

**THOMAS JEFFERSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**  
**February 22, 2023**

**Present:**

*Directors:* Joseph Thompson (Chair), David Collins, John Easter, Julie Jones, Rosalyn Koontz, Stephen Lucas, Angus Murdoch (present at 10:21 a.m.), Thomas Pratley

*Assoc. Directors:* Mark Wastler

*Staff:* Anne Coates, Courtney Harlow-Humphreys, Luke Longanecker, Mark McEldowney, Amy Moyer

*Agencies:* Debbie Cross (DCR), Kory Kirkland (NCRS)

**Remote Participants:**

*Directors:* Carolyn Daughters, Steven Meeks (joined at 10:31 a.m.)

*Staff:* Lisa Hyatt

**Absent:**

*Directors:* Mark Campbell, Enrique Hernandez

*Assoc. Directors:* Navarre Bartz, Richard Fox, Lonnie Murray, Carrie Swanson

A regular meeting of the Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors was held at the Virginia Department of Forestry Training Room, 900 Natural Resources Drive, Charlottesville, Virginia.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 10:10 a.m.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS:** None.

**GUEST INTRODUCTIONS:** None.

**ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA:** None.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**Approval of Remote Participation:**

Mr. Thompson related that Ms. Daughters asked to participate remotely for medical reasons. Ms. Daughters participated remotely from her home in Louisa, Virginia.

**MOTION:** Mr. Easter moved to approve remote participation by Ms. Daughters. Mr. Pratley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Directors Meeting Minutes – January 25, 2023:**

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to approve the Directors Meeting Minutes for January 25, 2023. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Agriculture Committee Report:**

Mr. Lucas reported that the Agriculture Committee met and discussed a number of VACS approvals. All of the requested approvals were reviewed and recommended and are on the Consent Agenda. The team is doing an outstanding job. Practice failures at Quaker Hill and Red Horse Farm will be separately considered; both have to do with well failures.

Mr. Lucas shared that the Committee also reviewed staffing; the VACS funding balance; and options for the District to keep the funds, transfer funds to other SWCDs, or send funds back to DCR. It was agreed to wait until April to make this decision.

Mr. Lucas reported that the Committee reviewed the events list and provided feedback. New farm signs will be coming in April that will help with getting traction with new farms and producers. Work on a manure composting price list is proceeding.

Ms. Coates shared that she will be asking each Committee as they meet to update their mission statement and scope of work on the Committee roster. Mr. Thompson inquired if changes will need Board approval. Ms. Coates replied no, the Committees are charged with this action item.

Mr. Lucas mentioned that the District has a ride-along program for Directors who would like to see what the organization does. Ms. Coates commented that this was in the Strategic Plan for Director engagement and is available for the urban, educational, and agriculture programs.

Mr. Lucas reported that Mr. Kirkland solicited feedback from the Committee for the NRCS local workgroup.

Mr. Longanecker then summarized the practice failures for Quaker Hill and REMT Land Preservation Foundation, noting that these items should be removed from the Consent Agenda. In both practices wells are no longer supplying enough water to meet the demand of the herd. Contract lifespans will reset to 10 years from the additional payment. The proposals include new wells, hydrogeologist recommendations on well placement, and pipeline to tie the new wells into the failed systems.

Ms. Cross explained that District Board approval is required to forward the projects to DCR for final funding approval by the Agricultural Incentives Program Manager. She commented that it should not take long to get approval since DCR engineering staff have already been out to these sites.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to approve sending the following practice failure payments to DCR for approval: Quaker Hill Farm for \$16,086.25 (Contract No. 02-15-0278) and The REMT Land Preservation Foundation for \$21,760.00 (Contract No. 02-15-0358). Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Water Resources Committee Report:**

Mr. Lucas reported that the Water Resources Committee recommended approval of a Tye septic project in the amount of \$4,400 for a failed system. The Committee discussed septic program outreach strategies, noting that contractors are currently the best source of referrals.

Mr. Lucas reported that three CAP projects were brought to the Committee by staff and all were approved. The Committee also reviewed local CAP funding balances, considered participation in the VCAP Start-Up Payment Pilot Project (SUPPP) after OAG review of the MOU, and discussed potential residential program referral incentives. The outreach event list is under review.

Ms. Coates noted the recent email from VASWCD indicating that Board minutes confirming approval to participate in SUPPP are sufficient and the signed MOU is not required. The Water Resources Committee will look more in depth at pros and cons at the next meeting.

**Elections:**

Mr. Thompson noted emails in regards to election filing changes applicable to the Board of Directors. Mr. Lucas shared information from a recent election finance training. Ms. Cross included links to SBE forms in her monthly written report. Mr. Pratley expressed concern that additional filing requirements will discourage potential candidates. Ms. Jones suggested a checklist to assist candidates. VASWCD has been asked to compile additional guidance.

