

THOMAS JEFFERSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
April 28, 2021

Remote Participants:

Directors: Pratley (Chair), Collins, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Meeks, Murdoch, Murray, Swanson

Assoc. Directors: Cowger (joined at 10:07 a.m.), Tingley

Staff: Coates, DaMitz, Gyurisin, Hyatt, Longanecker, Moyer

Agencies: Cross (DCR), Lipinski (NRCS)

Absent:

Directors: Campbell, Easter, Thompson

Assoc. Directors: Bartz, Merle-Smith, 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 10:04 a.m.

ROLL CALL: 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. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

ANNOUNCEMENTS: None.

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

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA: None.

ACTION ITEMS:

Directors Meeting Minutes:

MOTION: Mr. Pratley noted a correction to the minutes. Mr. Meeks moved to approve the Directors Meeting Minutes for March 31, 2021, as corrected. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

Budget/Finance Committee Report:

Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements – March 2021:

Mr. Meeks related that he reviewed the Treasurer's report and documentation provided for the month.

Credit Card and Expense Reimbursement Policy Updates:

Mr. Meeks and Ms. Moyer summarized proposed travel reimbursement policy amendments. Travel reimbursements would now be submitted quarterly by the 15th day of the month following the end of the first, second, and third quarter and by the last day of the fourth quarter. The Budget/Finance Committee recommends permitting travel reimbursement submissions for this most recent quarter to be submitted up to April 30 and then following the timeframes laid out in the amended policy thereafter.

Ms. Moyer outlined proposed credit card policy amendments. Current policy requirements for cards to be signed out of the office and returned the same day are difficult to follow when working remotely. The policy amendments would remove those restrictions. Ms. Coates commented that the sign-out provisions go back to when staff members shared cards, but staff members currently all have their own assigned cards in their names with separate statements, so it is easy to track who spent what, where, and when. Mr. Meeks noted that he reviews all expenditures on a monthly basis for reconciliation purposes.

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to approve the Treasurer's report and policy updates. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

Education Committee Report:

Scholarship Awards:

Mr. Meeks reported that 13 scholarship applications were received, with many deserving applicants. It was noted in reviewing past scholarship awards that some monies went unclaimed or were returned as unused by students who have withdrawn.

Mr. Collins stated that 13 applications is more than double the usual number, and it took a fair amount of time to go through them. He commented that this would be a good year to try to make more awards with that many applicants and given that some past scholarship money was not used.

Ms. Coates explained that unclaimed scholarships went back into the general fund and were not earmarked or dedicated for scholarships. The Education Committee would like to request that \$3,250 from unclaimed previous awards be made available for awards now or dedicated for future scholarships. The Education Committee recommends awards totaling \$5,000, using \$1,500 of the unclaimed funds in addition to \$3,500 proposed in the FY22 Budget, and putting the \$1,750 balance remaining from the unclaimed funds into reserves.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to allow unclaimed funds in the amount of \$3,250 to be utilized for scholarships, increasing the award pool for scholarships to be paid in FY22 and putting the balance into reserves. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

Ms. DaMitz related that the Education Committee recommends the following scholarship awards:

- Jacob Barlow: \$1,000
- Karina Long: \$1,000

- Amber Thompson: \$1,000
- Rebecca Taylor: \$500 (Eddie Wood Memorial)
- Elizabeth Rosson: \$500
- Haley Rosson: \$500
- Emily Chang: \$500

The Education Committee recommends forwarding Jacob Barlow's application to the VASWCD Educational Foundation for consideration in their scholarship program.

MOTION: Ms. Jones moved to approve the scholarship awards as recommended by the Education Committee and to move Jacob Barlow's application forward for the state award. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

Ms. Jones and Mr. Pratley thanked the application reviewers for their work.

Mr. Collins suggested that they consider larger awards in future, perhaps giving fewer awards but in larger amounts, as \$500 does not buy many books anymore. Mr. Pratley asked about the sources of scholarship funding. Ms. Coates said it is general fund, not an earmarked or dedicated source of funding specific for scholarships. Mr. Meeks recalled that the Eddie Wood scholarship started when Mr. Wood's family gave money to the District after his passing, but it was not enough to endow future scholarships, and there have been times when no scholarships were given during very lean years for the District.

Agriculture Committee Report:

Mr. Lucas reported that the all matters were routine and the Agriculture Committee did not meet this month. Mr. Longanecker noted that Mr. Thompson approved three items via delegated authority.

