

**THOMAS JEFFERSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**  
**November 17, 2021**

**Remote Participants:**

*Directors:* Pratley (Chair), Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Thompson

*Staff:* Coates, Hyatt, Longanecker, Moyer, Talley

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

**Absent:**

*Directors:* Easter, Jones, Meeks, Murdoch, Swanson

*Assoc. Directors:* Bartz, Cowger, Merle-Smith, Tingley, 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 10:05 a.m.

**ROLL CALL:** Ms. Moyer 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 City of Charlottesville and County of Albemarle, 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. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

**GUESTS:** 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. Thompson moved to approve the Directors Meeting Minutes for October 27, 2021. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

**Nominating Committee Selection:**

Mr. Pratley shared that he would decline to serve as chair again, as he has served as chair for six years. He does not plan to run for reelection at the end of this term.

Mr. Easter, Mr. Murray, and Mr. Campbell offered to serve on the Nominating Committee.

**Personnel/Operations Committee Report:**

*Vaccine Policy:*

Ms. Coates spoke to the need to have a COVID vaccine policy in place before advertising the education position due to the in-person interaction with children.

**MOTION:** Mr. Murray moved to approve the COVID-19 Vaccination and Testing Policy. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion.

Mr. Campbell expressed concern about the District enforcing health policies, impacts on volunteers, future vaccination boosters, and tracking requirements.

Ms. Coates stated that the policy would apply to volunteers who help with the District's educational programs, not Directors. Staff and volunteers will be around a lot of children in an environment where they may not be vaccinated, and she is concerned about the District's potential liability or risk. Ms. Coates drafted the policy based on a model policy provided by Terri Higgins, VASWCD's HR consultant.

Mr. Campbell noted that vaccination may not prevent transmission.

Ms. Coates explained that booster requirements will be based on CDC recommendations.

Mr. Lucas commented that he agrees with Mr. Campbell on a number of issues, but schools may require staff to be vaccinated, and the District should not single out the education position as the only one for which vaccination would be required.

Mr. Murray asked about any objections among current staff. Ms. Coates replied no, all current employees are vaccinated. Ms. Coates would like to have a policy before starting the interview process for the education position to be sure the new employee can work in the schools. Ms. Coates noted that other staff members also participate in education programs, and she would like to avoid workplace challenges with mixed status employees. Ms. Coates suggested clarifying that "volunteer" does not include Directors.

Mr. Campbell asked other volunteers or contractors, such as a fencing contractor who puts on a field day. Ms. Coates said the policy applies to those participating in in-person meetings or group activities. She considers group activities to be things like Envirothon or Camp Albemarle, with 200 or 300 kids going through the program in a week.

Mr. Pratley noted that the District can require things of people who come to participate in activities. Ms. Coates said that the policy applies to those "representing the District" and a guest speaker would not be covered by that.

Mr. Longanecker noted that he has not had a discussion with his team regarding boosters. He asked if this policy requires boosters. Ms. Coates replied that booster requirements would follow what is recommended by the CDC.

Mr. Talley asked what current booster requirements are. Ms. Coates said there is eligibility for boosters now but the definition of “fully vaccinated” has not changed. She said that if the definition of “fully vaccinated” changes to include boosters, that is what would trigger the requirement.

Ms. Cross suggested using the phrase “fully vaccinated” in the policy document. Mr. Murray agreed, and he asked that the policy expire in a year unless renewed. Mr. Collins concurred they should revisit the policy in a year.

Mr. Longanecker commented that some staff may be hesitant to receive a booster every six months.

Mr. Campbell reiterated his comments regarding the District’s involvement in health policy and keeping databases of health status.

Mr. Pratley asked the Board to consider approval of the policy as revised during discussion. Mr. Pratley and Ms. Coates reviewed the changes: revise to say “fully vaccinated,” insert a one-year sunset date unless renewed, and clarify that “volunteers” does not apply to Directors.

A roll call vote was then conducted. The motion passed 6-1 by the following vote:

Ayes: Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: Campbell

*Staff Incentive – Holiday:*

Ms. Coates presented the Personnel/Operations Committee’s recommendation for staff incentives totaling \$10,000, the same as last year. She commented on how hard staff has worked as they continue to deal with COVID challenges while maintaining an exceptional level of workload and production.

