

## Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

May 18, 2023

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Sarah Larose (NRCS District Conservationist), Richard Noel (Chair), Carissa Stein (Supervisor), Vicky Drew (Treasurer), Molly Magnan (Supervisor) arrived at 3:17

Conducted at St. Albans Free Library, St. Albans  
Minutes recorded by Lauren Weston

*The written minutes are a synopsis of the discussion at the meeting. Motions are as stated. Minutes will be subject to correction by the Board. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.*

### Minutes:

3:09 pm: Meeting called to order. Quorum present.

3:10 pm: NRCS update provided by Sarah Larose.

- Logan Reese 401 Natural Resources Specialist (aka conservation planner) started and has jumped right into learning the job.
- backfilling Meryl's VACD Planner position, interviews on Friday, 3 good candidates to interview.
- still waiting on Program Assistant, and Soil Conservationist Technician vacancy announcements to be advertised.
- Civil Engineer and Civil Engineer Technician positions have been advertised 4 times with no luck, higher ups discussing how to handle the engineering workload, possibility of more funds for TSP Engineers.
- due to the lack of engineers, specifically in the Northwest Zone, we are being very upfront without customers about this, and some customers are choosing to hire their own engineers, NRCS calls this a Third-Party Engineer.
- IRA EQIP and IRA CSP have been rolled out, planners on working through the steps to push them through the system.
- RCPP DEC 2132 NWZ did not get any pre-approvals this round, DC's and ASTC-O going to dig deeper to understand why none in the NWZ ranked high enough. At first glance of rankings from other zones it does not appear the rankings were done differently across zones.
- ACTNOW should be announced very soon, only going to be for CPA's, DIA's, and CEMA's this year, 50k has been set aside for this. State Office has stated that this is a learning year for ACTNOW, it will be ramped up in future years.
- Customer pit issue, leaked after installation, issue investigated, report provided to National Office, deemed NRCS responsible, going through the Equitable Relief process. Outcome is that NRCS will need to update their specification and standards for concrete installation.
- Possibility of getting an 1890 Intern, would be for 2024.
- District 50/50 position would like to discuss more – planner/engineer – local funding pool?
- Luc Dupuis will be acting FSA County Executive Director once Laurie Locke retires at the end of May 2023.

3:17 pm: Molly Magnan, Supervisor, arrives.

3:30 pm: Civil Rights Training provided by Sarah Larose to all present Supervisors. Supervisors acknowledge receipt of training. Sarah Larose will follow up with Dan Pipes, Supervisor, who is not present at this meeting. Sarah Larose will also send out electronic copies of these files for all Supervisors to have access to.

3:45 pm: Sarah Larose leaves meeting.

3:49 pm: Richard Noel shares about NRCC meetings he has attended. States that NRCC is looking into alternative or additional services beyond Quickbooks. Also stated that NRCC has paid their national dues.

Vicky Drew shares about VACD meetings she has attended including notice of the upcoming VACD board meeting on Monday May 22<sup>nd</sup>. Michelle Green will be stepping down from her VACD leadership position and Linda Corse will be president elect of VACD. Vicky Drew shared that the NRCC/NRCDs legislative efforts have resulted in a \$250,000 increase to NRCC's base budget; supervisors should see the email from Jill Arace with a survey asking about how supervisors would like to see funds distributed ([https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeLFyTRKoTwiSwGk6tf5ux5ZYgEMyT9\\_gyXwP3PKyIJJCHWng/viewform](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeLFyTRKoTwiSwGk6tf5ux5ZYgEMyT9_gyXwP3PKyIJJCHWng/viewform)). Also of note, the Legislature will be opening up our enabling statute in the coming term and all Supervisors should be prepared to provide input during that process.

4:01 pm: Supervisors review minutes from March 23, 2023 meeting. Carissa Stein makes a motion to accept minutes as written, Vicky Drew seconds, all approve, motion carries.

4:22 pm: Brief review of how Tree Sale went for 2023 and need to explore other options for next year given that the Field Days site may not be available. Also discussed possibility of moving tree sale up sooner than first weekend in May due to changing spring weather patterns. Discussed long term goals of getting a new office, NRCD vehicle, and consideration of adding a part time admin assistant. For June, Lauren Weston will prepare a wish list of improved wages, retirement, and health care offerings for staff to be considered by Board for FY24.

4:50 pm: Lauren Weston reviews FY23 financials (Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss by Month, Bank Statements, and Project Income Spreadsheet). Carissa Stein makes a motion to accept FY23 Financials to Date; Molly Magnan seconds, all approve, motion carries.

4:52 pm: Vicky Drew states that she has requested that VACD send out information about salaried vs hourly positions to inform our FY24 decisions. Also a request for a Board and staff member dinner this summer at someone's house to have everyone get to know each other.

5:02 pm: Lauren Weston shares some preliminary slides from the strategic planning process undertaken with the help of Andy Crossman. There is still additional work to be done, but this was just some preliminary information.

5:18 pm: Proposed next board meeting date of June 29<sup>th</sup>, will need to confirm with missing Board Members.

5:20 pm: Carissa Stein makes a motion to adjourn meeting, Vicky Drew seconds, all approve, motion carries.