



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, February 20, 2024, 5:00 p.m.
USDA Service Center, 22545 Center Parkway, Accomac, VA 23301**

ATTENDANCE:

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

- **Directors:** Chair Nick Thomas, Vice-Chair Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, Kyle Sturgis, and Sally Williams
- **Staff:** Carmie Ross, Bill Savage, Julie Head and Palmer Smith
- **Partners:** Ben Young NRCS; and Olivia Leatherwood- DCR CDC

The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:

- **Associate Directors:** Robbie Lewis, Edwin Long, Hunter Blake, Norman Pitt, Chip Burlington, Matt Hickman, Ursula Deitch, Rick Hall and Brian Broadwater

ESTABLISHMENT OF QUORUM: With five (5) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Nick Thomas called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. He thanked members and guests for attending.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS: Director Sands Gayle moved that the minutes of the February 20, 2024, meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District be approved as submitted. Director Sally Williams seconded, and the motion carried. Director Sands Gayle moved that the financial reports for February 2024 be approved as submitted. Director Jim Evans seconded, and the motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. n/a

NEW BUSINESS:

A. FY24 Cost Share Report: The FY24 Ches Bay VACS allocation is \$2,689,088 plus interest through February 29th of \$2,010.89 and a bank fee of \$24.00 for falling under minimum in August and September before first allocation was direct deposited, bringing the total available funds to \$2,691,074.89. The FY24 OCB VACS allocation is \$1,208,491.00 plus interest through February 29th of \$858.95 bringing the total available funds to \$1,209,349.95. The cost share requests approved and reported planted through March 19th total \$241,829.20 in Ches Bay VACS and \$242,019.60 in OCB VACS. Total cost

March 20, 2024

share requests of \$270.80 in Ches Bay VACS and \$157.80 in OCB VACS as additions to existing contracts or new NM-1a acreages were brought to the board for approval. After new requests, a balance of unobligated VACS funds totaling \$2,448,974.89 in Ches Bay VACS funds and \$967,172.55 in OCB VACS funds remain. March 20th Carmie requested Olivia Leatherwood, DCR, transfer \$2,300,000.00 of unobligated Ches Bay VACS and \$900,000.00 of unobligated OCB VACS to Whole Farm Approach (WFA) respectfully. Total approved and planted requests for Whole Farm Approach through March 19th total \$2,531,364.25 in Ches Bay WFA and \$1,696,952.45 in OCB WFA. Total cost share requests of \$815.40 in Ches Bay WFA and \$414.40 in OCB WFA as additions to existing contracts or new NM-1a acreages were brought to the board for approval. With the March 20th transfer of unobligated VACS funds to WFA, the new balance of WFA funds is - \$232,179.65 in Ches Bay WFA and -\$797,366.85 in OCB WFA. There is still a balance of unobligated VACS left that will be transferred at a later date. Olivia stated that she will release funds to cover the shortfalls and the District can payback the unobligated funds to DCR at the end of the year. A copy of all the contracts presented for approval will be attached to the official minutes. **Director Jim Evans moved that the new cost share requests be approved as submitted. Director Sally Williams seconded, and the motion carried.** A transfer request from Atkinson Farm Inc. was brought before the Board allowing Instance 569286 of WFA Contract 20-24-0247 and Instance 568844 of WFA Contract 20-24-0245 be transferred to Turlington Farms Inc. **Director Sally Williams moved that the transfer request be approved as submitted. Director Jim Evans seconded, and the motion carried. Director Kyle Sturgis moved that the FY24 Cost Share Report be approved as submitted. Director Sands Gayle seconded, and the motion carried.**

B. FY24 VCAP Report: Bill stated there were no changes from the February report to the Board.

C. Rent Agreement Update: With the new addition of 729 sq. ft. in rental space for storage, the landlord has increased the rent by \$5,500 per year. The District has been paying \$15,000 in office rent and as of September 1st, it will increase to \$20,500 per year. The rental space the District has acquired started in December 2023 so the prorated rate for the nine-month period until current lease ends totals \$4,125.06. The remaining two quarters of rent will be disbursed at \$5,812.53 each. **Director Jim Evans moved that the updated Rent Agreement and increase be approved as submitted. Director Sally Williams seconded, and the motion carried.**

