

## Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

June 29, 2023

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

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:

10:18 am: Meeting called to order. Quorum present.

10:19 am: NRCS update provided by Sarah Larose.

- Program Assistant vacancy announcement has closed, heard there were 14 applicants, waiting for panel, and hopefully interviews will be conducted soon.
- Mike Dickhaut new RCPP Partner Planner, slated to start end of July.
- Civil Engineering position advertised again, hoping, and crossing fingers for applicants, 4-5<sup>th</sup> time advertising position.
- IRA CSP ranking deadline 6/30/23, due to limitations of available practices, many applicants are choosing to wait till Classic CSP comes around as there are more options under Classic
- Process being discussed and worked on to evaluate and recommend practices to be added to the Climate Smart Agriculture and Forestry (CSAF) list.
- Zone is moving forward with obligations, overall, as a zone have done a great job at meeting the deadlines, some late pre-approvals are still coming in due to applicants cancelling their applications/not wanting to sign into a contract, and/or some applicants have been unresponsive.
- Lauren G has been on detail, returning the week of July 10<sup>th</sup>.
- Heather W a Resource Conservationist at the State Office will be away for a detail, have not heard who will fill in behind her while she is on detail.
- Luis Aponte has accepted the Assistance State Conservationist for Operations position here in VT, previously Wynea Buford held this position.
- Multiple other positions throughout the state are being advertised.
- Asked about getting FSA updates, currently they don't, let them know that since Laurie L retired Luc Dupuis is Acting CED, and they are currently interviewing to fill a permanent Program Technician position.

10:43 am: Richard Noel shares about NRCC meetings he has attended. States that NRCC received word of \$612,000 in budget allotment to all 14 Districts and NRCC for FY24 and the current plan is to try to split it evenly. Update that there is more Project Development money.

10:46 am: Vicky Drew shares about VACD meetings she has attended. Requests that at least 1 other Supervisor sign up for a VACD committee (governance, capacity building, finance, board development).

10:55 am : Sarah Larose leaves meeting

10:56 am: Supervisors review minutes from May 18, 2023 meeting. Dan Pipes makes a motion to accept minutes as written, Vicky Drew seconds, all approve, motion carries.

10:57 am: Dan Pipes and Lauren Weston provide a brief update on Strategic Planning including a draft vision statement and mission statement, strategic theme areas, and a timeline for the board to provide feedback. Aiming to have a 1 pager to use as a strategic plan for the August board meeting and have consultant Andy Crossman attend to inform the conversation.

11:06 am: Lauren Weston shares a financial analysis of the 2023 Tree Sale. Analysis included comparison of 2023 to previous years, multiple accounting methods for counting staff time spent on the project, and thoughts on the 2024 tree sale. Supervisors suggested looking into creating a local knowledge base in land stewards by teaching them how to regenerate plants on their own, perhaps through workshops, and by trying to source plants more locally. Board will need to discuss plans for 2024 Tree Sale if the Franklin County Field Days site is no longer available.

11:36 am: Lauren Weston reviews FY23 financials (Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss by Month, Bank Statement). Lauren Weston notes that we are nearly at the end of the fiscal year but that there are likely some changes to be seen on the financials due to the timing of pay periods. Carissa Stein makes a motion to accept FY23 Financials to Date; Dan Pipes seconds, all approve, motion carries.

12:03 pm: Lauren Weston presents proposal for hiring two new staff members to the team: one to backfill Katy Dynarski's position who is intending to leave in September 2023, and one new position related to agriculture if the budget allows. Board members review a set of resumes from applicants. Carissa Stein makes a motion to approve this proposal, Vicky Drew seconds, all approve, motion carries.

12:27 pm: Supervisors discuss wage raises for existing staff members at FCNRCD. Proposal for Lauren Weston to be compensated at \$32.81/hr; Katy Dynarski at \$27.30/hr, Kate Wettergreen at \$25.62/hr, and Mel Auffredou at \$23.76/hr. Supervisors discuss importance of communicating that raises this large should not be expected as the standard moving forward, but rather are a reflection of the growth period that the District has gone through thanks to their service towards a more stable financial operation. Vicky Drew makes a motion to accept this proposal, Dan Pipes seconds, all approve, motion carries.

12:36 pm: Board discusses potential wages to be offered for the two positions seeking to be filled by FCNRCD this summer. For the position backfilling the Projects Coordinator position: \$23/hr, and for a highly qualified agricultural programs position, up to \$25/hr with the potential for probationary periods for both. Vicky Drew makes a motion to accept this proposal, Carissa Stein seconds, all approve, motion carries.

12:49 pm: Board discusses idea of trying to put some of the surplus funds from FY23 into a Certificate of Deposit to try to improve financials. Proposal to select a high return CD with either a 6 month or 9 month timeline and the fund must be federally insured. Vicky Drew makes a motion to accept proposal, Dan Pipes seconds, all approve, motion carries.

12:52 pm: Board discusses July 13<sup>th</sup> potluck and potential hosting locations. Dan Pipes will look into hosting.

12:54 pm: Proposed next board meeting date to be in August around vacation schedules; will coordinate via email and post following public notice guidance.

12:58 pm: Vicky Drew makes a motion to adjourn meeting, Dan Pipes seconds, all approve, motion carries.