

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

December 16, 2021

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Katy Dynarski (Projects Coordinator), Megan Walker (Project Technician), Kate Wettergreen (ECO AmeriCorps Member), Richard Noel (Chair), Molly Magnan (Supervisor), Lauren Gibson (NRCS Acting District Conservationist – attending virtually via Teams).

Conducted at St. Albans State Police Barracks

Minutes recorded by Lauren Weston

Minutes:

9:14 am: Richard Noel begins meeting. Only two Supervisors in meeting: Richard Noel and Molly Magnan. No quorum achieved during meeting.

9:15 am: Lauren Gibson's term as Acting District Conservationist will end on December 31st, 2021. Next Acting DC will likely be either Sarah Larose or Wynea Buford. Currently, the DC position is posted for applications again. Will close 12/17/21. NRCS first batching cutoff for applications will be December 31st, ranking cutoff of March 18th. This does not include Forest Management Plans which are on a different timeline. NRCS is changing way they do CAPS by splitting into 3 categories – CPAs, DIAs, CEMAs. NRCS is launching EQIP CIC – Conservation Incentive Contract as a way to move from EQIP to CSP; will be 5 year contracts, application deadline is April 1st.

NRCS staffing update: Carissa Stein is leaving NRCS on December 31. Tucker Malone is out on part time paternity leave. Dillon Westcom will soon be returning from part time paternity leave.

9:27 am: Discussion about Supervisors. Richard Noel emphasized need to having people on the Board who have experience with boots on the ground on the land and in conservation. He has some ideas about new Board Members as well that he has been talking to. Board Elections process has ended, Richard Noel was the only applicant for his Board seat. Legal notice had been posted in St. Albans Messenger and advertised on FCNRCD website and facebook page. No other petitions received. Issue with recruitment and funding for Districts could be that we are not very well known.

9:40 am: Discussion about the Winter 2021-2022 newsletter that was just sent out, along with sales order forms. Board appreciated and approved of newsletter. Still need to finalize plans with Field Days site to ensure plant storage prior to 1 week before sale.

9:44 am: Discussion of finances internal to District and across State with NRCC finances. Difficult to do business with reimbursement-based payments at various grant holder levels with Council and VACD down to Districts. Important to choose a local bank for state and District business to reduce fees. Discussion around the potential for FCNRCD to open a line of credit to have additional card beyond debit card and a backup credit line for cash flow.

9:47 am: Discussed tree sale logistics and scheduling.

9:52 am: Lauren Weston provided District updates: Fall 2021 Natural Resources Assessment with UVM students currently complete; working to determine spring semester project viability with new group of

students. VT NRCDs were collectively awarded State's Pay for Phosphorus contract – FCNRCD will cover Franklin and Grand Isle Counties. Tile Drain monitoring project ends today with final samples; State will process data and write report to share back out about phosphorus loading and transport via tile drain systems. District beginning to work with NRCS and other Districts on Local working Group to inform NRCS funding priorities.

9:56 am: All present take Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion survey from University of Michigan and NRCDs partnership project. Surveys taken with anonymity.

10:35 am: Richard Noel proposes Holiday bonuses for District staff. Richard Noel and Molly Magnan approve – one additional Supervisor required to approve to reach quorum and secure full approval. Lauren Weston will contact Phil Parent and Adrian Rainville for approvals. Staff salary changes will be discussed at January board meeting – raises and COLA adjustments.

10:42 am: Overview of financials for FY22. Showing slower and no-income November, in line with slower finances with State groups too. Dam removal project money has almost completely moved through the District at this time pending willow staking in the spring.

10:48 am: Discussed and brainstormed agenda for January 20th board meeting. Meeting will take place at St. Albans Police Barracks from 9 am to 3 pm. Longer meeting to allow for elections of board offices, financial discussion regarding wages, strategic planning priorities, annual review of District Manager, outreach to new farmers suggestions, among other items.

11:03 am: Meeting ended.

12/17/21 – Lauren Contacts Phil Parent at 1:17 pm for phone approval of bonuses. This makes 3 approving supervisors in addition to Richard Noel and Molly Magnan. Bonuses approved.