D. Endowment Committee March 8th Meeting Minutes: Carmie presented the draft meeting minutes to the Board for approval. During the meeting, a deadline was set for future transcripts to be submitted to the District of February 28th. The budget was set for 2024 totaling \$4,500.00. The budget includes 2 scholarships at \$1,000 each, 2 youth conservation campers at \$550 each, and spring grants totaling \$1,400.00. A deadline of

March 20, 2024

April 24th was set for applications to be submitted to the District. The essay question for the scholarship essay was selected and the next Endowment Committee meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, April 30th at 2:00 p.m. **Director Sally Williams moved that the Endowment Committee minutes from the March 8th meeting be approved as submitted. Director Sands Gayle seconded, and the motion carried.**

E. Adoption of Eastern Shore SWCD Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy:

Carmie presented a draft ESSWCD Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy for review. This policy would permit committee meetings to be held electronically as well as Board meetings when needed. FOIA requires this policy to be in place prior to electronic meetings taking place. **Director Sands Gayle moved that the ESSWCD Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy be approved as submitted. Director Sally Williams seconded, and the motion carried.**

F. VA Soil and Water Conservation Board meeting: The next meeting will be held on March 27th at Bear Creek Lake State Park in Cumberland at 10:00 a.m.

CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:

A. n/a

STAFF REPORTS:

District Manager Report: Carmie Ross, 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 2024 Cost Share:

- **Agronomics:** Tracking and funding spreadsheets are being kept up to date. Continuing to pay out nmps- new cost share requests are reflected in the cost share report. With such a large program year, our time is being spent primarily on administration. Completed a transfer from existing participant to new participant form. Details will be presented under New Business

Accounting: Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.

Coastal Resilience & Sustainability Plan Steering Committee- Jessica Steelman, Steelman Coastal Consulting LLC, emailed the committee that due to the conclusion of her contract with the ANPDC, she will no longer be managing this effort. The final day of her contract with them was March 17th, and so she cancelled any upcoming meetings. She stated that ANPDC will be left with moving forward. She thanked all committee members for our hard work and participation in this initiative.

Reality Store: February 29th helped with the Reality Store at Northampton High School by manning the “student loan and credit card” booth. Eye opener event!

March 20, 2024

Endowment Committee Meeting: Attended this meeting on Friday, March 8th, drafted meeting packet and compiled the meeting minutes as presented under New Business.

National Ag Week: Recorded a couple facts, on behalf of the District, regarding nmps and cover crop acreages on the Shore to be aired on WESR during National Ag Week- March 17-23

District's Electronic Participation and Meeting Policy: Drafted this policy for the District in case its ever needed or if a committee needs to conduct a meeting electronically. According to FOIA, this policy is required to be in place.

Envirothon Testing Day: Plan to help with this event to be held on March 19th at the Painter AREC.

Rental Agreement: Been working with landlord to update the rental agreement for the new storage space wing.

Website Update: Recently worked on updating the District's website.

Upcoming Webinars/ Conference Calls:

- Area VI Envirothon- April 16- VIMS in Wachapreague
- Operations Committee meeting- April 17 at 4:00 p.m.
- Arbor Day- April 27- Cape Charles
- Endowment Committee meeting- April 30 at 2:00 p.m.

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:

- Working on No-Till & CCI-CNT Inspections
- Checking and filing NMPs as they are submitted

VESLT Reports:

- Three VESLT reports were filed this month.

Groundwater Committee Meeting 3/19/24:

- We were unable to attend due to conflict in schedules with Envirothon Competition Day.

VCAP:

- Explained in detail in the VCAP monthly report under New Business.
- There are no changes to the report since the February 21st Meeting.

Events:

- Attended Area 6 Spring Meeting in Petersburg on 3/7.
- Delivered Soils trailer to Holly Grove and set up for Julie 3/14.

March 20, 2024

- Attended Envirothon Competition Day at the AREC and helped with food & snacks setup 3/19.

Trainings:

- Attended the VCAP virtual training on 2/27.
- Attended VCAP in person Field Day training in Lynchburg on 3/13.

