



# Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting

## Meeting Minutes

June 28, 2023 9:00 - 12:00pm  
In Person: Berlin Office + Zoom Option

---

### Attendees:

**In Person:** Casey Spencer (WNRCD District Manager), Pat Richardson (Bookkeeper), Sarah Jansen (NRCS), Rick Hopkins (Chair Supervisor), Rich Turner (Treasurer), Russ Barrett (Vice Chair), Paul Hartshorn (Secretary Supervisor), Nancy Everhart (associate supervisor)

**Online:** Kat Lewis (Agricultural Conservation Specialist), Jeff Cueto (Associate Supervisor), Oliver Pierson (Supervisor)

### 9:02 Meeting Called to Order

### 9:03 NRCS Update

- No attendance from Marybeth, Sarah Jansen stood in her place
- Lots of applications heading into contract but still not able to complete the amount of work that needs to be done with the number of current soil cons.
- Actively hiring in all field offices except Berlin.
  - Conservation Technicians, Soil Conservationists, Engineers
    - Make sure we are helping get the word out about these open positions. VACD has posted about an open project technician spot that is open in Middlebury.

### 9:09 NRCC Update

- State budget was determined
  - Base funding was increased to \$612,000 → that is an additional \$250,000 from past years.
  - NRCC will take some money off the top of that for program and personal costs and the rest will be split between the 14 districts.
    - ~\$590,00 will be split between the 14 districts
- Council is meeting July 14th
- Action circles is requesting additional figures for FY25
- Jill Arace has brought back and re aligned the VACD board.
  - Those on the board have been selected and will help make informed decisions at VACD through their personal expertise.
- VACD board chose to have subcommittees to help advance all the work that is currently happening
  - Governance -> directly related to the legislators and legislative ask
  - Finance
  - Board Development
  - Capacity Building

- Winooski NRCD can reimburse their own board members who also serve on the VACD board if they choose to do so but VACD cannot personally pay them for being on the board.
- Potential worry from Nancy that the board was a little ambitious in this ask to bring back the VACD board. To have a successful board means there has to be ample communication between everyone. VACD is spread very thin right now so just hoping that everything that is discussed is followed up on and not just wasted.

#### 9:19 Business Items

- Approval of the February meeting minutes
  - Change the spelling of Jeff Cueto's name
  - Motion to approve as amended made by Paul
  - Seconded by Russ
  - All in favor – Approved
- Approval of the May meeting minutes
  - Change the spelling of Jeff Cueto's name and change ~\$600,000 to \$612,000 in the NRCC updates
  - Motion to approve as amended made by Paul
  - Seconded by Rich
  - All in favor – Approved

#### 9:25 Business Items

- Will approve meeting minutes for February at next board meeting
- Discussion to make finances quarterly vs monthly?
  - Broad recommendation made by Pat as that is how she has done things in the past and would be easier to track on quickbooks
- Approve finances for February - April
  - Motion to approve by Russ, seconded by Paul
- May financials
  - Net loss in May due to the tree sale staff time being accounted for
  - Net positive still for year to date
  - Proposal to change the column titles for the two columns both labeled year to date to make it more clear what is being represented in that column.
  - May was pretty low for invoices in and out due to the nature of many of our grants. Many follow a quarterly reporting schedule and reporting was due in April so therefore May is a dry month.
  - Motion to approve May financials made by Paul, seconded by Russ. All in favor – Approved
  - Est FY23 revenue: 252,260.97, expenses: 240,525.78, surplus: 11,735.19
- With the new fiscal year starting on July 1st, now should be the time we start to discuss changing our billable rate. This can't be changed for grants already in place but going forward, any new grants that we receive should have a higher billable rate
  - Ideal to make this billable rate uniform but might not be possible with the different sources of funding we receive.
- Proposal to move to quarterly financial reports was made by Pat and Casey. Quarterly financial reports would align better with how funding comes in for all of the different grants that we have,
  - Brief monthly financial reports can still be pulled for board meetings, especially while board meetings are still being hosted monthly as Casey and Pat continue to onboard.

- Quarterly financials would be easier to review on the board's end giving a better overall picture of what's going on as well as it would be easier for Casey and Pat to put together. It would save on staff time for both Casey and Pat and improve efficiency.
- Motion to approve moving to quarterly financial reports made by Paul, seconded by Rich. All in favor – Approved
- Line of credit was approved for \$50,000
  - This was created in case payroll could not be made for a given month. This has never had to be used and is paid back instantly each month.
- Proposal to implement digital checks – direct deposit payroll.
  - Pat to look into if there is an additional expense in quickbooks to offer this service but she knows that it is very easy to do right through quickbooks and is willing to start this service.
  - Everyone is in agreement that it is a valuable next step for WNRCD to take and will be implementing this at the start of the new fiscal year.
- Capital funds request
  - Still have ~\$1,100 that we need to use by this Friday (June 30th). If we don't use it, we can give it back to VACD and they can distribute it to other districts that did overspend.
  - Would look great to legislators if we did use our full request.
    - Can be used to buy computers, monitors, work from home equipment, GSP units or other small electronics.

#### **10:30 Staff Updates**

- See report

#### **11:17 Supervisor and Staff Sharing Opportunity**

- Rich is working with FWR and the Town of Williamstown to look into some culvert replacements. Working with Michelle to determine priority culverts to target for replacement. Will be meeting with the planning commission in August and will meet the Williamstown Select Board.
- Bob Paquin has resigned as an associate supervisor. He mentioned additional commitments of his to now be taking up more of his time.
- VACD is looking for their annual \$2,000 conservation dues and hoping WNRCD will be on top of it to get these into them quickly.
- Jill Arace wants to have a VACD annual meeting in Oct/Nov and would like to know if WNRCD would be willing to host this meeting?
- Next board meeting is scheduled for August 10th 9am - 12pm at the Berlin office. Casey will plan a visit to Shady Rill that day for those interested and available.

#### **11:23 Executive Session**

#### **11:53 Executive Session Adjourned**

Motion to approve by Paul, seconded by Rich, all in favor.

- The board unanimously agreed that Kat is eligible for a pay raise from Grade 19 Step 2 to Step 3 retroactive to April 4, 2023.
- The board determined Adelaide is not eligible for her annual raise until October 25, 2023.
- The board discussed if pay raises should be decoupled from evaluations (automatic), there was no consensus.
- Jeff Cueto will propose a revision of the handbook for the annual performance review section and send it out before the August meeting.