monica- School nutrition waivers ending June 30, 2022, this is going to have a huge impact on schools. Some schools that have community eligibility provisions, but so many students were fed through these waivers and meal counts were really high. This is going to be a big Spring challenge working through the changes with schools.

Sue-No updates but asked Bill if he would come to Waterbury to work in retirement.

Patrick-Undergoing greenhouse construction. Kicked off new cohort of farmers 11-12 new farmers, appreciative of alum who are able to teach and share their experiences with new cohort.

Marilyn- Just wanted to mention that Congress is set in the omnibus to extend the WIC benefit bump for fruits and vegetables through September 30, 2022. Benefit issuance will remain at current levels: \$24/month for children, \$43/month for pregnant and postpartum participants, and \$47/month for breastfeeding participants.

-<https://www.nwica.org/press-releases/congress-extends-the-wic-benefit-bump-to-build-nutrition-security-for-next-generation#>. YipVRonMJPY

Priscilla- Attended the Access to Agriculture at Estuary two days ago. Excited to see what the future holds, brings transportation to farmers markets. CT Access to Agriculture Connecting Rural Transit into CT Farms. Priscilla will send information to Erin and she will share out with the council.

7. Next Steps- DoAg to make adjustments to grant guidance and Erin will send to council to review. Council to return any comments/feedback by Friday March 18.

8. Adjournment- Erin called for a motion to adjourn, Sue made a motion which was seconded by Patrick. Meeting adjourned at 3:02PM.

Respectfully Submitted by Cyrena Thibodeau, AMIR I, March 11, 2022.