

**THOMAS JEFFERSON SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES**  
**May 31, 2023**

**Present:**

*Directors:* Joseph Thompson (Chair), David Collins, Carolyn Daughters, John Easter, Enrique Hernandez, Rosalyn Koontz, Stephen Lucas, Steven Meeks, Thomas Pratley

*Assoc. Directors:* Mark Wastler

*Staff:* Anne Coates, Matt Carroll (present at 11:50 a.m.), Courtney Harlow-Humphreys (present at 11:30 a.m.), Mark McEldowney, Amy Moyer, Meghan Sobott (present at 11:25 a.m.), Tim Talley

*Agencies:* Dana Bayless (NRCS), Ross Norton (NCRS)

**Remote Participants:**

*Directors:* Julie Jones

*Staff:* Lisa Hyatt, Luke Longanecker

**Absent:**

*Directors:* Mark Campbell, Angus Murdoch

*Assoc. Directors:* 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 Louisa County Schools Central Office, 953 Davis Highway, Mineral, Virginia.

**CALL TO ORDER:** Mr. Thompson called the meeting to order at 10:01 a.m. Ms. Coates verified that a quorum was met with the Director attendance as listed above.

**REMOTE PARTICIPATION:** Ms. Coates related that Ms. Jones would like to participate remotely for a personal matter.

**MOTION:** Mr. Easter moved to approve remote participation by Ms. Jones. Mr. Pratley seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. Ms. Jones participated remotely from her home in Charlottesville, Virginia, due to a scheduling conflict.

**STAFF, PARTNERS, AND GUESTS PRESENT:** Staff and partners present were identified as listed above.

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

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** None.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

**Directors Meeting Minutes – April 26, 2023:**

Ms. Daughters and Mr. Easter noted corrections to the minutes.

**MOTION:** Mr. Easter moved to accept the minutes with the corrections mentioned. Ms. Daughters seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Personnel and Operations Committee Report:**

*TJSWCD and Albemarle County MOA (Position Transfer):*

Ms. Coates shared that the District has been working with Albemarle County to finalize the MOA in regards to the Management Analyst position becoming a full-time position of the District. TJSWCD and Albemarle County have been in negotiations since October to come to an agreement on this transition. The MOA has been reviewed by OAG and the County Attorney and would be effective July 1 after approval by the Board of Supervisors in June.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to approve the MOA for the Management Analyst position. Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

*Pay Grade Determination – Revised Policy and Updated Pay Grade Ranges:*

Ms. Coates presented policy amendments and a new pay scale for consideration. She explained that current District policy is to follow the Albemarle County Pay Scale. Albemarle County recently adopted a new pay scale after completing a compensation study and job description analysis. The intention is that the District will utilize Albemarle County’s pay structure as a reference along with Charlottesville and other comparable organizations throughout the state, such as other SWCDs or NRCS, to create its own scale.

Mr. Thompson emphasized that the District is using the County structure as a framework but not locked in step with the County. The Board will continue to determine the appropriate salary levels for employees and different positions, but this gives a reference point based on where the District is located and the cost of living.

Mr. Easter asked if the minimum and maximum remain firm or if they have the ability to go below or above the stated scale. Ms. Moyer replied that the position descriptions reference a grade on the scale, so the Board would be locked into those ranges unless it takes action to change the scale. Ms. Coates noted that the proposed scale is for FY24 and could be revisited annually if needed.

Mr. Pratley asked about transitioning away from pay scales with fixed ranges, noting the need for flexibility in hiring. Ms. Coates spoke to the need for a pay scale for budgeting and establishing a hiring range. Mr. Pratley and Mr. Thompson commented on how position grades can be changed if warranted.

Mr. Collins noted that the new range will be needed starting next month. Ms. Moyer said the proposed scale uses the existing position grades matched to updated range numbers from the FY24 County pay scale as a starting point; steps 9 through 19 are currently used in District job descriptions. Ms. Coates commented that a grade change would include updates to the job description, but an employee can move within grade without changing the job description.

**MOTION:** Mr. Easter moved to adopt the policy revisions and proposed FY24 pay scale. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

*Job Descriptions – Engineering Position:*

Ms. Coates related that the engineering position should be retitled Agricultural Engineering Specialist, rather than Technician, and noted as an exempt position at grade 15. An approved job description is needed to move forward with recruitment.

Mr. Thompson asked Mr. Longanecker to share a summary of his expectations for how the position will contribute to the District’s program.

