



Winooski Natural Resources Conservation District Board of Supervisors Meeting

Meeting Minutes

May 19, 2023 9:00 - 12:00pm

In Person: Berlin Office

Attendees: Casey Spencer (WNRCD District Manager), Kat Lewis (WNRCD Ag Specialist), Adelaide Dumm (WNRCD Conservation Specialist), Pat Richardson (Bookkeeper), Sarah Jansen (NRCS), Nancy Everhart (associate supervisor), Jeff Cuteo (Associate Supervisor), Russ Barrett (Vice Chair), Paul Hartshorn (Secretary Supervisor), Oliver Pierson (Supervisor)

9:01 Meeting Called to Order

9:04 NRCS Update

- No attendance from Marybeth, Sarah Jansen stood in her place
- ACT Now is being rolled out
 - Allows for ~65 day turn around for grazing plans, forest management plans, nutrient management plans, and energy plans.
 - Idea is that customers can apply to ACT Now and get the required plans created so that they can streamline the EQIP and CSP application for future projects
- Actively hiring in all field offices except Berlin.
 - Conservation Technicians, Soil Conservationists, Engineers

9:10 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.

9:15 Discussion Item

- CREP Article in VTDigger
 - The VT RAPs require a buffer on fields adjacent to rivers, streams, and ditches
 - A waiver needs to be required by national headquarters for CREP projects as CREP pays for landowners to put in buffers but because buffers are a requirement in VT, there is hesitancy in national headquarters to grant funds to these CREP projects. They believe they should have to pay for practices that are required by state regulations.
 - This hold up is making the process of getting CREP projects implemented a slow process

- Looking forward, the new farm bill that should be coming out this year will hopefully be changing the language surrounding buffer requirements in Vermont and allow for more land to be put into a CREP Agreement.

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

9:43 Discussion Items

- DM Hiring Updates
 - Casey has USDA clearance
 - Casey to meet with all VACD staff to get familiar with grants
 - Casey feels properly trained to take on Adelaide's projects during maternity leave
 - Casey has been able to meet with Remy to discuss projects and get clarification as she transitions
- Adelaide's maternity leave discussion
 - Adelaide to use annual leave and comp time accrued during maternity leave so she can get paid for the first few weeks
 - Motion to approve plan as determined by Casey and Adelaide by Paul, Seconded by Oliver
- Kat's Annual leave discussion
 - Kat to carry over all accrued annual leave into the new fiscal year without losing any hours. Plan to use time off in late July
 - Motion to approve by Paul, Seconded by Oliver
- Annual Dinner
 - Bring back the annual fundraiser dinner
 - Plan to host dinner at farm or land owners property in Fall 2024
 - Potential to have two levels of tickets.
 - 1 that would cover just the cost of supplies and food
 - 1 that would cover costs with an added donation to the district
 - Could include a farm walk or tour of the property or just host a farm walk as a separate event this summer/early fall

10:25 Break

10:30 Staff Updates

- See report

12:08 Supervisor and Staff Sharing Opportunity

12:09 Motion to Adjourn

- Motion to adjourn made by Jeff, Seconded by Paul