



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, June 21, 2023, 5:00 p.m.

USDA Service Center, 22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301

ATTENDANCE:

The following Board members, Staff and Partners were in attendance:

Nick Thomas- Chair, Jim Evans- Director, Sally Williams- Director, Kyle Sturgis- Director, Carmie Savage- District Manager, Julie Head- Education Director, Bill Savage- Conservation Specialist, Palmer Smith- Conservation Technician, Ben Young- NRCS Soil Conservationist, Maggie Herrmann- NRCS Natural Resource Specialist, Rick Hall- Associate Director, Edwin Long- Associate Director, and Olivia Leatherwood- DCR.

The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:

Sands Gayle- Director, Robbie Lewis- Associate Director, Chip Turlington- Associate Director, Hunter Blake- Associate Director, Norman Pitt- Associate Director, Matt Hickman- Associate Director and Brian Broadwater- Associate Director.

CALL TO ORDER: Nick Thomas- Chair, called to order the June 21, 2023, District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS: Director Kyle Sturgis made a motion to approve the May 17, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, was carried unanimously. Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the May financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. VA Soil & Water Conservation Board- May 25th meeting minutes: Provided for Review.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

Chair Nick Thomas made a motion that the Board enter executive session to discuss matters exempt from the open meeting requirements of the VA Freedom of Information Act. The purpose of the closed meeting is to discuss personnel matters. Closed meetings are permitted under 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia. **AYES:** Directors: Kyle Sturgis, Jim Evans, and Sally Williams. **NAYES:** 0. The motion carried unanimously.

Executive Session was held.

APPROVED: _____ **SIGNED:** _____
BOARD CHAIRMAN BOARD SECRETARY

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Chair Nick Thomas made a motion that the Board reconvened into open session by the Code of Virginia 2.2-3712 (D). AYES: Kyle Sturgis, Jim Evans, and Sally Williams. NAYES: 0. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION: CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING- Resolution 1:

WHEREAS, the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District Board has convened a closed meeting on June 21, 2023, pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires certification by the District Board that a closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District Board hereby certifies that, to the best of the each member's knowledge, (i) only public matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public matters as identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered to which this certification applies.

Chair Nick Thomas made a motion for the adoption of Resolution 1, Certification of Closed Meeting, which confirms that the Board only discussed matters in Closed Meeting that were identified and lawfully exempt. AYES: Kyle Sturgis, Jim Evans, and Sally Williams. NAYES: 0. The motion carried unanimously.

Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the personal matters that were discussed and proposed FY24 Budget that was reviewed during Closed Meeting. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, was carried unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS:

A. FY24 DCR/ Eastern Shore SWCD Grant Agreements: The following grant agreements were discussed and presented for approval:

- Admin & Ops Grant: \$196,040.00 Total
- Cost Share & Technical Assistance Grant: \$4,351,327.00 Total
 - Chesapeake Bay VACS Cost Share: \$2,689,088.00
 - Outside Chesapeake Bay VACS Cost Share: \$1,208,491.00
 - Technical Assistance: \$453,748.00

Director Kyle Sturgis made a motion to accept the FY24 Grants as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, passed unanimously.

B. FY23 Cost Share Report- Carmie Savage: The balance of obligated funds for Poultry projects totals \$65,532.76 in FY20 Ches Bay VACS and \$0 in FY20 OCB VACS along with