Mr. Longanecker replied that he envisions this candidate as a more senior-level employee that comes in with NRCS or DCR engineering job approval authority or something equivalent, supporting field staff in the oversight, design, and construction of structural practices. The position will focus on completion of practices approved in previous years so that the current Conservation Specialists can continue to promote the program and practices to new farmers.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to approve the new Agriculture Engineering Specialist position. Mr. Hernandez seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

*Job Descriptions – Review Current Positions for FY23:*

Ms. Coates mentioned that any new job descriptions have already been reviewed by the Board, and all other positions not yet reviewed this fiscal year have been included in the Board packet. She shared an overview of current positions and program responsibilities. Mr. Thompson acknowledged the Board has reviewed the job descriptions presented by Ms. Coates.

*HR Consultant:*

Ms. Coates reported that the District will need a new job description as part of the Management Analyst position becoming a full-time employee of the District, as Ms. Moyer has taken on more responsibilities than in the original County job description. Ms. Coates has reached out to an HR consultant who will also revise the job description for the Executive Director. The HR consultant will reference all of the District's job descriptions to understand the District's structure when writing the Financial/Business Manager and Executive Director job descriptions. The goal is to bring the job descriptions to the Personnel and Operations Committee for review before adoption at the Board meeting in June.

Mr. Thompson asked why the consultant was chosen. Ms. Coates replied that this consultant provided the recent VASWCD HR training, and Gallagher completed Albemarle County's recent compensation study.

Mr. Meeks asked about the policy on hiring consultants and any obligation to solicit competitive offers. Ms. Moyer replied that multiple quotes are required by policy for purchases over \$2,500. Mr. Meeks asked about contract approval. Mr. Thompson noted that there is a budget line item for contract services. Ms. Coates said that budgeted contract services less than \$2,500 would not come back to the Board.

Ms. Daughters asked about the scope of work. Ms. Coates said it is limited to the two job descriptions, at an hourly rate, with a total not to exceed \$1,650.

Ms. Coates responded to additional questions from Directors regarding HR needs and contract services.

*FY23 Spring Staff Incentives added to Payroll:*

Ms. Coates related that the Personnel and Operations Committee discussed staff bonuses in relation to staff performance and the cost savings throughout the year. The Personnel and Operations Committee recommended approving \$76,500 in staff incentives.

Mr. Thompson noted that the incentives are allocated based on an individual's performance over the past year and the position responsibilities.

**MOTION:** Ms. Daughters moved to approve staff incentives of \$76,500. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote. Mr. Meeks abstained from voting.

*Salary Increase for FY24:*

Ms. Coates related that the Personnel and Operations Committee also reviewed salary increases for staff for the upcoming fiscal year. These increases are based on merit, cost of living analysis, and other data

that the Committee reviewed in detail. The recommended numbers were then provided to staff to prepare the draft budget.

Mr. Pratley asked about the percentage increase. Ms. Moyer replied that the average salary increase proposed for FY24 was 5.32 percent.

Mr. Meeks remarked that he is abstaining because the policy that the Personnel and Operations Committee consult with the Treasurer before making recommendations regarding pay increases, bonuses, or beginning wages was not followed.

Directors discussed whether the policy intent is to consult the Treasurer to verify that funding is available. Mr. Meeks asked for advance consultation in future.

Ms. Moyer related that the projected FY23 payroll costs including the proposed bonus comes out about the same as the adopted payroll budget due to vacancy savings.

Ms. Coates noted that the salary increases are for the next fiscal year. The expected FY24 cost-share allocation is \$5.8 million but the draft budget is balanced on obligating \$4 million.

**MOTION:** Mr. Pratley moved to approve the proposed salary increases for FY24. Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed by voice vote. Mr. Meeks abstained from voting.

### **Budget and Finance Committee Report:**

#### *Treasurer's Report and Financial Statements – April 2023:*

Mr. Meeks reported that the Budget and Finance Committee reviewed the financial statements and recommended that the Board adopt these reports.

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

#### *FY24 Budget:*

Mr. Meeks reported that the Committee reviewed the proposed budget for FY24 and recommended that the Board adopt the budget.

**MOTION:** Mr. Lucas moved to adopt the proposed FY24 budget. Mr. Easter seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Agriculture Committee Report:**

Mr. Lucas reported that the Agriculture Committee reviewed a number of VACS approvals and increases, which are listed on the Consent Agenda. He commented that staff has done an outstanding job. Almost \$4,261,000 out of roughly \$5,235,000 was obligated at the time of the meeting, which is 81 percent. The District needs to allocate \$450,310 before July 1 to meet the 90 percent threshold. The Committee discussed the option to return unobligated cost-share funding to DCR. Mr. Lucas said that Ms. Moyer and Ms. Coates have budgeted so that the District is not negatively impacted if a portion of technical assistance funding must be returned.