**MOTION:** Mr. Thompson moved to approve \$10,000 for holiday staff incentives. Mr. Murray seconded the motion.

Mr. Collins asked if they have the same number of employees as last year. Ms. Coates replied yes, the same number of employees would be receiving the bonus, as two employees who recently departed are still on the payroll system, both extended their last days of employment to ease the transition, and the incentive payment is based on the past six months’ performance.

A roll call vote was then conducted. The motion passed 7-0 by the following vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

*Transition Pay Options:*

Mr. Pratley stated that the District will be moving to biweekly payroll to deal with some compliance issues.

Ms. Coates explained that Terri Higgins recommended payroll changes for easier compliance with laws on overtime pay. Albemarle County is currently making the same change, which allowed the District to look at how Albemarle is handling transition pay options to assist employees in changing from monthly to biweekly pay. Ms. Coates said some District staff have expressed a potential need for these options. The Board of Directors agreed in concept last month, with a written policy to be brought forward this month.

Mr. Murray asked if leave cash-out applies any time or only during the transition. Ms. Coates said this is a one-time option, to be paid in January.

Ms. Moyer related that full-time employees are currently paid monthly on the last day of the month, so they would typically receive a full month's worth of pay in January. With the transition to biweekly pay, there will be one paycheck in January that represents two weeks of pay, and the next check will not come out until February 4. Bridge pay or leave cash-out would allow people to get extra money in January, the transition month. Thereafter, employees will receive at least two biweekly paychecks each month and receive about the same amount per month as they would have on the old schedule.

Mr. Murray commented that he is generally opposed to leave cash-out because it encourages people to not take breaks. Ms. Coates reiterated that this is a one-time option to transition to the new cycle.

A roll call vote was then conducted. The motion passed 7-0 by the following vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

### **Budget/Finance Committee Report:**

Mr. Lucas reported that the Budget/Finance Committee did not meet this month. He has looked over the financial reports.

Ms. Moyer noted that revenues are coming in close to budget, while expenses are under budget largely due to savings on personnel costs with the Conservation Specialist position not filled yet.

#### *Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements – October 2021:*

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to approve the Treasurer's Report and financial statements for October 2021. Mr. Thompson seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

### **Agriculture Committee Report:**

Mr. Thompson noted that the Agriculture Committee did not meet this month.

Mr. Longanecker related that staff have started cover crop inspections and verifying planting dates. The next Agriculture Committee meeting will be held December 1, with a bunch of approvals and end-of-year tax credits on the docket.

### **Dam Committee:**

Mr. Lucas reported that Mr. Talley, Ms. Abowd, and he conducted owner inspections for dams on Route 15. Additional inspections will be done with Charles Wilson, the dam engineer. Mr. Talley said PE inspections are scheduled for December 7 for South Anna 3, 4, 5, and 6B.

### **Donation/Sponsorship Requests:**

#### *VASWCD Annual Meeting Sponsorship Request:*

Ms. Coates shared the sponsorship request from VASWCD. The District contributed \$1,000 towards the video production training last year. The District normally pays a \$50 booth fee for the annual meeting.

Mr. Pratley suggested a donation of \$50, the usual booth fee, as a token. He did not see a need for sponsorship advertising. Several Directors expressed agreement.

**MOTION:** Mr. Thompson moved to contribute \$50 towards the annual online meeting. Mr. Campbell seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

Ms. Coates will bring any requests to sponsor a specific training session for future consideration.

*Raffle for Education Foundation:*

Ms. Moyer stated that the request letter asks Districts to contribute a minimum of \$100 and receive raffle tickets in exchange, which the Districts would then distribute as they see fit. She said Mr. Meeks was not comfortable with that idea and staff are not necessarily comfortable with accounting for that. Ms. Moyer offered to collect any individual donations and forward a spreadsheet of purchases to VASWCD.

*Virginia Forage and Grassland Council Sponsorship Request:*

Mr. Longanecker related that the Virginia Forage and Grassland Council will have four events across the state for the 2022 Winter Forage Conference. Districts within the area of each conference are asked to be single-day conference sponsors, giving the District a table for display, admission to the conference, and listing as a sponsor. Mr. Longanecker said the events typically draw 150 to 200 farmers per location.

Mr. Longanecker just started his first year of a three-year term as a technical advisor for the VFGC Board.

Mr. Campbell agreed that these are good meetings. He would prefer to pay the registration fee for two employees to attend the nearest meeting, rather than pay a sponsorship fee, as the meetings are outside of this District.