CCI-CNT pulled fields / acres:

- **Contract 20-22-0024:** Field 2, twelve acres of this field were voluntarily pulled out of CCI-CNT to put back in tillage. Repayment letter sent 3/1/24 and repayment is due in the amount of \$170.00 by 5/1/24.
- **Contract 20-23-0025:** Field 8 has a 1acre pond constructed on it. This one acre is out of compliance. The producer was contacted and a repayment letter was sent 3/4/24 Repayment was due in the amount of \$25.00 by 5/6/24 and was paid March 20, 2024.

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:

- CCI-CNT & SL-15A spot checks are ongoing
- Making changes as NMP's are submitted

Reality Store: On February 29th -helped with the Reality Store at Northampton High School and manned the "Chance" Booth

Area VI Spring Meeting: On March 7th- attended the Area VI Spring Meeting in Colonial Heights

Trainings and meetings:

- VCAP virtual part 2 training- 2/27
- VCAP Field Practicum in Lynchburg- 3/13
- Envirothon Local Competition Day- 3/19- Ben and Palmer administered the Wildlife exam

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.

Programming – Ongoing as requested. We took the soils trailer to Holly Grove on 3/14 and did 12 presentations with 276 students in 5 hours.

Local and Area Envirothon – Competition Day was March 19th. Broadwater Academy placed first. Next year, Julie would like to open the Envirothon Competition to include Holly Grove Christian Academy. The Area VI Envirothon will be on April 16, 2024, at

March 20, 2024

VIMS in Wachapreague. Julie needs some volunteers to judge the oral presentations on April 16th.

Junior Ag Camp/Ag Camp – Junior Ag Camp, July 2 -3, 2024, at BIC. Ag Camp is August 13 – 14.

Eastern Shore Regional Science Fair – April 20, 2024, at the VIMS campus. Rules and scoresheets have been developed. Info has been sent to all local schools and as many homeschool groups as we have contacts for along with offers to come in and work with their teachers and/or students.

Arbor Day – plans are underway for 2024 Arbor Day. This will most likely be in Cape Charles again at Strawberry Square. Plant plugs have been ordered.

Adventures in Nature Camp – Erin and Julie are investigating the possibility of working with Kiptopeke National Wildlife Refuge to hold a 2-day camp that would focus on natural resources. Current discussion is to focus the topics around Envirothon learning objectives such as forestry, wildlife, and aquatic topics. Dates are June 20th and June 21st.

Community Presentations: Julie presented info regarding District programs both agricultural and educational to the Men's Group of Johnsontown Methodist Church on March 19th.

Upcoming Dates

- a. 3/21 – OES -Goetchius
- b. 3/22 – AES Science Fair
- c. 4/2 – Area VI Envirothon Planning Meeting
- d. 4/3 – AES Career Day
- e. 4/4 – Metompkin Science Fair
- f. 4/11 – OES – Goetchius
- g. 4/12 – Kipto ES Science Fair
- h. 4/16 – Area VI Envirothon, VIMS
- i. 4/17 – SCA Science Fair
- j. 4/19 – CCCS Science Fair
- k. 4/19 – 4/20 – Eastern Shore Regional Science Fair
- l. 4/25 – OES – Goetchius
- m. 4/27 – Arbor Day, Cape Charles

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.

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

- **FY25 Budget Preparations:** Finance/Budget committees should begin preparations for FY25 budgets for district board discussions. FY25 budgets should be board approved by June 30.

- **New Director Orientation:** Per the FY24 Administrative and Operational Grant Agreement, Deliverable #13, all new directors are required to complete Director Orientation within six months of qualifying for office. DCR is partnering with the VASWCD to provide Director Orientation in two phases. Phase I and II must be completed by June 30, 2024.

o **Phase I is an online course available on the VASWCD website** It is comprised of 10 individual modules that can be taken online at any time, they do not have to be completed all at once. If you take the online modules, you must complete the Final Quiz for credit. Mini quizzes currently on the website are for your own benefit and knowledge, the Final Quiz must be completed for credit. Directors can also have group viewings of the online modules and a sign-in sheet should be submitted to your CDC for credit.

o **Phase II is in-person.** Each Area Spring Meeting will have a Phase II session in the afternoon and will provide an opportunity to hear from experienced Directors about your roles and responsibilities, and a chance to network with your neighboring District Directors. Additionally, a Director Resource Notebook will be provided, and we will review the helpful tools and documents of this notebook during Phase II. Although only new Directors are required to complete Director Orientation, all Directors are encouraged to participate, and all Directors will receive a Director Resource Notebook! Plan to attend your Area Spring Meeting!