Materials Cost – SWCB and DCR Response to Request from TJSWCD and SVSWCD:

Mr. Longanecker summarized the Soil and Water Conservation Board's response to concerns about how increased material costs have affected active projects, primarily structural practices. The SWCB approved a new policy starting July 1 where practices carried over into FY22 may be paid with the new cost list adopted in July 2021, rather than being locked into the cost list associated with the year the contract was approved. Districts will be permitted to transfer FY22 funds back to previous fiscal years to find those cost overruns. Mr. Longanecker said the District has about \$1.5 million in projects under construction from the current fiscal year and last year's projects as well.

Mr. Murdoch asked at what point do they reconsider it if prices go back to normal. Mr. Longanecker replied that there is a provision for FY22 that gives the ability to adjust cost lists mid-year if needed, rather than being locked in for 12 months. Mr. Collins asked if cost lists are statewide or per District. Mr. Longanecker replied that each District is responsible for developing its own average cost list.

Proposed FY22 VACS Program Allocations – Cost-Share and TA Increases:

Mr. Longanecker related that there is record funding statewide for FY22 VACS allocations. TJSWCD is slated to get almost \$3.3 million for cost-share in FY22. They are running some scenarios and discussing strategy. The allocation comes with \$401,000 in technical assistance funding.

Ms. Coates noted that this increased cost-share funding has an impact not only on staffing levels for field work but also on administrative and office duties, as well as the amount of work the committees are reviewing. Ms. Jones asked if they have to spend it all in a year. Ms. Coates replied that they have one

year to allocate the cost-share funding; unobligated funds will go back to DCR, as will a portion of the technical assistance funding if they obligate less than 90 percent of the cost-share allocation. Ms. Coates noted that they are budgeting around a target of obligating \$2.4 million; if they go over that, they would carry over the additional TA for use in the following year.

Transfer Acceptance of CB VACS in the amount of \$50,000 from Lord Fairfax SWCD:

Mr. Longanecker related that the District had approximately \$1.4 million in cost-share for FY21. They have obligated all of that with the approval set for today. They are requesting a \$50,000 transfer from Lord Fairfax to approve another project or two and allow for cost increases. This transfer will not come with TA funding. The Agriculture Committee and staff recommend acceptance of the transfer.

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to accept the \$50,000 transfer from the Lord Fairfax District without TA. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Collins, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Meeks, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Swanson
Nays: None

MOTION: Mr. Murray moved to accept the Agriculture Committee report. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Collins, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Meeks, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Swanson
Nays: None

Healthy Soils and Climate Committee Report:

Ms. Daughters reported that the Healthy Soils and Climate Committee met on April 20. Recent and upcoming trainings and seminars were noted. Committee members provided feedback on the first pass at strategic plan and annual work plan topics, suggesting that they incorporate co-benefits, locality work on healthy soils and carbon sequestration issues, and investigating carbon markets.

Ms. Coates expressed appreciation for the Committee's work in drafting this language.

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to accept the Healthy Soils and Climate Committee report. Mr. Murray seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Collins, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Meeks, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Swanson
Nays: None

Strategic Plan – Update on Draft and Collecting Input from Committees:

Ms. Coates shared that she is collecting input from committees on edits to the strategic plan. The new strategic plan will be a standalone new document rather than a redline update of the previous plan for clarity. Ms. Coates will compile a draft for review in May and adoption in June. Notes from the facilitated session last year have been shared with the committees related to the topics.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Committee Minutes:** Budget/Finance Committee (4/19/2021)
2. **Consent Items:** N/A

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Ms. Daughters seconded the motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:
Ayes: Collins, Daughters, Jones, Lucas, Meeks, Murdoch, Murray, Pratley, Swanson
Nays: None

RATIFICATION AGENDA:

1. **Ratification List:** Agriculture Committee; Dam Committee; Budget/Finance Committee; Personnel/Operations Committee; Water Resources Committee (see attached list)

