

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

June 30, 2025

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Orenna Brand (Community Engagement Specialist), Richard Noel (Chair), Vicky Drew (Supervisor), Molly Magnan (Supervisor), Dan Pipes (Supervisor), Lynda Ulrich (Supervisor), Emily Jaquish (VACD Program Assistant), Kate Wettergreen (Ag Programs Manager)

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

1:32: Meeting called to order. Quorum present.

1:33: Round of introductions.

1:34: Lauren Weston is recording the meeting to comply with Open Meeting Law requirements. In future meeting agendas will be posted on the website prior to the meeting, and recordings will be posted on the website after the meeting.

- Lauren Weston to circulate list of allowable reasons to enter Executive Session, and to confirm agenda posting requirements (# locations and how far in advance).

1:37: Richard Noel provides NRCC updates. Legislative appropriation and one-time (unrestricted) funding is confirmed.

1:39: Vicky Drew provides VACD updates. No new updates since last board meeting. Today is Jill Arace's last day as outgoing Executive Director of VACD.

1:41: Supervisors begin discussing increasing board member per-diem rate from \$50 to \$100 for FCNRCD Board Meetings.

1:44: Lynda Ulrich joins.

Vicky Drew motions to increase per-diem to \$100, effective next fiscal year (FY26); Lynda Ulrich seconds. All in favor; motion carries.

- Richard Noel suggests the increase to acknowledge value of farmers and to help with recruitment of future board members.
- Vicky Drew asks about budget impact. Lauren Weston states that ~\$2,800 spent through three quarters in FY25 on Board Member Per Diems and mileage to board meetings – not a significant impact.
- Rate increase will apply to monthly Treasurer-DM meetings as well.
- Lauren Weston to confirm with Lynda Ulrich that she is receiving payments.

1:48: Supervisors review June 12, 2025, meeting minutes. Dan Pipes motions to approve June 12, 2025, meeting minutes; Lynda Ulrich seconds. All in favor; motion carries.

- Vicky Drew inquires whether it is appropriate to include salaries in public meeting minutes. Lauren Weston confirms yes – since we are a municipality.

1:51: Lauren Weston provides updates on building outreach.

- Tim Smith (Executive Director of Franklin County Industrial Development Corporation and Mayor of St. Albans City) mentioned a building being developed in the St. Albans Town Industrial Park.
- Potential timeline of Fall 2026
- Supervisors are in favor of pursuing this option and learning more. Lynda Ulrich advises considering who else would occupy the space.
- Lauren to follow up with Tim Smith on: square footage, price, land lease terms, association fees, parking/event space and map.
 - Request to invite Tim Smith and possibly Andy Crossman to next meeting. Dan Pipes is willing to meet with Andy for a conversation.
- Lauren Weston to connect with Molly Magnan about other parcel.

2:01: Lauren Weston provides vehicle update. 2-year lease on 2025 Toyota Tacoma is finalized and truck is now at FCNRCD, though will not be used until vehicle policy is approved.

- Vehicle policy is drafted. Lauren Weston to send to board members to review.
 - Lauren Weston to update with overnight vehicle policy (staff can keep vehicle overnight in appropriate circumstances and with approval of District Manager).
 - Employee Handbook should be updated with vehicle policy in next round of updates.
- Insurance is set up through VLCT. Traffic violations will be the responsibility of the driver. Lauren Weston to confirm whether insurance covers staff/interns under 25 years old
- Lauren Weston to set up automatic payments for the truck.
- Orenna Brand will be responsible for vehicle maintenance.
- Dan Pipes recommends purchasing and mounting studless snow tires at Stone's Auto Repair ASAP. Remove and store current tires so they can be returned in good shape. Lauren Weston to purchase and have snow tires mounted
- Orenna Brand to look at NACD marketplace for car decals.
- Regarding managing gas payments, Lauren Weston to connect with People's Trust Company about obtaining debit card specifically for gas. Lynda Ulrich recommends establishing credit relationship with one gas station and using personal reimbursements as fallback.

