



EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, September 27, 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:

- **Directors:** Nick Thomas, Sands Gayle, Sally Williams, Jim Evans and Kyle Sturgis
- **Associate Directors:** Edwin Long, Rick Hall, Hunter Blake and Ursula Deitch
- **Staff:** Carmie Savage, Bill Savage and Palmer Smith
- **Partners:** Ben Young- NRCS

The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:

- **Associate Directors:** Robbie Lewis, Chip Turlington, Norman Pitt, Matt Hickman, and Brian Broadwater
- **Staff:** Julie Head

CALL TO ORDER: Chair Nick Thomas called to order the September 27, 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 August 16, 2023, meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, was carried unanimously. Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the August 2023 financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously.

OLD BUSINESS:

A. n/a

NEW BUSINESS:

A. FY24 Cost Share Report: The last poultry project that was approved is scheduled to be inspected October 12th by Amanda Pennington, DCR. The FY24 Ches Bay VACS allocation is \$2,689,088 plus interest through August 31st of \$ 181.21 and a bank fee of \$12.00 for falling under minimum in August before first allocation was direct deposited, bringing the total available funds to \$2,689,257.21. The FY24 OCB VACS allocation is \$1,208,491.00 plus interest through August 31st of \$10.67 bringing the total available funds to \$1,208,501.67. The cost share sign-up period from July 17-August 18 resulted in the District's largest cost share requests totaling \$5,811,407.40. The VACS requests were ranked by hydrologic priority and sorted in order using the CEF value assigned through tracking.

A copy of all the contracts presented for approvals will be attached to the official minutes. The following requests were presented for approval listed by contract, instances, practice, hydro unit, hydro priority, amount, and funding source:

- **FY24 Ches Bay VACS requests totaling \$287,154.65 signed up prior to August 18th Deadline.** Directors Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, and Nick Thomas stepped out of the meeting due to potential conflicts of interest. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY24 Ches Bay VACS requests totaling \$287,154.65 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, was carried unanimously.** Directors Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, and Nick Thomas returned to the meeting. Director Kyle Sturgis stepped out of the meeting due to a potential conflict of interest. **Contract 20-24-0226 totaling \$371.60 was presented for approval.** **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve contract 20-24-0226 totaling \$371.60 as presented. The motion, seconded by Chair Nick Thomas, was carried unanimously.** Director Kyle Sturgis returned to the meeting.
 - **FY24 Ches Bay VACS requests totaling \$81.60 that signed up after the August 18th deadline.** **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the additional FY24 Ches Bay VACS requests totaling \$81.60 as presented. The motion, seconded by Chair Nick Thomas, was carried unanimously.**
- **FY24 OCB VACS requests totaling \$299,406.70 signed up prior to August 18th Deadline.** Directors Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, and Nick Thomas stepped out of the meeting due to potential conflicts of interest. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY24 OCB VACS requests totaling \$299,406.70 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, was carried unanimously.**
- **FY24 Ches Bay WFA requests totaling \$2,695,889.60 signed up prior to August 18th Deadline.** Directors Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, and Nick Thomas stepped out of the meeting due to potential conflicts of interest. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY24 Ches Bay WFA requests totaling \$2,695,889.60 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, was carried unanimously.** Directors Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, and Nick Thomas returned to the meeting. Director Kyle Sturgis stepped out of the meeting due to a potential conflict of interest. **Contracts 20-24-0224 and 20-24-0225 totaling \$10,067.50 were presented for approval.** **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve contracts 20-24-0224 and 20-24-0225 totaling \$10,067.50 as presented. The motion, seconded by Chair Nick Thomas, was carried unanimously.** Director Kyle Sturgis returned to the meeting.
 - **FY24 Ches Bay WFA requests totaling \$389,546.50 that signed up after the August 18th deadline.** **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the additional FY24 Ches Bay WFA requests totaling \$389,546.50**

as presented. The motion, seconded by Chair Nick Thomas, was carried unanimously.

