



Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Meeting
Meeting Minutes

December 11, 2018
617 Comstock Road, Suite 1 Berlin, VT 05602

9:00am-11:13am

In attendance. Board: Don Hipes, Rick Hopkins, Lawrence Rowley, Paul Hartshorn, Mike Raboin. Staff: Gianna Petito, Kristen Balschunat. Guests: Jill Arace (VACD) Bruce Howlett (NRCS)
Listening on the phone: intern Kelly Rapacki

Supervisor and Staff Sharing. Discussion about spreading manure in light of the earlier-than-anticipated snow. Many folks have seen farmers spreading on the snow. Spreading manure after Dec 15th is not allowed, and strictly enforced. Spreading on the snow is also not allowed under the RAPs, however it has not been strongly enforced this year. If you have questions or concerns, contact Agency of Ag.

NRCS updates from Bruce Howlett. The new ranking system that was in the works for NRCS financial assistance will not be used, and the old ranking system will remain in place. Round 1 awards have already been selected. The deadline for Round 2 is this Friday (Dec14th). Bruce anticipated a Round 3 may open up in the future, but it has not been formally announced. A discussion was had about understaffing at NRCS creating capacity challenges in addressing the needs of the applicants, especially for large projects that require engineering. Balschunat asked how Districts may be able to assist farms that are not awarded NRCS funds. Howlett recommended getting involved with the state BMP program and looking in to the issue of fencing (both exclusionary fencing and fencing for pasture management). Arace mentioned that Agency of Ag and UVM have partnered on a fencing program. She recommended inviting Nina Gage (Agency of Ag) to speak at one of our board meetings to describe the program.

VACD Updates from Jill Arace:

National-Level Updates

- There will be a vote on the Farm Bill this week
- NRCS has a new Chief

State-Level Updates

- Discussion about two VACD-managed state-level grants:
 - Grassed Waterways
 - VT Environmental Stewardship Program (2 participating farms in Winooski District - Williston Cattle Co. and Fairmont)
- Mark your calendars for the 3rd Annual Ag Water Quality Partners Gathering - Feb 22 - Technical Assistants and Field Staff will be in the room with a farmer panel.
- News from the State House:
 - The State has approved a \$6 million budget for the Clean Water Fund, but has yet to announce how it will be funded. The budget will allow more spending in the areas of outreach and education.
 - The VHCB budget may be significantly cut.
 - Arace has joined a committee for the Working Lands Coalition, a group that helps farmers diversify their crops to create economic resilience.

Business Items:

~**Approve minutes.** of 11/15/18 meeting. Motion by Hartshorn to approve, second by Rowley. Motion carried.

~**Financial report.** (dated 11/30/18). DM Petito presented & explained financial report. Motion to approve the financial report by Hartshorn, seconded by Rowley. Motion carried.

~**Confirm Board Member Positions.**

- No election was needed as Dan Pillsbury was unable to submit a petition with the required 25 signatures by the deadline.
- Paul Hartshorn will be re-elected as Supervisor
- Dan Pillsbury will join the Board as an Associate Supervisor. He is gone in Florida for a few months and may call in to some board meetings.
- Board Position Nominations
 - Rick Hopkins was nominated for Chair by Hartshorn, seconded by Rowley. Motion carried.
 - Jeff Cueto was nominated for Co-Chair by Hopkins, seconded by Hartshorn. Motion carried.
 - Paul Hartshorn was nominated for Secretary by Rowley, seconded by Hopkins. Motion carried.
 - Lawrence Rowley was nominated for Treasurer by Hartshorn, seconded by Hopkins. Motion carried.
 - Hartshorn motioned to vote on all four position nominations at the same time. Motion carried. Hartshorn motioned to approve all nominations as outlined above, seconded by Rowley. Motion carried.
- VACD Representative Nominations

- Rick Hopkins was nominated to be the WNRCD representative to VACD by Hartshorn, seconded by Rowley. Discussion: What is the time commitment for this position? Usually just voting at the annual meeting, but Arace would like to take advantage to telecommunication to hold more regular meetings throughout the year. Motion carried.
- Central Region NRCC Representative
 - The central region consists of the Winooski District and the White River District. Petito will reach out to the new White River DM to schedule a discussion about the region's representation at NRCC.

Staff report.

Balschunat and Petito highlighted progress on various grants and upcoming tasks. See “WNRCD Staff Project Updates 12.5.18” for details. Of note:

- Karen Bates (DEC Bain Planner) would like to speak with the Board about the Basin 5 (Direct to Lake) Plan, which is entering Year 1 of the 5-year basin planning process.
- Petito will email supervisors information to share on their respective Front Porch Forums regarding Gift Cards for the Tree and Trout Sale
- Balschunat asked for recommendations for venues for the Conservation Commission Training Day. Recommendations below will be explored:
 - Capitol City Grange, Federated Church in Waterbury, Richmond Town Hall (or the church across the hall), Green Mountain Club Building
- Trees for Streams: A board member recommended investigating Armstrong Farm in Calais as a potential tree planting site. A significant portion of riparian habitat has been placed under conservation easement by the VLT.

Signing authority. Petito presented edited version of the Signature Matrix. Motion to approve the matrix by Hartshorn, seconded by Rowley. Motion carried.

NRCC Updates from Rick Hopkins

- Rick invited those in attendance to join the NRCC meeting at 1pm today in the National Life Annex Building
- NRCC has secured funding for a second year of Basin Planning grants
- Council has applied for water quality project development funds
- Council has expressed interest in administering a grant program for DEC grants and aid for aquatic invasive species.

Next WNRCD meeting will be TUES JAN 29, 2019 at 0900 in Williston.

Motion by Hartshorn to adjourn, second by Rowley. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned 11:13 am.