

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

November 17, 2021

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Katy Dynarski (Projects Coordinator), Megan Walker (Project Technician), Kate Wettergreen (ECO AmeriCorps Member), Richard Noel (Chair), Phil Parent (Vice Chair), Adrian Rainville (Supervisor), Carissa Stein (NRCS)

Conducted at Richard Noel's shop in Highgate, VT

Minutes recorded by Lauren Weston

Minutes:

9:00 am: Richard Noel begins meeting. At present, only 2 Supervisors in meeting: Richard Noel and Adrian Rainville. Phil Parent to arrive later in meeting at 9:40 am.

9:15 am: Carissa Stein provides NRCS update. There has been no selection of a Northwest Zone District Conservationist, Lauren Gibson will be acting until December 31, 2021. Program deadlines for NRCS are coming later in 2022, but if anyone is working with a farmer who wants to enroll in a program, they should make that known now so that field staff can go to the site before snow covers the ground. Potentially coming in the future is EQIP CIC which might be longer term contract for things like cover cropping, no till, manure injection, etc. Details are still being discussed. FCNRCD might want to consider applying for their own RCPP with NRCS as the partnership is already so well developed.

9:33 am: Richard Noel provides update on NRCC finances and ongoings from committee meetings.

9:40 am: Richard Noel officially calls meeting to order as Phil Parent has arrived.

9:41 am: General discussion about current fertilizer prices. Description of past parity program in dairy that has since ended. Discussion about the role of investment credit.

9:44 am: Supervisor recruitment update. Tyler Webb and Dan Fortin are currently not interested in joining the Board. Richard Noel did speak to Denna Benjamin about joining; she will plan to attend the next meeting to see how things work.

9:47 am: Richard Noel and Lauren Weston discuss banking update. Online banking account needs and update. Eileen Trudell has been removed from bank account following resignation at October meeting.

9:49 am: 2021 October 21 Board Meeting Minutes reviewed. Adrian Rainville makes a motion to approve; Phil Parent seconds. All approve, motion passes.

10:02 am: Discussion about Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss. Error noted on Profit and Loss as uncategorized income needs to be updated. Phil Parent makes motion to approve as corrected; Adrian Rainville seconds. All approve, Balance Sheet and Profit and Loss approved as corrected, motion passes.

10:05 am: Lauren Weston discusses update from recent District Manager meeting where District core services and legislative request were discussed with some Supervisors of other Districts.

10:10 am: Group discusses upcoming annual newsletter content and tree sale. Adrian Rainville asks to ensure we include NRCS program update to get in early. Carissa Stein suggests we include content about

“what is bare root material” for the tree sale as past customers have been confused. Carissa Stein suggests a piece about Japanese Knotweed and learning from MRBA plot at Caleb’s Field in Montgomery. Group discusses Japanese Knotweed and phragmites invasive plants. Lauren Weston updates group that this year there will be bat, bird, and insect houses for sale too. Adrian Rainville thinks his wife might be interested to make some of the bird houses. In the future, plan to work with Missisquoi Valley Union School District to make the bird houses – contact Joe Depatie. Perhaps this year organize for pre-orders for 2023 sale? Carissa Stein noted that Annette Goyne and Lindsey Wight have experience with bat boxes. For 2022 tree sale, Adrian Rainville notes that we will need predator guards for snakes on birdhouses; also consider wild apple trees for folks who hunt.

10:39 am: Megan Walker left meeting

10:40 am: Group discusses how they have managed agricultural ditches:

- Spread removed material on ledges and in pockets in spring so the grass has time to grow
- Consider riprap, plunge pools, head walls around culvert and tile outlets
- Dig a pool upstream of the culvert inlet to let sediment drop out before moving downstream
- Make the ditch parabolic in shape, no vertical walls – they will just cave in
- Ditch needs to be grassed
- In the old days, farmers would take a round pointed shovel and dig ditches out, knew how deep to go because of color change in material
- An experienced excavator can feel the difference between accumulated sediment and the bottom of the original ditch.
- Wet dirt put aside to spread when ground is dry

10:53 am: Lauren Weston poses question to group about needs in farming community around grazing, improved forage, and alternative herd management for Dairy Business Innovation Center proposal. Adrian Rainville raises question about need for more of this work as there are already so many grazing workshops around the state; are offerings sufficient? Group noted that larger dairy farms in the county are likely not going to be interested in participating in this type of cohort. Carissa Stein noted some farmers might be interested in multi-species cover crop; pigs, goat, sheep, and chicken farmers might be interested in participating; youtube videos are a great resource for them and TSPs already; winter bale grazing might be helpful, but farmers need to be willing to put in the labor and time to learn that management style. Another topic of interest is increasing water availability on farms; in Franklin County, springs have been running dry and folks just keep drilling wells. Do farmers need an alternative means of water capture and storage? NRCS could also see value in bringing more grazing consultants to spend a lot of time with farmers transitioning to grazing as grazing plans take a lot of time, energy, and resources.

11:18 am: Next Board meeting will be December 16th at 9 am at St. Albans Police Barracks. Planning for January 20th meeting to be a longer event to dive into a lot of these topics, planning, and annual review for Lauren Weston by the Board that she will prepare in advance.

11:23 am: Meeting ends.