

THOMAS JEFFERSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
March 29, 2023

Present:

Directors: Joseph Thompson (Chair), Mark Campbell (present at 10:11 a.m.), David Collins, Carolyn Daughters, Julie Jones, Rosalyn Koontz, Stephen Lucas, Steven Meeks, Angus Murdoch

Assoc. Directors: Mark Wastler (present at 10:03 a.m.)

Staff: Anne Coates, Luke Longanecker, Mark McEldowney, Amy Moyer

Agencies: Debbie Cross (DCR)

Remote Participants:

Directors: Enrique Hernandez

Staff: Lisa Hyatt

Agencies: Kory Kirkland (NCRS)

Absent:

Directors: John Easter, Thomas Pratley

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 Department of Forestry, 900 Natural Resources Drive #800, Charlottesville, Virginia.

CALL TO ORDER: Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 10:02 a.m.

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Mr. Thompson related that Mr. Hernandez asked to participate remotely for family medical reasons.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to approve remote participation by Mr. Hernandez. Ms. Daughters seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Mr. Hernandez participated remotely from his home in Fluvanna, Virginia.

GUEST INTRODUCTIONS: None.

ADDITIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA: None.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None.

UPDATES and ACTION ITEMS:

Directors Meeting Minutes – February 22, 2023:

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to accept the minutes as presented in the packet. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Budget/Finance Committee Report:

Mr. Meeks shared that the Budget/Finance Committee met this morning. The Board will be asked to vote on some budget amendments next month in regard to a few categories that are approaching the threshold. Mr. Meeks requested that the District support the VASWCD Educational Foundation Golf Tournament

by sponsoring a hole on the golf course and a team, which hopefully will be led by Mr. Longanecker, and the Committee voted in favor. The last item discussed was the FY24 health insurance renewal.

Ms. Moyer related that the Personnel/Operations Committee reviewed the FY24 health insurance renewal earlier this month and recommended an increase to the employer contribution towards dependent coverage. The Budget/Finance Committee reviewed the recommended rates and agreed with the Personnel/Operations Committee's recommendation.

Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements – February 2023:

Mr. Meeks reported that the Budget/Finance Committee reviewed the financial reports and found everything to be in order.

Golf Tournament Donation:

Mr. Meeks noted that the \$360 contribution supports the VASWCD Educational Foundation. Mr. Lucas commented that this is a traditional expenditure by the District Board.

MOTION: Ms. Koontz moved to approve the golf tournament donation of \$360. Ms. Daughters seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Health Insurance:

Mr. Thompson spoke to efforts to improve the employee benefits package and accommodate a variety of family situations. Ms. Coates noted that the District will continue to cover 100 percent of premiums for single employees. Ms. Moyer added that overall premium costs have increased slightly, but the employee's share of that premium cost for plus-one and plus-family plans will decrease under this proposal. Ms. Coates stated that the District must report its selection by April 1.

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to approve the FY24 health insurance renewal rates. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Beaver Creek Agreement:

Mr. Lucas stated that back when these watershed structures were built, soil and water conservation districts were listed as sponsors. The Rivanna Water and Sewer Authority is bearing most of the costs and responsibilities with NRCS for the Beaver Creek Dam improvements, and the District has been asked to sign the agreement as a sponsor. Mr. Lucas commented that this is largely a relic but there are potential litigation concerns, so Ms. Coates sent the agreement to the OAG for review.

Ms. Coates mentioned that the OAG is redlining the proposed agreement hoping to relieve some of the responsibility of the District, as there unfortunately is no option to opt out of the agreement entirely. RWSA is eager to have the District sign off on this document so work can begin.

Agriculture Committee Report:

Mr. Lucas reported that the Agriculture Committee met at the Department of Forestry on March 21 and reviewed a number of VACS approvals and increases, which are listed on the Consent Agenda. The Committee previously discussed its desire to require nutrient management plans for animal waste control CCI practices; DCR has indicated that it is too late to add the requirement this year but the District can do so next year.