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a remaining balance of \$108,403.53 in obligated FY22 Ches Bay Transfer funds. The FY23 VACS allocation totals \$1,945,741.00 in Ches Bay VACS and \$1,051,251.00 in OCB VACS. Interest earned through May 31st of \$2,059.36 and BMP repayments of \$1,167.66, and an additional \$500,000 VACS allocation leaves a new balance of \$2,448,968.02 of Ches Bay VACS funds. Interest earned in OCB VACS through May 31st of \$1,256.15 and BMP repayments of \$46.00 leaves a new balance of \$1,052,553.15 in OCB VACS funds. Approved ranked cost share requests through June 20th total \$250,191.25 in Ches Bay VACS along with a \$1,944,298.35 VACS funds transfer to WFA, return of unobligated '23 Ches Bay VACS totaling \$240,178.54 and new BMP Ches Bay VACS cost share requests of \$3,575.00 leaving a new balance of 10,724.88 in Ches Bay unobligated VACS funds. The approved ranked cost share requests through June 20th total \$282,902.40 in OCB VACS along with the transfer of \$768,737.71 in OCB unobligated VACS funds to WFA, new BMP OCB VACS cost share requests of \$4,245.00 and the transfer of \$1,340.92 from WFA OCB funds back to OCB VACS, have left a negative remaining balance of -\$1,991.04 in unobligated OCB VACS funds. Unobligated OCB WFA funds will be transferred back to OCB VACS to fund the need. The transferred Ches Bay VACS to WFA give a beginning balance of \$1,944,298.35 in Ches Bay WFA. The transferred OCB VACS to WFA give a beginning balance of \$768,737.71 in OCB WFA. The approved WFA Ches Bay Cost Share requests total \$1,890,091.30 plus new BMP WFA CB cost share requests of \$2,493.65 leave a remaining balance of \$51,713.40 in unobligated WFA Ches Bay funds. The approved WFA OCB Cost share requests total \$1,316,426.00, new WFA OCB cost share requests totaling \$1,660.20 and the transfer back to OCB VACS of \$1,340.92 plus additional funds from DCR of \$566,694.79 leave a remaining balance of \$16,005.38 in WFA OCB funds. The additional Cost share requests for Ches Bay VACS totaling \$3,575.00, OCB VACS totaling \$4,245.00, WFA Ches Bay totaling \$2,493.65 and additional WFA OCB cost share requests totaling \$1,660.20 were presented for approval. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the new Ches Bay VACS, OCB VACS, WFA Ches Bay and WFA OCB Cost Share requests as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously. Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY23 Costs Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously.**

C. FY23 VCAP Report: Living Shoreline Project 20-22-03 is currently under construction. Living Shoreline Project 20-22-05 has temporarily stalled due to contractor issues. Bill contracted VCAP Coordinator Blair Blanchette and was permitted to extend the project. Yearly inspections were completed on June 8th on the following projects: Contract 20-21-013, Contract 20-20-01, and Contract 20-20-02. All three were found to be in good order with no issues. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the FY23 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, was carried unanimously.**

D. Reminder: FSA Updates/ Announcement of 2023 County Committee Elections was included in meeting packet.

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E. District Vehicle Update: New Tahoe vehicles are going for \$60,000 plus. The one quoted previously only had two seats and the District needs three. After much research, Bill found a 2023 Ford Explorer at Preston Ford in Pittsville, MD for a total of \$43,303.00 which included purchasing fees and also a \$1,295 fee that covers all oil changes and tire rotations as long as the District owns the vehicle. The staff traded in the van for \$500 and picked up the Ford Explorer on June 15th. Carmie noted that ½ of the purchase price will come from '23 Cost Share Support and the other ½ from Contingency funds since it will also be used for Education purchases as well.

F. Operations Committee Minutes- May 17th meeting: A verbal recap of the meeting was given during the May 17th Board meeting. The written minutes were presented for approval. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the FY23 Costs Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, was carried unanimously.**

G. Technical Review Committee (TRC) Minutes- June 20th meeting: The FY24 Secondary Considerations, as recommended by the TRC, were presented for approval. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY24 Secondary Considerations as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, was carried unanimously.** The FY24 Average Cost List, as recommended by the TRC, was presented for approval. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY24 Average Cost List as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously.** The written minutes were presented for approval. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the June 20th TRC Minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously.**