Ratification Agenda - April 28, 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	Amos	02-21-0083	428498	SL-6W	\$ 57,232.76	-	-	Yes	4/21/21
2	Thompson	White	02-21-0084	428502	SL-6W	\$ 100,000.00	-	-	Yes	4/21/21
3	Thompson	Hall	02-21-0082	428433	SL-6W	\$ 1,713.31	-	-	Yes	4/21/21
4	Thompson	Graham II	02-21-0071	428429	SL-6W	\$ 7,904.24	-	-	Yes	4/21/21
Project Increases										
5	Thompson	Morris	02-21-0053	420359	WP-2W	\$ 157.00				4/21/21
6	Thompson	Albemarle Edgehill Farm	02-21-0071	423061	SL-6W	\$ 255.01				4/21/21
7	Thompson	Albemarle Edgehill Farm	02-21-0071	423067	SL-6W	\$ 750.00				4/21/21
8	Thompson	Albemarle Edgehill Farm	02-21-0071	423068	SL-6W	\$ 255.00				4/21/21
9	Thompson	White	02-21-0056	421349	SL-6W	\$ 6,281.76				4/21/21
Dam Committee										
10	Lucas	Contract Renewal - Dam Mowing and Maintenance LLC								4/21/21
Budget/Finance Committee										
11	Meeks	Donation to VASWCD Educational Foundation Golf Tournament								4/15/21
Personnel/Operations Committee										
12	Pratley	COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick and Expanded Family and Medical Leave Policy (effective 4/1/21 to 9/30/21)								4/26/21
Water Resources Committee										
13	Murray	Gontarz	02-21-007	-	CL-1	\$ 3,500.00	-	-	Yes	4/23/21
14	Murray	Babinaeu	02-21-008	-	CL-1	\$ 1,895.63	-	-	Yes	4/23/21
15	Murray	Peabody School	02-21-009	-	CL-3	\$ 3,500.00	-	-	Yes	4/23/21
16	Murray	Lewandowski	02-21-010	-	CL-3	\$ 3,094.61	-	-	Yes	4/23/21

Mr. Pratley called attention to the items approved by delegated authority. He noted that the COVID-19 Emergency Paid Sick and Expanded Family Medical Leave Policy was updated per instruction at the last meeting, and the policy document is included in the Board packet.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to approve the Ratification Agenda. Mr. Murray seconded the motion.

The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

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

Nays: None

COOPERATING AGENCIES REPORTS:

DCR: Ms. Cross summarized information from her monthly written report (*see attached report for details*) and highlighted upcoming meetings and trainings. She noted the importance of the FY22 average cost list, new tax credit legislation, the small herd initiative, and Area II SWCB nominees.

NRCS: Mr. Lipinski reported on RCPP awards. He also related that the Farmville area has requested over \$7 million of livestock funds, over \$1 million for seasonal high tunnels, and over \$1 million in crop projects. About \$1.3 million was requested for wildlife funds statewide. CSP funding can be added which extends farms from normal BMP and EQIP activities to the next level to address pasture

management, wildlife, and better cropping systems. The national payment schedule core team is doing an economic analysis for the increased supply and materials costs since the pandemic.

VCE: Ms. Swanson noted the well water testing clinic at the end of May.

DEQ: DEQ provided a written report.

FSA: No updates.

TJWRPF: Ms. Coates thanked staff for help in organizing the easement inspection packets. Foundation Directors have volunteered to conduct the easement inspections. Ms. Abowd is assisting with some of the Foundation administrative duties.

Mr. Murray invited any interested Directors to join him for easement inspections. Mr. Pratley noted that each easement will now be inspected in person every other year, with a landowner letter on the off year. Mr. Pratley asked staff to update the Foundation Director list on the website and bring reappointments to the District Board when necessary.

VASWCD/NACD: Mr. Meeks reported that area meetings are occurring this spring. He encouraged Directors to sign up for the Area II meeting. He will attend the VASWCD Educational Foundation golf tournament on May 19. He has attended one in-person Association meeting. It has not yet been determined whether the summer VASWCD Board meeting or annual meeting will be virtual or in person. Mr. Meeks will miss the July District Board meeting, as he will be attending the NACD meeting in Chicago at that time.

STAFF REPORTS:

Ms. Coates complimented Ms. DaMitz's work in organizing the scholarship packets and advertising the opportunity. She thanked Mr. Longanecker for his efforts on the letter to the SWCB presenting possible solutions to the materials cost issue. She also expressed appreciation to Ms. Daughters and Ms. Jones for their leadership on the Healthy Soils and Climate Committee while Mr. Bartz is on family leave. Ms. Coates noted NACD's interview of Mr. Meeks. Several staff members have received both first and second vaccinations. Ms. Coates asked that strategic plan edits be submitted by May 12. Ms. Coates noted that UVA submitted several stormwater plans recently, and she is discussing extending the contract past June 30.

Ms. DaMitz reported that the combined Area I and II Virtual Envirothon testing week is complete, and results will be shared at a Zoom meeting tonight.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Mr. Pratley reported that staffing levels will be discussed in the Personnel/Operations Committee meeting on May 5.

Mr. Lucas reported that monitors will be installed on the high-hazard dams this week, and the dam mowing contract was renewed.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 11:56 a.m.

Submitted by: _____
Recording Secretary

Approved: _____
Chair