Mr. Longanecker reported that the FY23 total VACS allocation is just over \$5.2 million. After the approvals today, the District will have allocated just over \$3.6 million, or about 70 percent of the FY23 funds.

Mr. Lucas shared that the Committee also held discussion on strategies for reaching landowners who could use the District's help but are unaware. Ms. Shippen-Hansen is working on GIS maps to assist with this, and Ms. Hyatt has drafted a participant survey for feedback from landowners.

Mr. Lucas reported that the Committee discussed returning some funds to NACD from a grant that was not fully used. Mr. Thompson commented that federal programs are oversubscribed and the state allocation is not large enough to fund all qualified applicants, and this is a challenge faced by staff in promoting CSP to producers.

Mr. Thompson congratulated staff on exceeding the \$3 million budget target for VACS obligations.

Water Resources Committee Report:

Mr. Lucas reported that the Water Resources Committee met the same day as the Agriculture Committee and recommended Tye and Goldmine septic approvals and several VCAP/ACAP projects, which are listed on the Consent Agenda.

SUPPP Update:

Mr. Lucas related that OAG reviewed the VCAP Start-Up Payment Pilot Project MOU and recommended against signing it without revisions. The Water Resources Committee will discuss this topic at its next Committee meeting.

Ms. Coates related that VASWCD has since clarified that the District can approve participation in the program without signing the MOU. Ms. Coates explained the attorney reviewed the document and identified several concerns, and agreeing to the program structure may have the same liability concerns even without signing the MOU. She suggested watching how it goes for the SWCDs currently piloting the program first. She noted that staff would like to see the program happen and think it could be beneficial.

Recommendation to merge with Education Committee:

Mr. Lucas reported on the recommendation to merge the Education Committee with the Water Resources Committee. The Education Committee currently has two members who meet once or twice a year to approve scholarships and camp applications.

Ms. Coates noted that Ms. Sobott and Ms. Harlow-Humphreys are already attending the Water Resources Committee meetings, so merging these two committees will help streamline oversight and obtain feedback from Directors on education programs, which go beyond just the scholarships.

Mr. Lucas asked that Mr. Collins and Mr. Meeks continue to participate in scholarship review, noting their experience in doing this. Mr. Collins is already a member of the Water Resources Committee, and Mr. Meeks confirmed he would like to serve in an advisory role. The combined committee will review its name and scope at the next meeting.

MOTION: Mr. Murdoch moved to merge the Education Committee and the Water Resources Committee. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation to form FrogWatch USA chapter:

Mr. Lucas presented that Ms. Harlow-Humphreys would like the District to sponsor a FrogWatch chapter. The program trains citizens to recognize and record frogs in their area to assist in assessing wetlands health. The Committee was excited and recommended approval. This would become part of Ms. Harlow-Humphreys' job description.

Mr. Thompson commented on the importance of these types of outreach programs both for promoting care for lands, waters, and natural resources and for gaining constituent support from local jurisdictions.

MOTION: Ms. Koontz moved that the District sponsor a FrogWatch USA chapter. Ms. Daughters Seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Recommendation to partner with Highland for education events:

Mr. Lucas related that Ms. Harlow-Humphreys has been in discussion with staff at James Monroe's Highland about holding outdoor classrooms for elementary school children. Ms. Harlow-Humphreys is seeking approval from the Board to partner on education programs at Highland.

Mr. Thompson asked about liability concerns and if there is a formal agreement to sign. Ms. Cross mentioned DCR can provide day riders for event insurance.

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to support the concept for educational events at Highland. Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Jones asked if the District is looking for other land partners for education programs. Ms. Coates replied that education staff have traditionally been busy with the Camp Albemarle MWEE program serving fourth graders in Charlottesville and Albemarle, but Ms. Harlow-Humphreys is looking for opportunities to cover other localities.