H. Operations Committee June 21st meeting- Verbal Report: The Operations Committee met prior to the District Board meeting at 4:00 p.m. on June 21, 2023. Nick conducted personnel evaluations on June 21st at 3:00pm. All the staff are doing a great job. Budget funding sources and amounts were reviewed. The FY24 Proposed Operational Budget was presented for approval. The Committee approved recommending the Budget to the Board for approval. (Nick, Carmie) FY24 District Policies were reviewed without change as well as the Personnel Handbook. FY24 Job Descriptions were reviewed without change. DCR's Desktop Fiscal Guide was reviewed. The Attachment D (Budget Template) for FY25 and FY26 was discussed and will be presented for approval during a special meeting of the District Board prior to the July 17th deadline for submission.

CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:

A. n/a

STAFF REPORTS:

District Manager Report: Carmie Savage, District Manager, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

FY 2023 Cost Share:

- **Agronomic:** All spreadsheets and tracking are being kept up to date. Completed all Cover Crop, Split App, and No-till Cost Share payments. Still processing payments for nutrient management practices and WFA NM as reported. Once completed will work on FY23 total summary.
- **Poultry Update:**
 - Contract 20-21-0176 – (2 manure sheds) participant plans to have it completed by June 30th (Local funding)

Administrative:

- Payroll and bills are always ongoing.
- Started gathering info for the 4th Quarter Attachment E due to DCR July 17 and year end reports.
- Have begun to work on the FY23 Questionnaire due to DCR to help with the program year assessment.
- Started the closeout of the program year process and gearing up for the new program year.
- Once approved, will set up a new FY24 Operations Budget in QuickBooks and update any salary changes.

Operations Committee: Prepared meeting minutes from the last Operations Committee meeting on 5/17. For the June 21st Operations Committee meeting, Carmie sent out the meeting agenda to members and attended the meeting.

- Drafted the FY24 Operational Budget
- Updated current job descriptions.
- Drafted personnel evaluations (*except for Carmie's- Nick will conduct*)
- Reviewed and updated all current District policies.
- Drafting Attachment D Budget Template for FY25 & 26

Technical Review Committee: Attended the meeting on June 20th at 12 noon.

- Drafted an overview of the current program year and how funding has been obligated and a breakdown of the FY24 cost share funding.

District Website: Updating the District's website to keep it up to date as time allows.

Trainings/Webinars/ Meetings:

- June 7th- Participated in VASWCD Admin/Ops Committee Virtual Meeting
- June 7th- Participated in DCR FY24 VACS Rollout Virtual Meeting
- June 14th- Participated in DCR FY24 WFA Rollout Virtual Meeting

Important Dates:

- June 19th- Office Closed- Juneteenth

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- June 20th- TRC Committee meeting @ 12pm
- June 20th – Groundwater Committee meeting @ 10am
- June 21st- Operations Committee meeting @ 4pm
- June 22nd- Coastal Resilience Steering Committee meeting
- June 21st District Board meeting @ 5pm
- June 27th- Painter AREC Field Day
- July 4th- Office Closed- Independence Day
- July 18th- Groundwater Committee Mtg- 10am
- July 19th- District Board meeting @ 5pm

Conservation Specialist Report: Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. He presented his report to the Board.

BMP - Cost Share:

- Checking Side dress forms as reported in.
- Organizing and filing FY23 producer files.
- Adjusting side dress reporting sheets in Tracking.
- Calling farmers when checks are ready.

VESLT Reports:

- Four reports filed his month.

VCAP:

- Explained in detail in the VCAP monthly report under New Business.

Trainings:

- 5/7 Attended FY24 VACS Roll out session.
- 5/14 Attended WFA Rollout Meeting

Meetings:

- 5/1 Attended VA Soil Health Quarterly Meeting
- 6/16 Bill was unable to attend the Groundwater Meeting due to a Dr. Appt and Palmer was in Training on that day.

