

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

February 29, 2024

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

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.

3:13 pm: Sarah Larose gives NRCS update

- Emily Lughart, newest employee in the NWZ, 401 Natural Resources Specialist (planner).
- informed to halt ranking, as an error was discovered in the efficiency score, this along with other system issues are preventing us from meeting deadlines.
- ACTNOW being utilized in VT, thresholds are set, once applications are ranked, if they meet the threshold they move to pre-approval, if they don't meet the threshold funding is determined after the ranking deadline.
- Dave Gauvin, Civil Engineering Technician has retired.

3:15 pm: Sarah Larose provides update on the effort to find land for the Franklin County Field Days.

3:28 pm: Richard Noel shared that he has a finance committee for NRCC coming up. Vicky Drew shares that the VACD Capacity Build Committee met yesterday; other committees are having more trouble meeting regularly. More board members are needed to help the subcommittees advance. There will not be a statute change related to NRCDs in the legislature this year. Jill Arace is planning to retire in the next year.

3:34 pm: Lauren Weston provides brief update about meeting with Edward Jones advisor to try to structure retirement plans for staff. Currently waiting on proposals back from Edward Jones to present to the board at an upcoming meeting.

3:38 pm: Supervisors review minutes from January 18th, 2024 meeting. Carissa Stein makes a motion to accept minutes, Dan Pipes seconds, all approve, motion carries.

3:39 pm: Lauren Weston reviews Project of the Month: Lake Carmi BMP project funded by VT DEC. Lauren Weston shows the map of potential projects and discusses the outreach for project development that FCNRCD will perform in 2024.

3:48 pm: Group discusses potential for new office building. Lauren Weston articulates need for new space due to NRCS staffing up, technology limitations associated with the NRCS office, and vision for a new office with land and parking. Questions arise about mortgages, rent to own, partnering with other

groups, etc. Lauren Weston will connect with Clare Ireland about the rule around mortgages. Board members agree to assist in search for an office (realtor, friends with connections, zoning rules, etc.)

4:30 pm: Lauren Weston shares that tree sale volunteers are needed April 29th, 30th, and May 1st at the Field Days location.

4:35 pm: Lauren Weston shared her self reflection for 2023 as part of her annual review. Group discussed the need for more support administratively related to the work that only Lauren currently does. Carissa Stein shared feedback from questions asked to staff, board members, and community organizations. Lots of support for the work of FCNRCD and Lauren's leadership.

5:20 pm: Board determined next meeting to be on Wednesday, March 27th at 3 pm.

5:21 pm: Carissa Stein makes a motion to adjourn the meeting, Dan Pipes seconds, all approve, motion carries.