



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



Bryan P. Hurlburt  
Commissioner

860-713-2501  
CTGrown.gov

**Connecticut Food Policy Council**  
**MEETING MINUTES**

January 11, 2024 1:00 PM- 3:00 PM via Webex

**Members Present:** Patrick Doyle, Commissioner Hurlburt, Monica Pacheco, Marilyn Lonczak, Dan Giacomi, Martha Page, Tida Infahseng, Shawn Joseph, Kim Boulette, April Chaplin

**Members Absent:** Lynn Peccerillo-Hills, Molly Devanney

**Public Present:** Meg Hourigan, Heather Peracchio, Priscilla Cotto

**DoAg staff Present:** Erin Windham, Cyrena Thibodeau, Hannah Carty, Kaleigh Royston

1. Call to Order: 1:18 PM
2. Review and approval of meeting minutes from November 9, 2023.
  - Moved by Martha
  - Second by Marilyn
  - Some typographical errors to be adjusted in minutes
  - Minutes accepted as revised, all approved and passed
3. Public Comment
  - a. No comments from the public
4. DoAg Report
  - A. Staffing changes
    - a. Introduced staff changes with Erin, Cyrena, and Hannah
  - B. DoAg report out on final redemption numbers for FMNP
    - a. Erin shared her screen
      - i. “Year in Review” 2023 highlights include transition to esolution which was successful.
        1. Issues \$3,057,870.83 in benefits partnered with 23 local WIC officer, 177 senior sites, etc.
          - a. WIC served 44,149 participants
          - b. Seniors/disabled individuals served are 31,006
          - c. Farmers Markets were supplied hotspots.
            - i. Technology was well-received
          - d. Held 11 Pop Up Markets

- i. Most successful were East Hartford
        - e. Sold \$336,211.71 for the top 10 farmers
        - f. WIC Redemption about 40%, Senior Redemption about 60% which were a little bit better than last year based on percentage
      - b. Hurlburt commended Erin and Ali on shepherding the transition.
5. Old Business
  - a. No old business
6. New Business
  - A. Connecticut Food System Alliance and NE Feeding NE Project- updates and review CT state brief
    - a. Meg Hourigan to present (shared screen)
      - i. NE project of research to transition the percentage of food that we eat to be NE grown (30 by 30 vision)
      - ii. Reported highlights on information from report
        - 1. Looking for feedback on last page of report: the SWOT analysis and on the report in general
        - 2. <https://nefoodsystemplanners.org/wp-content/uploads/NEFNE-CONNECTICUT-State-Brief.pdf>
        - 3. Feedback may be sent via email to [coordinator@ctfoodsystemalliance.com](mailto:coordinator@ctfoodsystemalliance.com)
        - 4. Discussion ensued
  - B. Food System Capacity Building Grant – approval of grant guidance and timeline for review4
    - a. Proposed Date of March 28
      - i. Discussion ensued
    - b. Budget
      - i. This grant was created because of a significant build up of funds in years
      - ii. Remaining in funds, \$99,881.00 plus annual appropriation of \$25000 \$106131.00.
        - 1. How much to put towards grant? Maximum each is \$20,000.00
        - 2. Discussion ensued
        - 3.
  - C. Annual Report update
    - a. To be sent end of January
  - D. Planning for 2024 (outreach, initiatives, proposed guests, field trips, Ag Day at the Capitol presence)
    - a. Would like to have field trips in addition to virtual meetings
      - i. Field Trips scheduled outside of regularly scheduled meetings
        - 1. Would like to see some concentration on BIPOC producers
    - b. Ag Day at the Capitol, Wednesday March 20
    - c. Proposed Guests at Meetings or Topics:
      - i. Increasing advocacy work at both state and local level
      - ii. Farm Bill year, so maybe we can tie in an advocacy group on the federal level (frack?)
        - 1. Center for budget priorities?



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2. NSAClocate up
  - d. Motion to allocate up to \$100 to participate and Table at Ag Day at the Capitol
    - i. Properly seconded
    - ii. Motion carries, all in favor
- E. 2024 Meeting Update for March  
Moving meeting date to March 28 for time to review grants.

**7. Board Member Updates**

- a. Patrick: Knox doing some micro-green work and battling down the hatches for full season while avoiding snow, wind, flood like everyone else
- b. Monica: state sponsored reimbursement has strengthened the the FTS programs in the state. Gearing up for advocacy at the Senate. The federal reimbursement has about \$100,000.00 spent with more time to do so, in addition to technical assistance and outreach to schools that are not utilizing their full potential
- c. Marilyn: concerns about cuts to WIC program which would affect about 14,000 individuals' ability to receive benefits in CT, with reductions in the amount of money for the Cash Value Benefit (CVB) for fruits and vegetables that each person would receive per month from \$52 for a fully breastfeeding woman to about ~\$11. For children, it would mean cutting back the CVB from \$25 per month to \$8. Farm to ECE project, on-going collaboration with UCONN and Farm to School Collaborative. Farm to ECE grant will close January 22.
- d. Martha: Technical assistance for Dairy farmers
- e. Shawn: Brass City Harvest is getting ready for the season and is gearing up for producing apple cider. Park City Harvest is making sure the field is right and filling out grants for some fencing.
- f. Tida: United Way of Coastal and Western Connecticut, which covers 27 towns in the state and previously worked within a few areas in the food system. They have a community survey and exploring where they can be most impactful on their overall or food system work. Link to survey: <https://forms.office.com/r/QLfeqpwl3y>
- g. April: no comments yet
- h. Dan: Did outreach to let individuals learn about how to benefit from SNAP benefits. Would not see an immediate impact if there was a government shut down. CT is one of 35 states that has submitted a letter of intent to operate a summer EBT program.

**8. Adjournment at 2:49 PM**