Vehicles:

- We received an email on the 6/14 from I.G. Burton Chevrolet stating that the new 2023 Tahoe, (other than the police models) would now cost around \$60,000. This was beyond our budget, so I began researching other options and located a New 2023 Ford Explorer at Preston Ford in Pittsville, MD. We were able to purchase this vehicle loaded with all the bells and whistles for \$43,303.00 after our trade and this price also included a \$1,295.00 life - time (no additional charge) oil change and tire rotation package. It carries the standard 3-year 36,000-mile bumper to bumper warranty. As well as the 5-year 60,000-mile Power train and roadside assistance.
- 6/2 Soils Trailer Inspected
- 6/16 District Truck Inspection

Conservation Technician Report: Palmer Smith, Conservation Technician, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

BMP - Cost Share:

- As Nutrient Management plans have come in, we have been making the necessary changes and additions and filing them.
- Bill and Palmer have been filing the completed FY23 contracts.
- Wrapping up the final FY23 contracts, making side dress and NMP changes

Trainings and meetings:

- 5/31- VACDE Board Meeting
- 6/5-6/7- Soil Science, Soil Fertility, Crop Production School in Harrisonburg
- 6/8- Annual VCAP inspections
- Palmer finished the 8 online trainings for Conservation Planner
 - Just have RUSLE training left and then the review with Carl.

Education Director Report: Julie Head, Education Director, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

Virginia Native Plants Campaign – They are revamping the native plants book that was put out a few years ago. There will be a zoom meeting for Regional Coordinators on 6/26.

Ag Camp – Ag Camp has been very popular for the last two years and we have had some parents mention that their younger children would like to attend. This year we are going to do a half-day Junior Ag Camp for 5–7-year-olds on July 27th and 28th. The full day Ag Camp for 8 – 12-year-olds will be on August 1st and 2nd. Both events will be held in conjunction with the Barrier Islands Center. Ag Camp has 13 students enrolled and Junior Ag Camp has 9 students enrolled.

Summer Programming – I will be doing some migrant programming with Eastern Shore Rural Health.

Upcoming Dates:

- a. 6/26 – Regional Coordinators meeting – Virginia Native Plants
- b. 6/28 – Planning Meeting for Graves Training
- c. 7/11 – Kiptopeke Elementary School Migrant Programming
- d. 7/19 – presentation on ESSWCD to Master Naturalists
- e. 7/26 – Metopmkin Elementary School Migrant programming
- f. 7/27 – 7/28 – Junior Ag Camp
- g. 8/1 – 8/2 – Ag Camp at the Barrier Islands Center
- h. 8/22 – 8/24 – Graves Training

PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS:

Department of Conservation & Recreation Update: Olivia Leatherwood, DCR CDC, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

New District Representative at the Office of the Attorney General: Darrell Kuntz, dkuntz@oag.state.va.us, 804-371-5207. Refer all future questions to Darrell and not to Kate Kulbok.

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

- **4th Quarter/End of Year Reports:** Due to me July 17 (Att. E, Cash Balance, Profit & Loss, Year-End Cash Balance, and Carryover Reports)
- **FY23 Self-Assessment Questionnaire:** are due to me on or before July 17.
- Attachment D – FY25 Budget Template: Due to Blair Gordon July 17 – must be board approved and signed.
- **FY23 Grant Agreement Deliverables:** for both the Administrative & Operational Grant and Cost-Share & Technical Assistance Grant must be satisfied before 06/30/23. Any outstanding items should be addressed at the June 2023 board meeting. Instructions for completing End of Year reports have been emailed to staff.
- **FY24 Grant Agreements:** The VA Soil & Water Conservation Board (VSWCB) did not have a quorum for their May meeting, so policies and grant agreements were not approved. DCR does not expect there to be any changes to the proposed grant agreements. The VSWCB has scheduled a meeting for June 12, after which, if approved, grant agreements will be sent out to Districts from Blair Gordon. If Districts would like, you may approve the draft agreements and delegate signature authority to the District Chair upon receipt.
- **FY24 Budgets:** FY24 Budgets should be approved by your Board by June 30 or no later than July board meeting.
- **Return of Funds to DCR:** If you would like to get funds off your books to clean up Attachment E, please have your request submitted to me by June 15 so they can be processed before the end of the FY. All other funds will be returned as part of EOY returns once reports are reconciled.
- Return of Funds to meet 90%: need board action during June meeting.