2:16: Lauren Weston provides financial process improvements update. Vicky Drew motions to proceed with Phase 2 of work with Structural Integrity regardless of WUV grant outcome (though we should wait to receive word on WUV funding first before moving forward); Lynda Ulrich seconds. All in favor, motion carries.

- Phase 1 of work with Dave Dore (Structural Integrity) is complete. VCF grant for Phase 2 (just over \$6k) was not awarded, but Lauren Weston has applied for additional funding through WUV, which is under consideration.
- Lauren Weston to share Phase 1 report with board.

2:20: Kate Wettergreen presents scope of work presentation.

- Vicky Drew requests more field tours of projects, and to discuss the *State of the Lake* report at future meeting.
- Lynda Ulrich recommends producing more public reports to demonstrate District's value.
- Lauren Weston to send Lynda Ulrich the Supervisors Handbook.

2:47: Supervisors review upcoming events and meetings.

- July 9, 10am – Missisquoi River Fishing Festival
- July 11, 10am – Loan Programs for Agricultural Producers
- July 15, 10am – Riparian Buffer Workshop in Fairfax
- July 17, 2pm – Composting workshop for home gardeners
- July 28, 4:30pm – Supporting Pollinators and Wildlife
- August 8, 10am – Field Day at Does' Leap Farm
- August 26, 2:30pm – IPM for gardeners
- TBD: Stream Wise, Water Management

2:49: Lauren Weston provides updates on Locally Led Conservation results. \$1.5 million secured for farmstead pool in Franklin County. Funds available August 20, 2025 for FY26 projects.

- Vicky Drew expresses interest in supporting ecological projects going forward.
- Lauren Weston would like increased board involvement in Local Led going forward.

2:57: Lauren Weston review 2025 Tree Sale financials.

- Net income was positive but \$10k less than last year. First year without growth in sales during Lauren Weston's tenure.
- Significantly more staff hours were worked than last year, likely due to increase in staffing. Smoothest year yet.
- Search for new Tree Sale location has not yet begun.
- Lynda Ulrich suggests focusing on expanding participation through marketing efforts. Offers to help starting in December/January.
 - Reach out to realtors to target new homeowners. Distribute flyers at the Home Show in March (too expensive to table, but could collaborate with MRBA/UMATR, FNLC, or NRCS).
 - Lynda Ulrich has connection with Tony McCracken (shed seller at Home Show).

3:08: Supervisors discuss 2026 Board Retreat.

- Tentative date set: June 18th, 2026 – Still under discussion
- Begin planning for next strategic plan and thinking about big picture financials.
- Vicky Drew would like a field visit as part of the Board Retreat.

3:13: Next FCNRC Board Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, August 14 from 1:30pm-3:30pm at 431 Franklin Park West, Suite 100a, St. Albans, VT.

3:16: Dan Pipes makes a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss various projects' design and engineering contractors, Vicky Drew seconds. All in favor; motion carries.

3:23: Molly Magnan exits.

3:48: Supervisors exit Executive Session. Dan Pipes motions to exit Executive Session; Vicky Drew seconds. All in favor; motion carries.

3:49: Lynda Ulrich exits. Quorum remains.

3:49: Supervisors select contractors for design/engineering projects. Vicky Drew motions to select Fitzgerald Environmental Associates for Westcott Brook Floodplain Restoration – Final Design, Rock River Tributary – Final Design, and Lake Carmi State Park Wetland Restoration – 30% Design and to select Dubois & King for Marsh Brook Stream Restoration – Final Design; Dan Pipes seconds. All in favor; motion carries. These decisions were made by selecting the lowest bidder on all four projects with consideration of the reputation, experience, and abilities of each firm.

3:50: Richard Noel motions to adjourn; Dan Pipes seconds. All in favor; motion carries. Meeting adjourns.