Mr. Lucas also reported that the NRCS local workgroup meeting will occur at the Agriculture Committee meeting in June, and the Committee continues to develop strategies to reach the farms and producers throughout the District.

Mr. Longanecker shared that they have a June 15 deadline to decide whether to return funds to DCR, and staff is working hard to reach the 90 percent threshold. Ms. Coates complimented the team's efforts, noting the significant increase in cost-share funding and associated workload.

*Special Authorization Delegated Authority for EOY Cost-Share and TA to Agriculture Committee Chair:* Mr. Thompson noted that this action gives delegated authority to approve cost-share projects prior to the next Board meeting in order to reach the maximum obligation.

**MOTION:** Ms. Daughters moved to give Mr. Lucas delegated authority to approve projects prior to the next Board meeting. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Mr. Pratley moved to give Mr. Lucas delegated authority to return technical assistance and cost-share funds as appropriate prior to the next Board meeting. Mr. Meeks seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Education and Water Resources Committee Report:**

Mr. Lucas reported that the septic program is going strong in the Hardware watershed with help from the recent postcard mailing, with just over \$7,000 in requests in the Hardware. There were also two pump-outs in the Tye watershed and one pump-out in the Goldmine watershed. Three recommended VCAP projects are also listed on the Consent Agenda.

Mr. Lucas reported that Ms. Harlow-Humphreys shared an update about the newly-established FrogWatch USA chapter. The Committee recommended approval of a third application for Youth Conservation Camp. Mr. Lucas related that Louisa County High School placed second in the state Envirothon. Mr. Lucas mentioned the ongoing issue of PFAS ending up on farmers' fields from sludge and commercial fertilizer containing these chemicals.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

1. **Committee Minutes:** Agriculture Committee (5/23/2023); Education and Water Resources Committee (5/23/2023); Personnel/Operations Committee (5/17/23)
2. **Consent Items:** Agriculture Cost-Share, Residential Cost-Share (see attached list)

CONSENT AGENDA (cont'd.)

5/31/2023

Agriculture Practices						
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Final Tax Credit	Conservation Plan Approval
Quaker Hill	02-23-0039	527923	SL-8H	\$ 223.40	-	-
Quaker Hill	02-23-0039	527928	SL-8H	\$ 257.20	-	-
Chanin	02-23-0140	527269	SL-6W	\$ 31,220.25	-	Yes
Chanin	02-23-0140	527273	SL-6W	\$ 25,803.50	-	Yes
Hedgerow Holdings II, LLC	02-23-0151	527644	SL-6W	\$ 81,379.98	-	Yes
Hedgerow Holdings II, LLC	02-23-0151	527649	WP-2N	\$ 5,123.25	-	Yes
Massie	02-23-0152	527653	SL-8A	\$ 672.00	-	-
Bellair Produce LLC	02-23-0153	527654	SL-8A	\$ 440.00	-	-
Turner	02-23-0154	527661	SL-6W	\$ 27,095.25	-	Yes
Syed	02-23-0156	527688	SL-6W	\$ 35,605.97	-	Yes
Aronhalt	02-23-0157	527689	SL-1	\$ 6,480.00	-	Yes
Aronhalt	02-23-0157	527690	SL-1	\$ 2,275.00	-	Yes
Watkins	02-23-0158	527702	FR-1	\$ 1,856.25	-	Yes
Watkins	02-23-0158	527651	SL-7	\$ 14,335.20	-	Yes
Harrison Cattle Co	02-23-0160	527729	SL-6W	\$ 97,467.37	-	Yes
Yarrington	02-23-0164	527896	CCI-WP-2W	\$ 7,880.00	-	-
Double L Farms LLC	02-23-0165	527911	CCI-SL-6W	\$ 3,756.25	-	-
LCST GRV LLC	02-23-0166	527919	SL-6W	\$ 112,931.37	-	Yes
Quaker Hill	02-23-0167	527929	CCI-WP-4	\$ 6,875.00	-	-
Quaker Hill	02-23-0167	527933	CCI-WP-4	\$ 6,250.00	-	-
Quaker Hill	02-23-0167	527934	CCI-WP-4	\$ 6,250.00	-	-
Quaker Hill	02-23-0167	527935	CCI-WP-4	\$ 6,875.00	-	-
Kirby	02-23-0168	527936	NM-1A	\$ 1,564.60	-	-
Coleman	02-23-0170	527953	NM-1A	\$ 3,860.40	-	-
<b>Increases</b>						
Buch	02-23-0055	517171	SL-6W	\$ 1,921.15	-	-

