

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

July 26, 2022

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Richard Noel (Chair), Carissa Stein (Supervisor), Vicky Drew (Treasurer), Phil Parent (Vice Chair), Molly Magnan (Supervisor – on Zoom)

Conducted at State Police Barracks in 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:

9:09 am: Meeting called to order with quorum – Richard Noel, Molly Magnan (on Zoom), Carissa Stein, Vicky Drew.

9:10 am: NRCS update from Sarah Larose, NRCS Northwest Zone District Conservationist – shared in advance via email. Lauren Weston presented.

- Round 2 EQIP, CSP applications being moved forward to obligation, deadline is August 12th.
- FY23 looking like there will only be one sign up period with a deadline to apply by 11/18 for EQIP and RCPP, CSP and AMA is 10/21, this is draft and subject to change.
- please promote the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), sent back monies this year and STC does not want to see that happen in FY23.
- Sean Pease was hired as the Soil Con Tech duty station Morrisville office, hoping to start sometime in August.
- CREP agreement changing in FY 23, new agreement to start in July 2023. The new agreement ends up creating more workload for NRCS, Ben Gabos and Phil Wilson from Agency of Ag, have been typically doing everything involved with the technical assistance side of this program. With the new agreement they will no longer have access to NRCS computers/programs/vehicles and therefore NRCS planners will be doing the planning in Conservation Desktop and a multitude of other planning steps.
 - Supervisors discussed if this would change any funding mechanisms or policy. Need to follow up with Sarah Larose for clarification
- pushing to get another Civil Engineer Tech or Civil Engineer within the zone as Dillan Westcom might possibly take a position within Agency of Ag, and Bob T has informed me they would not be backfilling the 50/50 engineer position if that happens. And the CET Dave Gauvin is likely to retire in a year or two.
- discussions of training partners seems to be a hot topic, I think overall our zone is doing fairly well with providing training to the Franklin District and vice versa. Feedback is welcome in regards to what additional trainings we could collaborate on or is needed by the District employees.
 - FCNRCD agrees that training opportunities are being shared and facilitated well and are appreciative of efforts being made

- Claire Jensen Soil Con Pathways and Liza McLatchy Engineering Pathways last day in NWZ is August 12th, they will be returning to VT, Claire will be going to the Central Zone, Middlebury office and Liza to the Central Zone Williston office. It was asked if NWZ wanted another soil con pathways for next year, I asked to take a year off as there is a lot of training involved that takes up a lot of time, not sure if we will or won't get one, we will be getting another Engineering pathways, that training falls mostly on the zone engineer who is Xavier.

9:19 am: Phil Parent arrives

9:20 am: Lauren Weston shared update that Kate Wettergreen has accepted offer from FCNRCD to stay on full time after her end of AmeriCorps term.

9:24 am: Update from Richard Noel about NRCC/VACD meetings. All Districts are discussing FY24 Legislative requests and FY23 adjustments to submit to Action Circles and Agency of Ag. There is some discussion that some Districts are not regularly meeting with their boards; perhaps increased participation in Supervisory Unions would be helpful for those purposes. Richard Noel suggested Jonathan Gates may be a good candidate to join FCNRCD board. Richard Noel also discussed the presentation Lauren Weston gave in July to the NRCC Board – Lauren will share the presentation and files with FCNRCD Board in follow up.

9:36 am: Board reviews and votes on 2022 June 21 Board Meeting Minutes. Carissa Stein makes a motion to approve both sets of minutes; Vicky Drew seconds. Phil Parent recused because not present at that meeting. All voting Supervisors approve, motion passes.

10:01 am: Lauren Weston reviews FY22 Finances for entire fiscal year through June 30, 2022. Lauren Weston reviews sales, Federal and State income; Board inquired about how this compares to FY21, Lauren to follow up. Lauren Weston emphasized the cost of running an organization, like the District and how much money it takes – for team meetings, board meetings, financial, insurance, etc. in terms of administration costs and how this is a good narrative to keep requesting funds from VT Legislature. Vicky Drew makes a motion to approve FY22 Profit and Loss and Balance Sheets; Phil Parent seconds. All approve, motion passes.

10:02 am: Lauren Weston shares out reporting on deliverables and annual report metrics from FY22 including qualitative and quantitative features such as volume of grants applied to, administrative efforts, number of soil samples, events, volunteers, etc. Board discusses having more farms be interested in utilizing their Nutrient Management Plans and how to ensure folks know that the need new soil samples.

10:16 am: Board reviews FCNRCD Tuition Reimbursement Policy draft prepared by Lauren Weston. Carissa Stein makes a motion to approve Tuition Reimbursement Policy as written; Phil Parent seconds. All approve, motion passes.

10:27 am: Board reviews and discusses Board Member position description; decide to each review before August Board meeting and sign and return descriptions to Lauren Weston. Lauren Weston to send out supplementary information via email. Carissa Stein makes a motion to approve Board Member Description as written; Phil Parent seconds. All approve, motion passes.

10:28 am: Board discusses current members associated with Peoples Trust Company bank account.

Vicky Drew volunteers to serve as Board Treasurer and also be listed on bank account alongside Richard Noel and Lauren Weston; all members fill out updated signatory forms to submit to bank.

10:30 am: Molly Magnan leaves meeting.

10:52 am: Board discusses the need for storage and cold storage facilities. Review possibility to purchase a cold storage trailer from a farm, decide to instead explore other options such as other farms and renting a trailer for the tree sale. Greens trailer may be an option, or Dan Boucher's farm?

11:43 am: Lauren Weston reviews draft FY24 Legislative Budget request with Board. Board suggests increasing amounts for mileage considering if NRCS does staff up, District may need to be using personal vehicles more often; increased lodging and per diems for staff. Supplies to include soil testing buckets Carissa Stein recommends, fees for accounting services, insurance costs stipends for farmers to attend events, and per diems if Board members if allowed. Lauren Weston will make edits, check in with Clare Ireland, and submit FY23 readjustment and FY24 request.

11:44 am: Lauren Weston shares about upcoming event at Kent Henderson's house on drones and Water Quality: <https://www.franklincountynrcd.org/post/august-25th-drones-water-quality-event-in-georgia-vt>

11:44 am: Scheduling next District Board meeting at NRCS office at 50 S. Main St., St. Albans, August 30th from 3 pm to 5 pm.

11:44 am: Carissa Stein makes a motion to adjourn the meeting; Phil Parent seconds. All approve, motion passes.