

THOMAS JEFFERSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
February 24, 2021

Remote Participants:

Directors: Pratley (Chair), Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Swanson (joined at 10:06 a.m.), Thompson

Assoc. Directors: Bartz, Merle-Smith, Tingley

Staff: Coates, DaMitz, Gyurisin, Hyatt, Longanecker

Agencies: Cross (DCR), Bayless (NRCS), Kirkland (NRCS)

Absent:

Assoc. Directors: Cowger, Tweardy

The Board of Directors convened a decentralized meeting via Zoom due to the COVID-19 public health emergency.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Pratley called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

ROLL CALL: Ms. Coates called the roll to confirm a quorum of Directors. Attendance was confirmed as listed above.

Motion to Conduct Electronic Meeting:

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved that the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors certify that the nature of the state of emergency caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, as declared by the Governor of Virginia, makes it impracticable or unsafe for the Board to assemble in a single physical location, and further that the purpose of the meeting, including all agenda items as reflected in the meeting's prepared agenda, is to transact or discuss business that is statutorily required or that is necessary to continue operations of the Board and the discharge of the Board's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson

Nays: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Mr. Pratley asked if any comments were received from the public. Ms. Coates confirmed that no public comments were submitted.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA: None.

ACTION ITEMS:

Directors Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Thompson moved to approve the Directors Meeting Minutes for January 27, 2021, as submitted. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson

Nays: None

Budget/Finance Committee Report:

Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements – January 2021:

Mr. Meeks reported that the first installment of the NACD technical assistance grant was received in February, DCR funding for the third quarter has not yet been received but is expected by the end of this month, and the October check on the uncleared check report finally cleared this month.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to accept the report as presented. Ms. Daughters seconded the motion.

The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson

Nays: None

Mr. Meeks related that the audit exit interview has been postponed to next week.

Mr. Pratley left the meeting at 10:15 a.m. Mr. Thompson took the chair in Mr. Pratley's absence.

Climate Committee Report:

Mr. Bartz reported that he will be going on parental leave. The committee has selected Ms. Daughters and Ms. Jones as co-chairs.

Mr. Bartz reported that the committee is following several bills in this General Assembly session. One of the main bills is SB 1374, which creates a carbon sequestration task force at the state level, and the committee would like to get healthy soils specifically added to this bill. The committee agreed to change its name to the Healthy Soils and Climate Committee. The committee will be looking at goals to include in the strategic plan and annual plan of work.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to change the committee's name from "Climate Committee" to "Healthy Soils and Climate Committee." Mr. Murray seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Swanson, Thompson

Nays: None

Absent: Pratley

Ms. Daughters shared updates from the Regenerative Agriculture Forum on February 7, noting Rep. Abigail Spanberger's bills regarding loans for carbon sequestration practices and domestic greenhouse gas credits. She also shared information regarding recent and upcoming soil health webinars.

Ms. Coates asked the Board to consider sending a letter requesting that the District be included as a supporter of the Virginia Soil Health Coalition.

MOTION: Mr. Collins moved to send a letter requesting that the District be a member of the Virginia Soil Health Coalition. Mr. Murdoch seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Swanson, Thompson
Nays: None
Absent: Pratley

Mr. Thompson noted Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack's support for tax credits for carbon sequestration and environmental services.

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to accept the Healthy Soils and Climate Committee's report. Mr. Murray seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Swanson, Thompson
Nays: None
Absent: Pratley

Mr. Pratley rejoined the meeting at 10:30 a.m. and resumed the chair.

Agriculture Committee Report:

Mr. Thompson noted that three new approvals and two project increases are listed on the ratification agenda. Mr. Thompson reported that the Agriculture Committee discussed DCR's request that the District complete a tillage survey. Concerns were raised regarding lack of advance notification to landowners and that having two people per vehicle for the survey is not compliant with current COVID policies. The Agriculture Committee recommended that the Board decline participation in the tillage survey at this time. Mr. Lucas and Mr. Longanecker participated on a call with DCR where these concerns were voiced, and the DCR representative said they would be taken into consideration.