Mr. Longanecker mentioned Ms. Hyatt and Ms. Abowd have been working on pulling addresses for outreach mailings in the Tye and Hardware watersheds for both septic and agriculture programs. Roughly 1,000 postcards were sent in the first round of mailings for the Tye watershed, and phone calls have started coming in.

Ms. Jones suggested cross-promotion with AHIP. Ms. Hyatt said she is in regular contact with AHIP and they often send her potential projects.

Area Meeting:

Ms. Coates reported that the Area II meeting is April 19 and reminded Directors to register. Ms. Hyatt confirmed that the registration deadline is April 4. Ms. Moyer mentioned that about 60 attendees have registered with at least 12 more expected from other agencies. Ms. Coates said the main purpose for the cutoff date is in regards to the food order that needs to be placed. Ms. Coates thanked Ms. Cross for the help she has provided in planning.

Ms. Coates summarized the agenda and event setup plans. Highlights include a panel on solar and a tour of BMPs on the Highland property. Ms. Jones and Ms. Hyatt will work on putting together a press release after the event with Mr. Longanecker's assistance.

Mr. Kirkland shared that NRCS is doing a pollinator project at Highland for guests to observe.

Personnel/Operations Committee Report:

Health Insurance:

Mr. Thompson noted that health insurance was discussed earlier. Ms. Coates spoke to the need to look at the benefits package as a whole to ensure that the District is marketable and competitive in the employment world.

Cost-Share Obligation Goals:

Mr. Thompson stated that the ag team is doing an incredible job, has already met the obligation goals set by the Board of Directors, and is now exceeding that. Ms. Coates explained that the \$3 million goal was based both on what staff thought was a comfortable and reachable number and also on the Attachment D funding scenario that also happened to be \$3 million.

Ms. Cross noted the importance of setting those goals to ensure the amount of technical assistance funding to include in the budget; additional technical assistance funding garnered from obligating additional cost-share beyond the goal can be reserved for use in future years. Ms. Coates suggested updating projections next month and returning funds if necessary to reduce the cost-share allocation to hit 90 percent. She would prefer to do any return of funds before fourth quarter TA is disbursed.

Mr. Longanecker commented that staff will continue to push hard to get projects through April so they have a good idea where they are budget-wise for the year.

Ms. Jones commented that the goal is always to deploy as many conservation dollars as possible, but hitting the \$3 million goal meets the budget obligations. Ms. Cross expects cost-share funding to stay strong and robust through at least 2028.

Ms. Coates mentioned that staff will be meeting with Directors in each of the localities as well as looking at other data to see how to target landowners as part of the goal-setting process for next year's strategic plan update. Mr. Campbell and Mr. Longanecker spoke regarding some of the challenges in generating new signups beyond early adopters.

Benefits Survey Results:

Mr. Thompson noted that the benefits survey results were provided in the Board packet. Mr. Thompson mentions that overall satisfaction ratings were good, and health benefits was high on the list of importance.

Ms. Moyer mentioned that staff expressed interest in additional retirement savings options, and VRS has options for an additional voluntary deferred compensation plan. Mr. Thompson asked that a summary be written up and be brought to the Personnel/Operations Committee for review.

Ms. Coates would like to do an annual survey and expand on questions on categories like training.

Closed Session – Staffing:

MOTION: Mr. Lucas moved to enter closed session for personnel matters regarding District employee performance reviews and salary in accordance with Virginia Code § 2.2-3711 (A) (1). Ms. Jones seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Coates and Associate Directors were asked to remain present.