**Approval of Remote Participation:**

Mr. Meeks asked to participate remotely for personal reasons due to travel delays. Mr. Meeks participated remotely from his home in Scottsville, Virginia.

**MOTION:** Ms. Jones moved to approve remote participation by Mr. Meeks. Mr. Pratley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Budget/Finance Committee Report:**

*Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements – January 2023*

Mr. Meeks reported that he reviewed the financial reports provided by staff and everything seemed to be order.

Mr. Easter asked about showing year-to-date budget amounts rather than annual budget amounts. Ms. Moyer replied it would be difficult to break the annual budget into even monthly amounts because many receipts are quarterly.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to approve the financial reports. Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Moyer related that the Truist account representative recommended a new credit card account to replace the SunTrust business cards. Ms. Coates commented that the business rewards points could be significant for supplies purchases. Ms. Coates noted that everyone will be getting new cards and reoccurring payments will need to be changed.

**Personnel/Operations Committee Report:**

*Closed Session – Staffing:*

**MOTION:** Mr. Pratley moved to enter into closed session for personnel matters regarding District employees in accordance with Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A) (1). Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Coates, Ms. Moyer, and Mr. Wastler were asked to remain present for the closed session.

**MOTION:** Upon returning to open session, Mr. Pratley moved to certify that, to the best of each Director's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion by which the closed

session was convened were heard, discussed, or considered in the closed session. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed 10-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Collins, Daughters, Easter, Jones, Koontz, Lucas, Meeks, Murdoch, Pratley, Thompson  
 Nays: None

Ms. Jones moved to approve the new job description for an Operations and Administrative Coordinator with the edits discussed. She noted this is a new job description for a new position for the District. Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Koontz moved to approve personnel action discussed in the closed session. Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Committee Minutes:** Agriculture Committee (2/14/2023); Water Resources Committee (2/14/2023)
2. **Consent Items:** Agriculture Cost-Share, Residential Cost-Share (see attached lists)

CONSENT AGENDA (cont'd.)

2/22/2023

Agriculture Practices						
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Final Tax Credit	Conservation Plan Approval
Quaker Hill	02-15-0278	208681	SL-6	<del>\$ 16,086.25</del>	-	-
The REMT Land Preservation Foundation Inc	02-15-0358	209119	SL-6	<del>\$ 21,760.00</del>	-	-
Bray	02-23-0092	521639	SL-6W	\$ 19,491.87	-	Yes
Bray	02-23-0092	521641	CCI-SL6W	\$ 6,297.50	-	-
Bundoran Farm Community Association, Inc	02-23-0095	522686	CCI-SL6W	\$ 18,142.50	-	-
White	02-23-0096	522692	SL-6W	\$ 28,751.82	-	Yes
Goodwin	02-23-0098	522696	CCI-SL6W	\$ 8,121.25	-	-
Harvey	02-23-0099	522699	WP-2W	\$ 19,046.88	-	Yes
<b>Increases</b>						
Harvey	02-22-0014	446998	SL-6W	\$ 28,425.85	-	Yes
Harvey	02-22-0014	451800	SL-6N	\$ 133.70	-	Yes

Urban Practices						
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Funding Source	Locality	Runoff Reduction
Maitra	02-23-014	RWH	\$ 1,832.00	VCAP	Nelson	768
Sealey	02-23-015	CL-3	\$ 7,000.00	CCAP	Charlottesville	2,200
Blankenship	02-23-016	RWH	\$ 7,776.00	VCAP	Albemarle	3,283

Septic Practices				
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated
Orman	02-23-0097	522695	RB-4	\$ 4,400.00

Mr. Longanecker asked to strike the two practice failures listed at the top of the Consent Agenda that were considered earlier in the meeting.

**MOTION:** Mr. Pratley moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Mr. Lucas seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**RATIFICATION AGENDA:**

**1. Ratification List:** Agriculture Committee

<b>Ratification Agenda - February 22, 2023</b>							
<b>Item</b>	<b>Delegated Authority</b>	<b>Last Name / Business</b>	<b>Contract #</b>	<b>Instance</b>	<b>Practice Code</b>	<b>Estimated Cost Share</b>	<b>Approval Date</b>
<b>Agriculture Committee</b>							
1	Lucas	Bellair Farm	02-23-0011	505744	SL-6W	\$ 2,703.51	2/2/2023

**MOTION:** Mr. Easter moved to approve the Ratification Agenda. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**COOPERATING AGENCIES REPORTS:**

**DCR:** Ms. Cross noted that the District had obligated 53.14 percent of VACS funding as of the February 16 report; this does not include today’s approvals. Ms. Cross noted that the General Assembly will adjourn Saturday, February 25. Significant legislation was introduced in the House and Senate to shift the Watershed Implementation Plan date when over 50 acres of cropland will require a nutrient management plan and anyone with over 20 head of cattle will have to fence them out. Legislators were pushing for 2030 but negotiated for 2028 with parameters for a workgroup, recommendations from SWCDs, periodic reports to the General Assembly, and ties to full funding. Ms. Cross outlined potential funding increases in the proposed budget above the current \$123 million cost-share program.