MOTION: Mr. Campbell moved that the District decline DCR's request to do the tillage survey. Mr. Meeks seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson
Nays: None

Mr. Thompson reported that the Agriculture Committee recommended using priority mail for cost-share checks over \$600 to provide tracking information and hopefully preclude reissuing checks due to mail delays. Directors and staff discussed the payment process, additional mailing costs, and producers' need for prompt payment after project completion. Staff can also accommodate scheduled in-person check pickups. The topic will be revisited in future to see if mail service has improved.

MOTION: Mr. Collins moved to use priority mail for cost-share checks over \$600. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed 11-1 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson
Nays: Meeks

Mr. Thompson related that videos have been proposed as an alternative to the in-person tours originally planned to highlight BMPs completed through the equine grant program. Three video production quotations were solicited. The Agriculture Committee recommended the selection of Paula Totten. Grant funding will cover much of the cost.

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to select Paula Totten as the videographer for these equine projects. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson
Nays: None

Mr. Thompson reported that the committee also discussed a cost-overrun associated with a chicken litter shed and the new agriculture site visit questionnaire. Ms. Coates provided more information on how site visit questionnaires will be used. The outreach flyer and cover crop application were not discussed in the committee meeting due to time constraints. Mr. Longanecker noted a producer complaint regarding failed cover crop plantings. Mr. Thompson stated that the District is constrained by the programmatic requirements and cutoff dates for cover crops, but cover crop BMP dates will be altered to recognize the effects of climate change and warmer fall seasons.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to adopt the Agriculture Committee report. Mr. Murdoch seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson
Nays: None

Water Resources Committee Report:

Mr. Murray called attention to the project approved by delegated authority and listed on the ratification agenda. Mr. Murray reported that the letter regarding the Slabtown Meadow project had been finalized.

Mr. Gyurisin reported that the urban program will be out of CCAP funding after next month's approvals. He will be requesting additional funding from the City of Charlottesville, as he has a waitlist started and more site visits coming in March. Some ACAP funding remains and additional applications are expected shortly.

Ms. Coates explained that the City of Charlottesville held back CCAP funding in a previous year when program demand was lower.

Ms. Coates reported that there will be a shift in staff responsibilities for the septic program. Ms. Abowd will be taking over the Goldmine program, Ms. Kirschner will be taking over the Tye program, and Ms. Hyatt will provide oversight and training while still coordinating the Hardware program that will end in June. Generic program emails have been created to allow publications to stay current through staff changes.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to accept the Water Resources Committee report. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson
Nays: None

RATIFICATION AGENDA:

1. **Ratification List:** Water Resources Committee; Agriculture Committee (see attached list)

| Ratification Agenda - February 24, 2021 | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---------------------|----------------------|------------|----------|---------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------|----------------------------|---------------|
| Item | Delegated Authority | Last Name / Business | Contract # | Instance | Practice Code | Estimated Cost Share | Potential Tax Credit | Final Tax Credit | Conservation Plan Approval | Approval Date |
| Agriculture Committee | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Thompson | Teel/Clover Green | 02-20-0012 | 362223 | SL-6W | \$5,000.00 | | | | 1/28/21 |
| 2 | Thompson | Deike | 02-21-0072 | 424562 | FR-1 | \$2,802.12 | \$768.75 | - | Yes | 2/18/21 |
| 3 | Thompson | Deike | 02-21-0072 | 424563 | FR-3 | \$9,873.18 | - | - | Yes | 2/18/21 |
| Project Increases | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Thompson | Haines | 02-20-0160 | 387140 | SL-6W | \$3,772.90 | | | | 2/18/21 |
| 5 | Thompson | QTIP Marital Trust | 02-20-0178 | 388399 | SL-6W | \$7,699.50 | \$233.12 | | | 2/18/21 |
| Water Resources Committee | | | | | | | | | | |
| 6 | Murray | Cabbell | 02-21-0073 | 424730 | RB-1 | \$150.00 | n/a | n/a | n/a | 2/18/21 |

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to approve the Ratification Agenda. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed 12-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Meeks, Murray, Pratley, Swanson, Thompson

Nays: None

COOPERATING AGENCIES REPORTS:

DCR: Ms. Cross summarized information from her monthly written report (*see attached report for details*) and shared other items of interest. She noted that the Soil and Water Conservation Board will meet on March 16 at 11:00 a.m., April 21 at 10:00 a.m., and May 20 at 10:00 a.m. Virtual cost-share training sessions will take place on June 2 and June 8.