MOTION: Upon returning to open session, Mr. Lucas moved to certify that, to the best of each Director's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from 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. Ms. Jones seconded this motion. The motion passed 9-0 by the following roll call vote:

Ayes: Campbell, Daughters, Hernandez, Jones, Koontz, Lucas, Meeks, Murdoch, Thompson
 Nays: None

Ms. Daughters moved to authorize the Executive Director to offer Amy Moyer a full-time management position with the District. She stated that the Board shall approve a final job description for this position prior to the anticipated start date of July 1, 2023. Mr. Meeks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

1. **Committee Minutes:** Agriculture Committee (3/21/2023); Water Resources Committee (3/21/2023); Personnel/Operations Committee (3/1/2023 and 3/29/2023)
2. **Consent Items:** Agriculture Cost-Share, Residential Cost-Share (see attached list)

CONSENT AGENDA (cont'd.)

3/29/2023

Agriculture Practices						
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Final Tax Credit	Conservation Plan Approval
Albemarle Edgehill Farm, LLC	02-23-0013	524512	SL-6N	\$ 34,814.89	-	-
Bundoran Farm Community Association, Inc	02-23-0079	524507	SL-6W	\$ 19,978.77	-	-
Riverview Farms Cattle, LLC	02-23-0081	521623	CCI-WP-4	\$ 6,500.00	-	-
Riverview Farms Cattle, LLC	02-23-0083	521622	CCI-WP-4	\$ 6,625.00	-	-
Riverview Farms Cattle, LLC	02-23-0084	521613	CCI-WP-4	\$ 8,000.00	-	-
Riverview Farms Cattle, LLC	02-23-0085	521621	CCI-WP-4	\$ 6,500.00	-	-
Moorman	02-23-0100	522935	CCI-SL-6W	\$ 6,092.50	-	-
Douglas Coleman Farms, LLC	02-23-0101	523777	NM-3C	\$ 7,554.24	-	-
Douglas Coleman Farms, LLC	02-23-0101	524105	NM-4	\$ 1,200.96	-	-
Estes Cattle Corp	02-23-0102	524067	SL-6W	\$ 119,868.12	-	-
Estes Cattle Corp	02-23-0102	524066	SL-7	\$ 9,622.88	-	-
Williams	02-23-0103	524089	CCI-SL-6W	\$ 6,076.25	-	-
Walnut Grove Farm, LLC	02-23-0104	524139	SL-1	\$ 15,750.00	-	Yes
Wild Oats Farm	02-23-0105	524154	WP-2W	\$ 7,782.10	-	Yes
Gibson Marshal French Cattle Company LLC	02-23-0106	524236	SL-6W	\$ 271,640.90	-	Yes
Thiemann	02-23-0107	524313	WP-2W	\$ 45,780.76	-	Yes
Delamater	02-23-0108	524521	SL-7	\$ 5,121.20	-	Yes
Koebel	02-23-0109	524541	SL-6W	\$ 18,605.25	-	Yes
Koebel	02-23-0109	524542	SL-7	\$ 6,030.40	-	Yes
Koebel	02-23-0109	524612	CCI-SE-1	\$ 472.00	-	-
Koebel	02-23-0109	524613	CCI-SL-6W	\$ 4,037.50	-	-
Mangham	02-23-0111	524593	SL-6W	\$ 8,923.80	-	-
Mangham	02-23-0111	524594	WP-2W	\$ 15,409.00	-	-
Mangham	02-23-0111	524595	WP-2N	\$ 7,084.00	-	-
Whetzel	02-23-0112	524631	SL-6W	\$ 30,447.03	-	Yes
Increases						
Garber	02-23-0001	487221	SL-7	\$ 3,960.00	-	-
Albemarle Edgehill Farm, LLC	02-23-0012	505980	SL-6W	\$ 12,505.20	-	-
Flick	02-23-0088	521630	SL-6W	\$ 4,226.18	-	-
White	02-23-0096	522692	SL-6W	\$ 3,007.98	-	-

Urban Practices				
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Funding Source
Seibert	02-23-017	ISR	\$ 1,310.00	VCAP
Seibert	02-23-018	CL-3	\$ 6,543.36	VCAP
Galloway	02-23-019	CL-3	\$ 1,144.16	VCAP
Yoder	02-23-020	CL-1	\$ 1,050.92	VCAP
Yoder	02-23-021	CL-3	\$ 4,866.43	VCAP
Tanner-Chitwood	02-23-022	CL-1	\$ 3,180.72	VCAP
Donovan	02-23-023	CL-1	\$ 2,334.53	VCAP
Donovan	02-23-024	CL-3	\$ 4,352.54	ACAP