Urban Practices				
Last Name / Business	Contract #	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Funding Source
Trodden	02-23-029	PP	\$ 5,656.00	VCAP
Flannery	02-23-031	DW	\$ 4,464.00	VCAP

Septic Practices				
Last Name	Contract #	Instance	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share
Bonds	02-23-0138	527115	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Denby	02-23-0139	527116	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Forlines	02-23-0141	527509	RB-1	\$ 240.00
Neill	02-23-0142	527510	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Pettitt	02-23-0143	527511	RB-3M	\$ 2,000.00
Pettitt	02-23-0143	527513	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Pettitt	02-23-0143	527514	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Denby	02-23-0144	527516	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Jackson	02-23-0145	527526	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Maitland	02-23-0146	527528	RB-3M	\$ 1,000.00
Smith	02-23-0147	527529	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Hickman	02-23-0148	527572	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Rice	02-23-0149	527573	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Rushfinn	02-23-0150	527576	RB-1	\$ 240.00
El	02-23-0155	527663	RB-1	\$ 300.00
Shiflett	02-23-0159	527745	RB-4	\$ 4,000.00
Plumb	02-23-0161	527880	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Habel	02-23-0162	527882	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Palmer	02-23-0163	527885	RB-1	\$ 300.00
Carter	02-23-0171	527968	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Carter	02-23-0171	527970	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Carter	02-23-0171	527971	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Carter	02-23-0171	527973	RB-1	\$ 200.00
Carter	02-23-0171	527974	RB-1	\$ 200.00

**MOTION:** Mr. Meeks moved to approve the Committee minutes. Ms. Koontz seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**MOTION:** Ms. Koontz moved to approve the consent items. Mr. Collins seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**RATIFICATION AGENDA:**

**1. Ratification List:** Education and Water Resources Committee

Ratification Agenda - May 31, 2023								
Item	Delegated Authority	Last Name / Business	Contract #	Locality	Project Area	Practice Code	Estimated Cost Share	Approval Date
Education and Water Resources Committee								
1	Murray	Brunk	02-23-032	Nelson	21780	CL-1	\$ 2,720.00	5/26/2023

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

**COOPERATING AGENCIES REPORTS:**

**DCR:** DCR provided a written report.

Directors discussed the different experiences they have had with the local registrars throughout the District in regard to the upcoming elections. Registrars are giving different advice depending on the locality.

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

**NRCS:** Mr. Bayless thanked Mr. Lucas for mentioning the local workgroup, as this is the opportunity to submit any comments. Staff just finished the CSP Classic ranking deadline, and applications will be gathered for the June 16 in conjunction with the Inflation Reduction Act. Mr. Bayless shared recent staff turnover at NRCS and FSA with the Board.

**VCE:** Mr. Hernandez shared that there are programs coming in the future, and he will send out information and dates.

**TJWRP Foundation:** Mr. Thompson shared that one easement currently held by the District is looking to be expanded. A new application has been received, and Mr. Thompson will be traveling to meet these landowners in the coming weeks.

Ms. Jones left the meeting at 11:47 a.m.

**NACD:** Mr. Meeks mentioned that the NACD is reorganizing its committee structure, and Virginia has placeholders on four committees, up from two the previous year.

**VASWCD:** Mr. Meeks reported that he attended the state Envirothon at VSU as an oral presentation judge. He noted the Louisa County High School team’s outstanding job in the oral presentation.

**STAFF REPORTS:** Ms. Coates referenced the staff newsletter, which has a lot of great education updates.

**DIRECTOR REPORTS:** Directors discussed the election filing process earlier in the meeting. No additional reports were offered at this time.

**LOUISA ENVIROTHON TEAM:** The Louisa County High School Envirothon team was invited to the Board meeting so that that District could congratulate and thank them in person and to celebrate their recent accomplishment of placing second in the state Envirothon and winning the Oral Presentation Excellence Award. Ms. Harlow-Humphreys introduced a portion of the Louisa High School Envirothon team in attendance, including students Allison Allen, Escarlet Hernandez, and Holleigh Wright and coaches Kim Jancaitis Martinak and Logan Horne.

**ADJOURNMENT:**

There being no further business, the chair adjourned the meeting at 11:55 a.m.

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

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