NRCS: Mr. Kirkland reported that his agency is still in COVID Phase 1 status: no guests, limited staff in office, and telework strongly encouraged. NRCS will announce preapprovals for projects in mid-April. CSP re-enrolls have been submitted. They are working on status reviews for CREP projects. NRCS staff will be attending an all-employees meeting tomorrow with new leadership.

Mr. Bayless reported that he has shared the local workgroup questionnaire with District staff. This will be discussed further at March Agriculture Committee meeting. The report is due May 1, 2021.

VCE: Ms. Swanson reported that her office is still only open by appointment. They have an outside drop box and pickup location for soil boxes. Ag agents are still doing farm visits. Albemarle's annual well water clinic will take place in May and is open to residents of any county, with drive-by sample kit pickup on May 24 and sample drop-offs on May 26, and the interpretation meeting will likely be virtual.

DEQ: DEQ provided a written report.

FSA: No updates.

TJWRPF: Ms. Coates related that she and Ms. Abowd met yesterday regarding easement inspection packets. Foundation directors will be inspecting nine easements this year, and staff will do letters-in-lieu for the other nine.

VAWCD/NACD: Mr. Pratley congratulated Mr. Meeks on his election as NACD Southeast Region Chair. Mr. Meeks reported that the NACD recently held its annual meeting with eight days of virtual sessions, and VASWCD area meetings are underway. Ms. Coates noted the affordability of the NACD

annual meeting this year allowed her and Ms. Kirschner to participate. Mr. Pratley suggested inviting the NACD Southeast Region Representative to attend a Board meeting.

STAFF REPORTS:

Ms. Coates noted the site visit log and staff newsletter included in the meeting packet. She reported on recent staff trainings and carbon farm planning opportunities.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Directors offered no comments at this time.

CLOSED SESSION:

Mr. Thompson summarized a request from Overton McGehee regarding acquisition of land in Fluvanna County to be placed under conservation easement. Directors discussed the process for going into closed session to consider this proposal.

Mr. Collins and Ms. Swanson left the meeting at 12:09 p.m. Mr. Bartz left the meeting at 12:14 p.m. Mr. Meeks left the meeting at 12:25 p.m.

MOTION: Ms. Jones moved to enter closed session for matters involving the acquisition of real property for a public purpose regarding the District, in accordance with Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711(A)(3), and to invite Associate Directors, Anne Coates, Lisa Hyatt, Chris Gyurisin, and Amy Moyer to participate in the closed session. Mr. Murray seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

Absent: Collins, Meeks, Swanson

Mr. Easter left the meeting at 12:26 p.m.

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to reconvene in open session. Mr. Murray seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

Absent: Collins, Easter, Meeks, Swanson

CERTIFICATION: Ms. Jones moved, pursuant to Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712(D), to certify that, to the best of the Board's knowledge, only matters lawfully exempted and as identified in the motion by which the closed session was convened were heard or discussed by this Board during its closed session.

Ms. Daughters seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

Absent: Collins, Easter, Meeks, Swanson

MOTION: Ms. Jones moved that, in response to Mr. Thompson's request from Overton McGehee and the interested parties in Fluvanna, the Board finds that it is unable to be of assistance as per the request to purchase and own property at this time; however, the Board recognizes the conservation value of the land in discussion and would like to offer any services and support the District can within its current capacity. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

Absent: Collins, Easter, Meeks, Swanson

Mr. Thompson will convey this message to Mr. McGehee.

ADJOURNMENT:

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to adjourn the meeting. Mr. Murray seconded the motion. The motion passed 8-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

Absent: Collins, Easter, Meeks, Swanson

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 1:02 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Recording Secretary

Approved: _____
Chair