

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

January 18, 2024

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Richard Noel (Chair), Carissa Stein (Supervisor), Vicky Drew (Supervisor) on Zoom, Dan Pipes (Supervisor), Sarah Larose (NRCS District Conservationist – arrived at 3:27 pm)

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:

3:12 pm: Meeting called to order. Quorum present.

3:14 pm: Supervisors review minutes from December 15th, 2023 meeting. Discussion around need for better understanding of use of executive session in board meetings, Lauren Weston will reach out to Clare Ireland. Vicky Drew makes a motion to accept minutes, Carissa Stein seconds, all approve, motion carries.

3:16 pm: Richard Noel shared that he attended a Finance Committee Meeting for NRCC and they discussed that appropriations requests would be adjusted proportionally if our full request was not met. Richard Noel notified the board that there is a Legislative Delegation Breakfast for Franklin County on 1/22/24 at the Enosburg Legion at 8 am; three board members and Lauren Weston agreed to attend together and bring our legislative requests to talk 1 on 1 with legislators.

3:27 pm: Sarah Larose arrives

3:28 pm: Vicky Drew updates board that Chris von Alt has resigned from the VACD Executive Committee. Vicky Drew shares that there is an upcoming full VACD board meeting on January 24th from 4 to 6 pm on zoom and encouraged all other board members to participate.

3:29 pm: Sarah Larose gives NRCS update

- Emily Jaquish VACD PA has started as well as Iliana Freiday 401 Natural Resources Specialist
- Emily Lugthart slated to start on the 29th
- CSP IRA Round 2 will be announced, sign up deadline of 3/29/24
- CSP ranking internal deadline being adjusted due to lack of functionality of internal systems, was 1/26 now 2/9
- EQIP/RCP/AMA ranking deadline in March
- FY25 NRCS program sign up will be August 25th
- Dave Gauvin CET retiring, last day 1/31/24

3:37 pm: Board discusses progress being made by Franklin County Field Days committee to find new location. Requested that FCNRCD assist with map making to determine where there might be parcels

that could potentially qualify under requirements for 60 acres, not on Vermont Land Trust land, showing waterways and soils.

4:00 pm: Lauren Weston presented Quarterly Finances for review by Board and discussed anticipated income for next 6 months. Lauren Weston reviews FY24 financials (Balance Sheet, Profit and Loss by Month, Bank Statement, and Projected Future Income). Carissa Stein makes a motion to accept FY24 Financials to Date; Vicky Drew seconds, all approve, motion carries.

4:12 pm: Lauren Weston shared the Project of the Month, the Nutrient Management Planning class through which FCNRCD is assisting 7 farmers with creating a Nutrient Management Plan for their farm. Sarah Larose mentioned that there might be future RCPP funds if FCNRCD wanted to apply for their own NMP class funding in the future since VACD's funds are expiring. Board also discussed recent UVM webinar series about neonics.

4:32 pm: Board discussed possibility of receiving HR/Admin training from Clare Ireland and decided they were not interested.

4:35 pm: Lauren Weston told the board that she has started preliminarily exploring retirement options with an Edward Jones advisor for FCNRCD Staff. Vicky Drew agreed to sit in on a future call with the advisor to learn more.

4:39 pm: Lauren Weston asked Dan Pipes if he would be willing to host a Birding on the Farm event in the spring at his home, he was supportive.

4:40 pm: Lauren Weston presented draft Employee Handbook for discussion by Board members. Board discussed making clear how to get into contact with them if there was a complaint against the District Manager. Vicky Drew and Carissa Stein submitted versions with comments to Lauren Weston to be incorporated. Dan Pipes made a motion to adopt the new Employee Handbook with edits as discussed; Carissa Stein seconded, all approve, motion carries.

5:00 pm: Lauren Weston presented a draft job description and request for applications for the Agricultural Programs Specialist position. Board has some small adjustments such as changing the language from Minimum Qualifications to Preferred Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities, as well as adding in a desire for the candidate to have knowledge of soils. All board members offered to participate in interviews assuming no conflict of interest with the applicant.

5:10 pm: Board determined next meeting to be on Thursday, February 29th at 3 pm.

5:12 pm: Lauren Weston requested Vicky Drew call People's Trust Company to increase debit card limit for the following day to pay for the newsletters that were mailed out.

5:15 pm: Carissa Stein and Vicky Drew discussed the need for a District Manager Annual Review with employee participation. Lauren Weston will coordinate with Carissa Stein to determine how to incorporate employee feedback.

5:17 pm: Richard Noel makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, Dan Pipes seconds, all approve, motion carries.