

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

July 21, 2021

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Brodie Haenke (Conservation Specialist), Katherine Helmer (ECO AmeriCorps Member), Nancy Allen (NRCS Conservation Planner) Richard Noel (Chair), Eileen Trudell (Supervisor), Adrian Rainville (Supervisor), Molly Magnan (Supervisor)

Conducted via Zoom online meeting platform

Minutes recorded by Brodie Haenke and Lauren Weston

Minutes:

9:36 am: Richard Noel calls meeting to order.

9:37 am: Nancy Allen NRCS Update: Nancy forwarded a new pilot project for closing CRP and CREP projects to Lauren Weston "Expanded CLEAR30 Pilot" if you had a CREP or CRP site, you can reenroll for continued funding and support with this program. More to learn about this new program. NRCS is finishing up their funding cycle right now. A lot of Forestry and High Tunnel applications were not funded because there were more applicants than funds to go around. District Conservationist search continues for the Northwest Zone. They have advertised it and readvertised it but that's the only update for now.

9:40 am: Approval of minutes from May and June 2021. Adrian Rainville moves to approve May 19, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes, Molly Magnan seconds, all approve. Molly Magnan moves to approve the June 23, 2021 Board Meeting Minutes, Adrian Rainville seconds, all approve.

9:42 am: Financials: Net ~\$15,000 positive overall for 2020FY. Some grants had not been invoiced for at the end of the FY21 though the hours and work had been done already because of funding cycle timing.

9:46 am: Lauren Weston created pie charts to share how the paid District staff spend their time. About a third of our time is spent on admin, around a third is spent on Agricultural WQ grants, and the rest is spent on wetland outreach, the dam removal, watershed planning, tree plantings, and tree sale. A narrative description of work that has been completed in FY21 is also available. These hours are comparable (within 5%) of the spread of work hours from FY20. Additional hours worked by team during FY21 because of onboarding of Lauren Weston overlapping with Jeannie Bartlett; and additional hours worked each pay period by Lauren Weston carried over as comp time.

9:54 am: Richard Noel moves to approve the financial statements from FY21, Molly Magnan seconds, all approve.

9:55 am: Procurement Policy: Policy has been updated with a line about allowing the District to choose to sole source contractors if needed under certain circumstances and at their discretion. Policy should be followed starting now and moving forward. Richard Noel moves to approve the procurement policy, Molly Magnan seconds, all approve.

9:58 am: Future staffing discussion. The District can afford to maintain the DM, hire a replacement of the Conservation Specialist, and an AmeriCorps member. Lauren Weston would like to hire an additional staff person out of this round of applicants because there is a great pool of applicants and the District

can afford it for at least one year. The District will be able more fully use all the grants we receive by having more staff – reach full potential of the projects and funding opportunities. The District potentially will receive an additional 3 grants that will allow this additional staff person to also work full-time or near full-time. Discussion of staff expenses, annual District expenses – report needs updating for next board meeting, and sources of income. The District will not get more space immediately, but we'll be able to telework and rotate in the spaces in the office.

10:18 am: The Board moves to approve the wage increase for the District Manager Lauren Weston from \$21.00/hour to \$21.59/hour during this pay period and moving forward. All approve. This was part of Lauren Weston's original hire letter to consider this raise at 6 months assuming the budget could make this possible. FY22 budget takes this raise into account.

10:19 am: The Board moves to approve the hiring of a Projects Coordinator (replacement of the Conservation Specialist) at listed pay rate up to \$18.76/hour. All approve.

10:19 am: The Board moves to approve an additional Project Coordinator Technician out of the same staff pool at listed pay rate (up to \$18.17/hour), part or full time pending funding, and with a contingency of 1 year guarantee and then position re-evaluated at that time. All approve.

10:20 am: The Board moves to approve FY22 Budget and Workplan as written. All approve.

10:31 am: The District received an MOU from the NRCS that has been approved by the Board in spring 2021. Now there is an Unfunded Cooperative Agreement (UCA) that needs reviewing and approval. Richard Noel will need to sign it as Board Chair following approval by Wynea Buford with NRCS. Molly Magnan moves to approve it, Adrian Rainville seconds it, all approve.

10:38 am: Molly Magnan farm update: Working with Brian Jerose/AgriLab Technologies on a composting facility and they have two different compost products right now. They will not be in the Pay for Phosphorus Program due to field changes but will hope to join the program next year.

10:41 am: Discussion of the wildfire smoke from out west making its way to Vermont.

10:43 am: Summer projects at the District: The District is still recruiting for the NMP class. There is a Composting Association of Vermont webinar tonight about compost and soil health that the District is helping to organize if anyone wants to attend. The District is working to host a State House to Farmhouse meeting that will be hosted at Guy Choiniere's farm on September 13. The dam removal is impending, will likely start early August.

Review of other summer projects upcoming.

10:48 am: Farewells to Katherine Helmer and Brodie Haenke and thanking them for their work and service.

10:55 am: Richard Noel to host in-person board meeting on August 16 at 9:00am – next Board Meeting confirmed.

10:57 am: Meeting adjourned.

Please note – all associated documents referenced in these minutes are available to the public upon request.