Ms. Cross noted several upcoming meetings, including the VASWCD quarterly meeting on March 15, a virtual meeting on HR trends on April 12, the Area II spring meeting on April 19 hosted by Thomas Jefferson SWCD, and in-person training on the Attachment D budget template and HR topics on May 9.

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

**NRCS:** Mr. Kirkland reported that EQIP preapprovals in the high tunnel and conservation plan activity funds pools have been made. All other livestock, cropping, and forestry-based EQIP applications will be ranked by March 3. There will be an additional \$2.5 million available through EQIP as a result of the Inflation Recovery Act to be used for climate-smart practices. CSP received \$4.8 in additional funding through the Inflation Recovery Act, and the ranking deadline is May 26. CRP signup will be from February 27 to April 7. Mr. Kirkland also shared office staffing updates.

**VCE:** No updates.

**TJWRP Foundation:** Mr. Thompson reported that the Foundation is about to have another Board meeting. They are working to smooth out and reinforce processes associated with the easements the District holds. Mr. Thompson commented that the District’s two biggest potential liabilities are dams and easements. The largest issue with easements is communication with landowners, particularly in making sure new landowners are informed on what they can and cannot do with an easement on the property. It is helpful to have Foundation Board members involved in the easement inspections.

**NACD:** Mr. Meeks just returned from the NACD Annual Meeting in New Orleans. He stated it was an incredible conference, having the largest Virginia delegation of any he has attended. Jessica Shippen-Hansen also attended, and he hopes the meeting was productive for her in making connections for her new job responsibilities. Mr. Meeks will share a report on the NACD Annual Meeting at upcoming VASWCD area meetings.

**VASWCD:** Mr. Meeks encouraged Directors to attend the VASWCD quarterly meeting. He will follow up with Kendall Tyree about the election process.

Ms. Coates asked if NACD's Climate-Smart Commodities award was mentioned. Mr. Meeks replied that this is still in development so details were not yet available, but funding will be available to SWCDs through NACD and NCRS. Mr. Meeks noted that lack of technical support and funding for training was mentioned as a national issue.

### **STAFF REPORTS:**

Ms. Coates noted the monthly newsletter sent out with the packet. She hopes to rotate staff at Board meetings to share program updates. Ms. Coates spoke regarding the need to evaluate staffing levels and what model works best to deliver higher levels of cost-share funding, given the challenges in recruiting and training new staff. Ms. Coates gave a presentation at the Louisa County Board of Supervisors meeting last night, with Mr. Lucas, Tim Talley, and Matt Carroll also attending. Ms. Coates said the Board of Supervisors was impressed with what the organization is doing in the county, with \$12 million of cost-share funding delivered to Louisa County since 1998 and \$772,000 in payments just last year.

Ms. Harlow-Humphreys introduced herself to the Board. She heads up the education programs for the District and assists Meghan Sobott with VCAP. She is currently gearing up for spring field trips; fourth-graders from Albemarle County and City of Charlottesville schools attend watershed education programs at Camp Albemarle, around 1400 students in total. The local Envirothon will be held in March at Camp Albemarle. As spring approaches there is a lot of interest in the VCAP program coming through. Ms. Harlow-Humphreys is working on education outreach in Fluvanna, Louisa, and Nelson and has written several smaller grants for lending education items to teachers in these areas. She is currently helping with the 4-H science fair in Nelson.

Ms. Coates added that Ms. Harlow-Humphreys has a talent for drawing and partnered with an artist acquaintance for this year's local Envirothon logo.

Ms. Harlow-Humphreys responded to questions and shared additional information on the Envirothon program.

### **DIRECTOR REPORTS:**

Mr. Pratley asked about Area II meeting plans. Mr. Thompson replied that he is working with Ms. Coates and the Area II chair on event planning, and the tentative agenda includes a panel on solar and updates on election requirements. Ms. Coates said the agenda also includes agency updates and a Youth Conservation Leadership Institute student presentation.

Mr. Murdoch noted an interesting NRCS webinar on bale grazing.

Mr. Thompson suggested a vote to approve boxed lunches at the Area II meeting for logistics, dietary, and sanitary reasons.

**MOTION:** Ms. Jones moved to approve boxed lunches at the Area II meeting. Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

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

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