Septic Practices				
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share
Varner	02-23-0006	495267	RB-4	\$ 6,400.00
Davis	02-23-0110	524588	RB-3M	\$ 3,200.00

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

RATIFICATION AGENDA:

- Ratification List:** Agriculture Committee

Ratification Agenda - March 29, 2023							
Item	Delegated Authority	Last Name / Business	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Approval Date
Agriculture Committee							
1	Lucas	Witmer	02-23-0067	519330	SL-6W	\$10,563.35	3/16/2023

MOTION: Mr. Meeks moved to approve the Ratification Agenda. Mr. Murdoch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

COOPERATING AGENCIES REPORTS:

DCR: Ms. Cross summarized information from her written report, noting that quarterly reports are due April 17 and now is the time to start working on FY24 budgets. She called attention to the reminder about open meeting requirements. The General Assembly is still meeting about budget amendments, with the possibility of additional funds coming to Districts. The notification deadline for any projects to be carried over into a fourth program year is May 15. The second page of the report outlines Director election filing requirements; questions should be addressed to the local registrar’s office. Ms. Cross reviewed upcoming training and meeting dates.

DEQ: DEQ provided a written report.

NRCS: Mr. Kirkland reported that notice was received this morning that initial EQIP preapprovals for the cropland, livestock, wildlife, and forestry fund pools had been made. One additional application preapproval was received in the wildlife funding pool. There was significant interest in the livestock fund pool but local applications ranked below those that were preapproved in this area; funds likely went

towards larger animal number operations involving animal waste storage components. Staff will continue to work with applicants, and they are hopeful that additional funding for livestock-based applications incorporating climate-smart practices may come through with \$2.5 million statewide from the Inflation Reduction Act. They continue to work with existing preapprovals for forest management CAP and high tunnels. CSP received \$4.8 million in additional funds for climate-smart practices from the Inflation Reduction Act, and the ranking deadline is Mary 26. Mr. Kirkland also shared office staffing updates.

VCE: No updates.

TJWRP Foundation: Mr. Thompson reported on a site visit to a property outside of Crozet regarding a possible easement on five parcels so no further development can happen. The Eastons plan to move forward with expanding the easement on their property. Once these get further down the road, the Foundation Board will give a recommendation to the District Board.

VASWCD: Mr. Meeks encouraged Directors to consider participating in the golf tournament, commenting that the event is a great time to interact with staff and Directors as well as other state agencies. The TAC committee will be gearing up to meet this summer, and Mr. Meeks should be representing VASWCD again. Mr. Meeks has attended four area meetings around the state, and they have all been well-received with good attendance.

STAFF REPORTS:

Ms. Coates mentioned that the staff newsletter was sent out with the Board packet with the bulk of the content covering education programs, and Ms. Harlow-Humphreys has done an incredible job in expanding program diversity. April Board and Committee meetings will be all-virtual via Zoom unless announced otherwise due to Area II meeting preparations. Ms. Coates congratulated Ms. Sobott and Ms. Harlow-Humphreys on the increase in residential conservation assistance program approvals.

DIRECTOR REPORTS:

Ms. Koontz reported that she attended the local Envirothon last week at Camp Albemarle. A total of three teams participated as well as an alternate team.

Mr. Campbell reported that he has been attending the Hat and Black Creek TMDL meetings in Nelson, and they have had good participation amongst landowners and other citizens. Mr. Campbell served as the Farm Bureau representative on the TAC stream exclusion subcommittee last year and will continue this year.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 12:32 p.m.

Submitted by: _____
Recording Secretary

Approved: _____
Chair