

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

August 12, 2026

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Orenna Brand (Community Engagement Specialist), Vicky Drew (Chair), Dan Pipes (Vice Chair), Molly Magnan (Treasurer), Karyn Rocheleau (Supervisor), Lynn Knight

Conducted at 431 Franklin Park West, Suite 100a, St. Albans
Minutes recorded by Orenna Brand

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:

10:05: Vicky Drew calls meeting to order.

10:06: Supervisors sign Trudell and Howrigan CREP contracts.

- Dan Pipes motions to accept Trudell and Howrigan CREP contracts; Karyn Rocheleau seconds. All in favor; motion carries.

10:07: Lynn Knight enters.

10:13: Lauren Weston shares Sarah Larose's NRCS updates.

- Reorganization is well underway; employees will be getting their employment letters by Friday the 14th.
 - Vicky Drew explains: NRCS is transitioning technical staff to regional hubs and moving the national office from Washington, DC to Fort Collins, CO.
- Finalizing EQIP and CSP obligations.
- Multiple construction projects are underway.
- FY2027 planning, many new applicants are still coming through our doors!
- FY27 application deadline TBD, hoping for an early deadline of September 25th.

10:19: Vicky Drew shares VACD updates.

- Board meeting on Tuesday, August 18.

10:23: Supervisors review June 10, 2026, and July 13, 2026, meeting minutes.

- Vote to approve is postponed to September meeting.

10:26: Lauren Weston shares financial updates.

- FY26 Financials:
 - Not yet closed. Working on last fixes with Dave Dore and will share at next meeting.
- FY27 Financials to Date:
 - CDARS not yet set up, but shadow account is now in effect. Karyn Rocheleau recommends asking Michelle Monroe (in capacity as FNLC Treasurer) for help with issue of transactions showing up twice in QBO. Lauren Weston to reach out.
 - Profit & Loss is actual for FY27 as of July 1.

- Budget plan is by grant and mix of real-time updates and forecast.
 - Current projected net is \$10k, which may be smaller due to differences in the way the budget was built this year.
 - Board suggests beginning to explore “what if” scenarios in case grants come up short.
 - Increasing healthcare costs will likely eat into profits.
- Chase card is still open; Lauren Weston is working to close it.
- Karyn Rocheleau motions to accept FY27 Financials to Date; Molly Magnan seconds. All in favor; motion carries.

10:31: Molly Magnan enters.

10:43: Supervisors discuss future banking/CDARS.

- CDARS are effectively laddered CDs that allow full FDIC protection. No penalty for taking money out prematurely other than losing interest. Paperwork is required every month.
- Discussion:
 - Current lease is up November 1. District pays just under \$3k with utilities except Wi-Fi. There may be an increase in monthly rent going into the third year; Lauren Weston to check in with Denis Dubois about whether District is locked in for third year or could go month-to-month.
 - Doesn’t make sense to put money away if District is going to purchase building imminently.
 - In keeping with Operating Reserve Policy, District Manager would like to keep \$150k easily accessible. Cash is still somewhat accessible in a CDARS, but there may be a delay between closing account and receiving money.
- Karyn Rocheleau motions to invest \$100k in a six-month CDARS *if* supervisors do not decide to pursue purchasing a building after viewing several properties on the afternoon of August 12, 2026; Dan Pipes seconds. All in favor; motion carries.
 - If putting money into six-month CDARS, District Manager should set calendar reminder to do paperwork in six months.
 - [decision later made not to open CDARS yet]

10:57: Lauren Weston discusses retaining new accountant.

- Karyn Rocheleau has had a positive experience working with Stephanie Machia of Young Accounting. Board is supportive of exploring.
- Lauren Weston to inquire about whether she has experience working with non-profits.

10:59: Supervisors recap 80 Birthday Celebration and Board Retreat.

- Dan Pipes leads After Action Review (AAR):
 - Intentions/goals:
 - Celebrate the work District has done
 - Establish shared understanding of history
 - Have fun
 - Celebrate Richard Noel and Dayton Fleury
 - What did we do well? What do we want to sustain?
 - Organization, presentation, orchestration of the whole thing
 - Great atmosphere – turnout, music, people had a good time

- Community engagement
- Space worked well
- Food was great
- Coordinating with Paula Boomhower and Julie Wright was smooth
- Nice to give people hats – good for marketing, puts people on a team
- Legislative body came out (6)
- Felt good to reflect – posters, history
- Raffle
- Weekday night
- Music
- What do we want to improve?
 - Too much food – could donate it next time
 - Raffle – more efficient (gift baskets)
 - 50/50 raffle – give more notice about cash
 - Music – plan ahead
 - Speech should be shorter – if that long, give parts of it out to staff – use visual cues
 - Could record it – invite Channel 15 TV
 - Do a headcount
 - Get everyone to do sign in sheet
- Board reflects on retreat:
 - Difficult to remember content of retreat because event happened right after.
 - Long day; hard to give up whole day in the summer.
 - Surprisingly enjoyable.
- Lauren Weston and Vicky Drew to review history.

11:23: Vicky Drew shares contract management connection.

- Pat would be happy to review contracts for District.
- Vicky Drew to introduce Pat to District Manager.

11:25: Lauren Weston shares updated board position descriptions.

- Dan Pipes updated with active language.
- There is a board orientation folder in Google Drive now. Lauren Weston to send link around.

11:28: Lauren Weston shares FY26 Successes and Reporting Document.

- District received 41 of 54 grants applied for (76% success rate) for a total of \$2,434,102.34.
- Supervisors recommend creating updated acronym sheet.
- Vicky Drew to look into connecting with Vermont Community Foundation.

11:37: Lauren Weston reviews proposed strategic planning approach.

- Current plan expires at end of calendar year; goal is to create new plan in near future, but ok if there is not overlap.
- New plan will also be for 3-year period.
- Supervisors discuss shortening mission statement.
- Discussion about meetings:

- Supervisors will attend multiple 2-hour sessions for different thematic areas of plan (e.g., internal, external, agriculture, natural resources, etc.) outside of board meetings. Frequency still TBD but more than quarterly.
- Consider breaking the board and staff into themes based on content area.
- Staff involvement: District Manager to do separate process with staff, but supervisors would also like to interface with staff throughout the process.

11:49: Lauren Weston shares upcoming events.

- Saturday, August 15. 10am-12pm: Wetland & Wildlife in the Refuge
- Tuesday, August 18, 2pm-4pm: Lakeshore Restoration Permitting (Part 1)
- Wednesday, August 19, 10am-2pm: Innovative Riparian Buffer Workshop – Fitzgerald Farm and ICN/RLNSP
- Saturday, September 5, 10am-1pm: Vernal Pool Restoration Workshop

11:49: Next FCNRCD Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, September 16, 2026, from 3pm-5pm at 431 Franklin Park West, Suite 100a, St. Albans, VT. First strategic planning meeting is scheduled for Thursday, September 24, 2026, from 3pm-5pm.

- Molly Magnan will not be available on Tuesdays throughout the school year.

11:52: Dan Pipes motions to adjourn; Karyn Rocheleau seconds. All in favor; motion carries.