AG COST SHARE

- **FY23 End of Year VACS Items:**
 - Present for approval at June board meeting the LOGI Cost-Share Program Carryover Report for BMPs to be Completed, Canceled, or Carried Over into FY24 and take actions as appropriate.
 - Run EOY QA/QC Reports in LOGI and correct issues by June 30.
 - Complete and submit EOY Cost-Share Reports (Carryover, Cash On-Hand Balance, Att. E) by July 17.
 - Submit Board-approved Att. D Template by July 17

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- Potentially delegate authority to District Chair or Ag Committee for any practices completed between June board meeting and June 30
- **FY24 Secondary Considerations and FY24 Average Cost List:** both documents must be approved by the SWCD Board of Directors and secondary considerations must be approved by DCR prior to allocating any FY24 cost-share.
- **End of Lifespan (EOL) Verifications:** Reminder EOL verifications are loaded in CAS through 2025. Practices expiring at the end of 2023 are due by September 30, 2023 in order to receive compensation for work done. Each verification completed will receive \$200, and any 2024 and 2025 verifications completed will receive an early bonus of \$50.
- **Random Verifications:** Olivia will be reaching out to schedule random verifications soon.

DATES TO REMEMBER

June

- June 7- VACS Update Session, Virtual (1:00-4:00), Password: A43tY64mXD
- June 7 – VASWCD Admin/Ops Committee Meeting: Att. D Training Follow Up, 10:00am, Register Here
- June 12 – VSWCB Meeting, Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, Glen Allen
- June 15 – VACS Update Session, Virtual (9:00-12:00), Password: 9f7mgQXvAJ
- June 19 – Juneteenth State Holiday, State Government offices closed
- June 20 – Filing Deadline, Last day to file election documents with local registrar
- June 21 – VASWCD Quarterly Board Meeting (virtual) 9:30am, Register Here

July

- July 4 – State Holiday – Independence Day, State Government offices closed
- July 11 – VASWCD Water Cooler Chat, 1:30, Register Here
- July 17 – End of Year Reports and Attachment D due to DCR
- July 19 – Tracking Program Updates & continued VACS Updates, Virtual (9:30-11:30am), link forthcoming
- July 26 – Tracking Program Updates & continued VACS Updates, Virtual (1:00-3:00pm), link forthcoming

Other Dates

- Aug 22-24 – VACDE Annual Summer Training, Graves Mountain Lodge
- Sept 30 – Deadline for EOL Verifications for 2023 Reimbursement
- October 17-18 – VA Rare, Threatened, & Endangered Species/VA Cultural & Historic Resources Protection course

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Accomack Field Office NRCS Report: Ben Young, NRCS Soil Conservationist, gave a verbal report to the Board.

VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Updates:

- Jake Browder is the acting District Conservationist while Jenny Templeton is working on a State level Easement Team for the next few months.

FY23 programs

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)
 - 6 Black Duck Initiative
 - 1 Forestry CAPs
 - 2 Poultry

• Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

Ongoing restoration work on 1 WRE (Wetland Reserve Easement) in Northampton County. Field Office working with NRCS Easement Team & Engineering Staff, Northampton County, DEQ, USACE, VMRC for permitting purposes. 13 Wetland Easement on-site annual monitoring visits will be scheduled for this winter/spring.

- Working on CSP rankings

ES Resource Conservation & Development: Edwin Long, RC&D Chair, gave a verbal report to the Board.

- Stacey Johnson, Projects Director, has resigned from RC&D. She has accepted a position in another state. RC&D is meeting to discuss the future.

The June 21, 2023 Board meeting was adjourned.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage

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