- **FY24 OCB WFA requests totaling \$2,010,833.25 signed up prior to August 18th Deadline.** Directors Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, and Nick Thomas stepped out of the meeting due to potential conflicts of interest. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY24 OCB WFA requests totaling \$2,010,833.25 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, was carried unanimously.** Directors Jim Evans, Sands Gayle, and Nick Thomas returned to the meeting.
 - **FY24 OCB WFA requests totaling \$118,056.00 that signed up after the August 18th deadline.** Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the additional FY24 OCB WFA requests totaling \$118,056.00 as presented. The motion, seconded by Chair Nick Thomas, was carried unanimously.

Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the FY24 Costs Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, was carried unanimously.

B. FY24 VCAP Report: VASWCD has issued the VCAP check to the District which included \$12,318.40 for the participants and \$1,200 to the District for technical assistance for Living Shoreline Project 20-22-03 so it has been completed and paid. Living Shoreline Project 20-22-05 was permitted by VASWCD to extend the project. There has been new interest in another living shoreline project but that is at the very beginning stages. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the FY24 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously.**

C. Office Rental Agreement- September 1, 2023- August 31, 2024: The rental agreement of \$15,000 for the period of September 1, 2023- August 31, 2024, remains the same as last year. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the office rental agreement through August 31, 2024 as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, was carried unanimously.**

D. Award Nominees for Eastern Shore SWCD Annual Awards Banquet: The date and venue have been set for October 24, 2023, at Eastern Shore Community College Workforce and Development Center. A list of awardees for Clean Water Farm Award, Conservation Farmer, Conservation Teacher, and Stewardship Award were presented for approval. The Wildlife award will be nominated by NRCS, and the Forestry award will be nominated by Robbie Lewis, Dept of Forestry. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the award nominees as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, was carried unanimously.**

E. Eastern Shore RC&D Update: Along with a letter of explanation from Edwin Long, ES RC&DC Chair, the District received a copy of Article X of the ES RC&DC by-laws which gives specific instructions regarding the “Dissolution” of this non-profit organization. It states that the Corporation may be dissolved at any time by a two-thirds majority vote of the council members and approved in writing by three-fourths of the Legal Sponsors. The four legal sponsors are Accomack County, Northampton County, A-NPDC, and Eastern Shore SWCD. A representative from each legal sponsor needs to be appointed to meet and discuss the closure. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to appoint Carmie Savage as the representative of the District in this matter. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, was carried unanimously.**

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 2024 Cost Share:

- **Agronomic:** DATA ENTRY, DATA ENTRY, DATA ENTRY , DATA ENTRY Over 5.8 million dollars' worth of data entry!!!! Cost Share requests and details were presented during New Business.
- **Poultry Update:** Updates on the remaining project were given during the FY24 Cost Share Report.

Accounting: Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.

Office Rental Agreement: Drafted new rental agreement for September 1, 2023 - August 31, 2024, was reviewed during New Business.

District Website: Updating the District's website as time allows.

Webinars/ Conference Calls:

- 9/20/23- Helped with Farm Field Day in Northampton County
- 9/26/23- Attended Row Crop focused Regional VACS/Conservation Planning/Engineering Training on Tuesday September 26th in Windsor

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:

- Finished entering data in tracking.

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VESLT Reports:

- Two land trust reports were filed this month.

VCAP:

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

Trainings:

- 9/15 Tall Fescue Training – Virtual
- 9/26 Regional VACS Conservation Planning / Training /Engineering Training

Events:

- 9/19 Accomack Farm Tour
- 9/20 Northampton Farm Tour

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:

- DATA → finished entering sign ups!!!!

Groundwater Committee: Did not attend Groundwater Meeting due to Accomack Farm Tour

Trainings and meetings:

- 8/21- 20-22-05 VCAP site visit
- 9/15- All Things Tall Fescue virtual training
- 9/19- Accomack Farm Tour
- 9/20- Northampton Farm Tour
 - Brought Jolene (cow) & Rupert (sheep)
- 9/26- Regional VACS/Conservation Planning/Engineering Training in Isle of Wight

Education Director Report: Julie Head, Education Director, was unable to attend.