Mr. Longanecker stated that Culpeper SWCD is sponsoring the event and will have a table there, so they could try to join up with them. TJSWCD has historically sent four to five staff members to these events.

Ms. Cross noted that a number of SWCDs do pay the \$150 sponsorship, such as John Marshall, Culpeper, and Loudon.

Mr. Pratley asked how many farmers from this District are expected to attend the event in Rapidan and whether a table would be helpful to outreach. Mr. Longanecker replied yes, the events are popular, and they see quite a few farmers come up from Louisa and Albemarle. Mr. Longanecker thinks the topic will draw wide interest.

**MOTION:** Mr. Thompson moved to approve the \$150 sponsorship. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion.

Mr. Murray asked if this event was a priority on the outreach list. Ms. Coates said this event is new to the list, as they have not had a table or been a sponsor before, but it should reach both the target audience in the agricultural community and others who are curious about the topic. Mr. Longanecker commented that having a table and presence there would be a benefit in connecting with people that they might not reach otherwise.

Mr. Pratley asked if the table would be manned by staff. Mr. Longanecker replied yes, and all fees will be refunded if the event is canceled due to COVID concerns. Mr. Thompson commented that this may be an opportunity for recruitment as well.

A roll call vote was then conducted. The motion passed 7-0 by the following vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

**Albemarle County Stream Health Initiative (SHI):**

Ms. Coates related that Albemarle County is pursuing initiatives in the stream health program other than CBPA. She and Mr. Longanecker worked with Laurel Williamson to draft language for potential support for an additional staff person on the Ag team and additional funding for ACAP.

Mr. Murray encouraged Directors to look at the Albemarle County website for additional information on the SHI proposals.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

- Committee Minutes:** Budget/Finance Committee (10/27/2021)

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to adopt the Consent Agenda. Mr. Murray seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

**RATIFICATION AGENDA:**

- Ratification List:** Water Resources Committee, Personnel/Operations Committee (see attached list)

<b>Ratification Agenda - November 17, 2021</b>										
Item	Delegated Authority	Last Name / Business	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Potential Tax Credit	Final Tax Credit	Conservation Plan Approval	Approval Date
<b>Water Resources Committee</b>										
1	Murray	Salzman	02-21-027	n/a	CL-3	\$ 3,500.00	n/a	n/a	n/a	11/4/2021
<b>Personnel/Operations Committee</b>										
2	Pratley	Convey TJSWCD's Support for DEQ to Review all Utility Scale Solar Projects of over 5 Megawatts								10/8/2021

**MOTION:** Mr. Thompson moved to approve the Ratification Agenda. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed 7-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Collins, Daughters, Lucas, Murray, Pratley, Thompson

Nays: None

**COOPERATING AGENCIES REPORTS:**

**DCR:** Ms. Cross summarized information from her monthly written report (*see attached report for details*). She called attention to end-of-lifespan verifications, closeout of the RMP TRC grant funds, COIA training requirements, tax credit changes, conservation planner certifications, average buffer width corrections, spot checks, DSWC staffing updates, and upcoming meetings.

Mr. Thompson left the meeting at 11:30 a.m.

**NRCS:** Mr. Bayless shared updates on staff changes, COVID operations status, and application and ranking deadlines.

**VCE:** No updates.

**DEQ:** DEQ provided a written report.

**FSA:** No updates.

**TJWRP Foundation:** Ms. Coates reported on a response from legal counsel regarding a Foundation Director serving as an Associate Director for the District Board.

**VASWCD/NACD:** Mr. Pratley noted informational items regarding the VASWCD annual meeting and Area II meeting. Ms. Coates gave an overview of items of interest included in the packet.

**VSHC:** Ms. Coates noted the email notification for upcoming events.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Ms. Coates noted the site visit log and staff newsletter. She then shared updates on staffing and program assignments and the Louisa ESC plan review contract.

Mr. Talley spoke regarding the Dam Safety Inventory System. Ms. Hyatt noted the JRA video with Ray Walker, an Albemarle County farmer.

**DIRECTOR REPORTS:**

Mr. Pratley noted that there will be no in-person dinner meeting in December. The Board of Directors will meet at 10:00 a.m. on December 15.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 12:03 p.m.

Submitted by: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Recording Secretary*

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_  
*Chair*