

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

June 23, 2021

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Brodie Haenke (Conservation Specialist), Carissa Stein (NRCS Conservation Planner) Richard Noel (Chair), Adrian Rainville (Supervisor)

No Quorum. No Votes Taken.

Conducted via Zoom online meeting platform

Minutes recorded by Brodie Haenke and Lauren Weston

Minutes:

9:35 am: Brodie announces his departure for the Agency of Agriculture and thanks the Board for their support over the last four years.

9:41 am: NRCS Update from Carissa Stein. NRCS just ended a ranking period for Round 3, the only thing included was AMA High Tunnels and Forestry Management Plants. Round 2 is being contracted and obligated. Round 3 will be the last round for fiscal year 2021. Sarah Larose is acting District Conservationist. The position for the Northwest Zone DC has been re-posted with corrections. Request for District: Sarah Larose wants to know what projects are costing, because high materials cost projects are being slowed down or halted because NRCS payment rates may not reflect the current material costs due to the pandemic and material shortages. They are looking for more information from partners to provide as rationale for increased rates. Vicky Drew is stepping down as State Conservationist, Obe Racicot will be acting State Conservationist. State Conservationist position has not yet been posted. Lauren Newman (VACD) is helping with surveying with their new drone and it is speeding up engineering survey efforts exponentially. Mariah Choiniere is a new Pathways intern at the NW Zone office with NRCS.

9:52 am: Adrian Rainville needs to get a picture and bio to Lauren for the website. Lauren Weston will connect with Adrian Rainville about that and visit property to do this in person.

9:54 am: Denna Benjamin has not gotten back to Lauren Weston about becoming an associate supervisor. Discussion of potential Franklin County residents that would be good to reach out to about joining the board. Lauren Weston will do outreach again later this summer

9:56 am: Lauren Weston is interested in finding more shrub willows for willow stake harvesting. Carissa suggested there may be some willow stands along the Trout River. Richard suggested some landowners who have pond or river frontage.

10:00 am: Discussion of Tree and Trout Sales from 2021: Total income from sales from tree sale was \$40,819.16. The largest tree sale ever for the District. Net profit before staff time included was \$13,028.89. Net profit after wages, taxes, and benefits for hours spent was \$4,764.33. This is comparable to past years net income. The District staff spent about 300 hours working on the tree sale which was close to year's past, even considering it was Lauren Weston's first year managing the tree sale. Close to 9,000 stems or individual plants were sold, 300 unique customers. Next year, the District

will be able to utilize more volunteers and hopefully cut down on expenses a bit with new lessons learned.

10:12 am: Lauren Weston plans on hiring a Projects Coordinator to replace the Conservation Specialist position in the coming week to replace Brodie Haenke ASAP. Lauren Weston has developed a position description and some interview questions that is ready for the board to review. Lauren Weston will send it out to the board via email for approval. Lauren Weston wants to know who should be involved with hiring the new Projects Coordinator position. Richard Noel suggested that Lauren Weston reach out to Jill Arace at VACD to work on a hiring team plan.

10:20 am: Determined that remainder of agenda required Quorum of Board to be productive. Suggested sending an email or phone calls to document votes on pressing matters.

10:22 am: Review of unofficial FY21 year end financials. The District is generally looking good at the end of the fiscal year with a ~\$22,000 net increase in profit.

10:27 am: Lauren has created a projected budget for the next fiscal year. Currently the District has a projected to gain \$128,000 in staff funding in the next year without taking on any more grants. The District is also applying for more grants now as well and Lauren Weston projects the need for an additional staff person if these grants are accepted.

10:31 am: Phil Parent may join but we have covered as much of the agenda as possible without getting more votes.

10:34 am: Scheduling the next meeting. July 21 at 9:30am. Hoping to meet in person for August meeting. Lauren Weston will reach out to board members about when would work for August meeting.

10:38 am: Meeting adjourned.