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 was unable to attend.

ADMINISTRATION & OPERATIONS

- **Return of Funds Invoices:** Please have these postmarked by September 15.
- **Electronic 1099s:** For the 2023 tax year, any District sending out a total of 10 or more 1099s will be required by the IRS to submit them electronically. A webinar will be offered in November to provide more information.
- **COIA Training for Directors:** The Code of Virginia requires locally elected officials to complete COIA training once every two years. Most Directors completed

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this between July and December of 2021. The training can be accessed at <https://ethicswebinar.dls.virginia.gov/>. Each module is specific to your role so select “Local Elected Officials or EDAs/IDAs” to complete the correct training. Please remember there is no completion certificate for this training, so my suggestion is to take a screenshot of your completion message. I’ve been informed that returning Directors will have an opportunity to complete this training at Annual Meeting in December.

- **2023 Clean Water Farm Award Applications**: A memo from Director Wells was released on July 28 with information regarding this year’s Clean Water Farm Awards. Local winner information and grand basin nominations are due to me October 2. Signatures and approvals should be obtained by your September board meeting. New forms can be found at the following links: CWFA Application; Grand Basin Award Application.

AG 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.
- **Engineering Assistance Request Form**: <https://consapps.dcr.virginia.gov/BMPTracking/Forms/Default.aspx> Located under forms in Tracking. Animal Waste requests will be handled by Amanda Pennington, and all other requests must be sent to Raleigh Coleman who will assign staff to assist your District.

GRANT DELIVERABLES

- **FY23 Annual Report**: for July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023, should be completed by September 30th.
- **Dedicated Reserves**: Remember that board action is necessary to dedicate, for specific purposes, any amount above twelve months of routine operating funds. This should be completed by September 30th.
- **Outreach Event**: Begin planning for the required outreach event. Conditions for this deliverable are outlined in Attachment C and Attachment F of the Admin/Ops grant agreement.

DATES TO REMEMBER

September

- Sept 15 – Return of Cost-Share funds to DCR due.
- Sept 25 – VSWCB Meeting – Audit Subcommittee 9:00, Full Board 10:00, Bear Creek Lake State Park\

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- Sept 26 – Regional VACS/Conservation Planning Training: Crops; Peanut SWCD, Register [Here](#)
- Sept 27 – VASWCD Quarterly Board Meeting, Drury Plaza Hotel, Register [Here](#)
- Sept 30 – Annual Report due to DCR; Deadline for Dedicated Reserve Board action; Deadline for EOL Verifications

Other Dates

- October 2 – Local CWFA winner applications and grand basin nominations due to DCR
- October 11 – Commonwealth Risk Management Plans & SWCDs, Zoom Webinar, 1:00, Register [Here](#)
- December 3-6 – VASWCD Annual Meeting, Norfolk Marriott

Accomack Field Office NRCS Report: Ben Young, NRCS Soil Conservationist, provided a written report to the Board and it is on file in the District office. He presented his report to the Board.

UPDATES

- End of Fiscal Year 9/30/23
- Ben is Acting DC through December 12, 2023
- Soil Con Tech Interviews- conducted two on 9/25/2023.
- Furlough may be on the horizon soon.

CSP

- 2 CSP Contracts Obligated since last board meeting for a total payment over 5 years of \$290,846.

EQIP

- 2 Black Duck Pond projects initiated.
- 8 Chicken House HUA Pads completed pending approval.

CRP

- 2 cancellations finalized.
- 2 renewals completed.
- 4 mid-contract management extensions granted until April 2024
- 1 new enrollment after fiscal year
- 1 contract changing hands.
- 1 contract holder has passed away- looking at whether to transfer ownership.

Trainings

- Ben attended 1 and Maggie attended 2 agroforestry trainings.
- Maggie attended a CD and CART training last week.

Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savag

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