



Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Meeting
Meeting Minutes

August 13th, 2019 9am-12:04pm
617 Comstock Road Suite 1 Berlin VT 05602

Attendees: Gianna Petito, Kristen Balschunat, Rick Hopkins, Paul Hartshorn, Jeff Cueto, Lawrence Rowley, Russ Barrett

9:00 NRCS Updates: Not present, no updates

9:01 NRCC Updates: \$925,000 signed with DEC for a design and implementation grant to be distributed to 10 of the 14 Districts statewide (one of which is Winooski NRCD).

9:05 Supervisor and Staff Sharing: Russ noted that Gianna presented about the work of the District at the most recent CVRPC CWAC meeting - many members were unaware of the full scope of work of the District. Lawrence noticed the Stream Team murals in Milton. Russ visited the Northfield Dog River Park celebration recently - noted Friends of Winooski's involvement in restoration there. Celebrating blueberry season.

9:15 Minutes: Motion by Jeff to approve the minutes from the July 16, 2019. Seconded by Paul. All in favor. Motion carries.

9:20 Financial Report: See report for full details. \$23,000 has been invoiced to multiple grantors but not yet paid out. We don't pay contractors until we receive our grant money, so contractors have been waiting for a few months. Brief discussion about opening a line of credit to help alleviate that problem - staff will do more research about how much credit the District would be eligible for - not much collateral to offer. Jeff motions to approve the financial report. Seconded by Paul. All in favor. Motion carries.

9:30 Staff Progress Report: See staff report for details. Highlights & discussion:

- S.96: There has been an increase in funding from Council to pay for for Gianna's time tracking S.96. There will be a webinar on S.96 this Thursday. Holden and Gianna are working on communicating options to Districts so they can make better choices about how

to be involved in the process and decide if they want to become Clean Water Service Providers. They sent a survey to all districts to gather information on interests. Lawrence asked Gianna what her preference would be for a CWSP. Gianna expressed concern about conflict of interest with on-the ground implementers being CWSPs. She would prefer a regional grant-making group like the Lake Champlain Basin Program.

- Strategic Planning: We are in the environmental scan phase. Also developing a partner interview for 6 or 7 of our closest partners.
- Discussion about water quality monitoring with the Stream Team.
- Staff is spending some time attending tabling events to build brand recognition for the District and connect with residents of the district. Staff asked Board members to share recommendations of good events to attend.

11:00 Review Changes to Benefits in Employee Handbook: Retirement: Discussed difference between 2% flat vs. matching employees up to 3%. Preference is 2% flat to provide consistency in the budget. Healthcare: Discussed difference in plans for health insurance. Kristen requested an increase of the healthcare stipend to \$500. The board was in support of the increase. The budget will need to be adjusted mid-fiscal-year to add the additional funding for healthcare. Gianna will do some research about adjusting the budget for the start of the calendar year so that all employees can receive \$500/month. The changes to the handbook will be reworded and presented again at the next meeting.

11:15 NRCS MOA Updates/Local Survey Results: District feedback about the MOA has been aggregated and shared with NRCS. The board reviewed some preliminary results of the Local Resource Survey (see meeting packet) which have been shared with Marybeth Whitten (NRCS).

11:30 Farm and Forest Tour: The Board shared details about this annual event with Staff. Notes: The Board usually tours at least one operation in each county. People who can help identify farms are the County Forester or NRCS employees. We could also highlight our own work. Sometimes legislators are invited.

Annual Meeting: The Board shared details about this annual event with Staff. Notes: Guest speaker, dinner, give out awards to Farm and Forest Tour “farms of excellence”.. Year in review from District. On average about 30 people have attended throughout the years. Tickets are sold for attendees. Plaques/certificates. Lawrence asked if Friends of Winooski hosts a similar event where we could present our award? Brief discussion about cost/benefit of hosting an expensive but not highly attended event. Jeff thinks it may be obligated in our MOU.

Note: Russ leaves VT on November 2nd. Planning to complete the farm tour in September and strategic planning meeting in October to take advantage of his time here.

NEXT MEETING: Tuesday, September 24th, 2019 - 9am - Farm Tour - start location TBD

12:04 Adjourn Motion by Paul, seconded by Russ. All in favor. Motion carries.