- **VCE Director Appointments expire December 31, 2024:** DCR has notified VCE leadership, and the process will be the same as previous years. Appointments will go before the VSWCB in September, so August will likely be the last month for Districts to act. Please submit Form 14 and draft minutes of the appointment.

- **4th Quarter Reports:** Due on or before April 15th (Att. E, Balance Sheet, P&L)

AG COST SHARE

- **Follow Up on Random BMP Verifications:** Please continue to work with participants who have maintenance needs. Remember to update the Verification Module as repairs are completed.
- **90% VACS Obligations:** Districts unable to obligate 90% of their FY24 cost share allocation can either transfer allocation to another district or return allocation with proportional TA to DCR before June 15, 2024.
- **4th Carryover Requests:** Carryover BMPs coming to the end of their 3rd PY and note expected to be completed by 6/30/24 can only be carried over again with prior approval from DCR. Requests to carryover BMPs a 3 rd time into a 4th PY must be submitted to Sara Bottenfield by May 15. For more information, please see Manual pages II-41 to II- 44. For each practice requested, District staff will need to:

- o Update the Carryover section of the Measurements tab by selecting 'Other (describe in BMP Comments)' as one of the justifications and entering a comment on the General tab to explain the reason for additional carryover. Include the date and initials of the person entering the request.
- o Send an email to Sara Bottenfield, copying your CDC, with the contract number, instance number, and justification. If submitting multiple practices, please include them all in a single email.
- o The carryover report can be found in Logi under: Shared Reports > District Reports > Carryover Reports >Cost Share Program Carryover Report for BMPs to be Completed, Canceled, or Carried Over into FY25. Items requiring DCR approval are marked with a '2.'

- **Conservation Planner Certification Courses:** There are multiple courses for initial

March 20, 2024

Conservation Planner Certification within the coming months. See below for details.

- o **April 4-5** – Conservation Selling Skills, Central Virginia Community College, Lynchburg, VA
- o **May 15** – Perennial Stream ID Course, 8am-4:30pm, Charlottesville, VA
- o **Summer, TBD** – Nutrient Management Courses
- o **October 15-16** – Virginia Resource Training, Virtual
- o **Fall TBD** – RUSLE2
- o **October/November** – DCR Conservation Planner Course

GRANT DELIVERABLE REMINDERS

- **Annually review and document in minutes:**

- o Strategic Plan
- o Annual Plan of Work
- o Desktop Procedures for District Operations
- o Fixed Assets Inventory
- o Personnel Documents: Personnel Policy, Position Descriptions, and Performance Expectations
- o Annual Employee Performance Evaluations
- o Outreach Event (Admin/Ops Grant Agreement, Attachment F)

DATES TO REMEMBER

- March 6 – Area V Spring Meeting; 9:30am, The Barn at Pine View-Keysville
- March 7 – Area VI Spring Meeting; 10:00am, Keystone Truck & Tractor Museum-Colonial Heights
- March 9 – General Assembly adjourns.
- March 27 – RUSLE2 Part C, 9:00-11:00, Register [Here](#)
- March 27 – VA Soil & Water Conservation Board Meeting, 10:00am, Bear Creek Lake State Park, Cumberland; Audit Subcommittee 9:00am
- April 3 – VASWCD Quarterly Meeting, 9:00am, Drury Hotel, Glen Allen
- April 16 – Area VI Envirothon; Eastern Shore
- April 18 – Area V Envirothon
- April 30 – VASWCD Conservation Chats, 6:00pm, Register [Here](#) (Directors encourages to participate!)
- May 15 – Deadline to notify Sara Bottenfield of carryovers into a 4th program year.

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

EQIP & CSP- waiting for preapproval.

Easements: monitoring to take place in April

Trainings: Everyone being sent to different states for various trainings in the next month

New Soil Con Technician- position not filled. Position may be readvertised for a third Time

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie S. Ross

March 20, 2024

