



## EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

### MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, October 14, 2020, 5:00 p.m.

Onley Town Center, 25020 Shore Parkway, Onley, VA 23418

**ATTENDANCE:** The following Directors and Associate Directors were in attendance:

Robin Rich-Coates, Chair

Nick Thomas, Director

Fred Holland, Vice Chair

Jim Evans, Director

Kyle Sturgis, Director

Others present were:

Carmie Savage, District Manager

Julie Head, Education Director

Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist

Jaclyn Friedman, DCR CDC

Norman Pitt, Conservation Technician

Jane Corson-Lassiter, NRCS

**CALL TO ORDER:** Robin Rich-Coates, Chair, called to order the October 14, 2020 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

**MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS:** A motion was made and carried to approve the meeting minutes from September 16, 2020 and the September 2020 Financial Reports. (Holland, Evans)

**OLD BUSINESS:** There was not any old business discussed.

### NEW BUSINESS:

**A. FY21 Cost Share Report- Carmie Savage:** Obligated funds for agronomic practices carried over from FY20 to FY21 total \$9,498.00 in Ches Bay funds and \$2,501.40 in OCB funds. FY20 Obligated funds carried over to FY21 for animal waste BMPs total \$1,784,934.17 in Ches Bay funds and \$228,611.87 in OCB funds. The FY21 VACS Allocation totals \$560,561.00 in Ches Bay funds and \$285,682.00 in OCB funds. Interest accrued through September 30, 2020 total \$681.68 towards Ches Bay funds and \$95.95 towards OCB funds. FY20 VNRCF TA remaining funds totaling \$449,471.87 were approved at the September 16<sup>th</sup> Board meeting to be used towards funding OCB requests since Ches Bay funds are more easily obtainable. Approved ranked requests from September 14<sup>th</sup> District Board meeting total to \$1,194,819.08 for Ches Bay funding and \$895,654.47 for OCB funds. These approved amounts were slightly reduced from the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting due to one contract cancellation. The VACS funding in Ches Bay after approved requests is fully obligated showing a remaining need of Ches Bay funds in the amount of \$633,576.40 to fully fund all requests. The VACS funding in

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**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_  
BOARD CHAIRMAN BOARD SECRETARY

OCB after approved requests is also fully obligated. The FY20 VNRCF TA also was fully obligated to OCB with a remaining need of \$160,404.65 to fully fund all OCB requests. Carmie reminded the Board that these are initial requests of what is planned and the remaining needs will drastically reduce once all plantings are reported to the District since acreages will not get planted, some acreages will get planted later vs. earlier, etc. The WFA-1 costs share requests from three contracts total \$339,119.95 and were approved at the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting contingent on the special grant funding. RMP-1 totals of \$17,822 were approved at the September 16<sup>th</sup> meeting using Statewide source funding but the Bay acreages will be funded under the WFA-1 special grant once available. **A motion was made and carried to approve the cost share report as presented. (Holland, Sturgis)**

**B. Whole Farm Approach (WFA-1) Pilot Program Update:** Carmie included in the meeting packet an email from Darryl Glover, DCR Division Director of Soil and Water Conservation dated October 6, 2020 where he stated that EPA had a few questions of DCR regarding the work plan they had submitted. DCR has responded to EPA and are awaiting a review of the answers they provided. He appreciated patience and said it should not be much longer.

**C. VA Conservation Assistance Program (VCAP):** Bill Savage and Norman Pitt gave an update to the Board.

- Contract 20-20-02 was the District's first VCAP project. This project was a 164 Ft. living shoreline project along Craddock Creek. The estimated cost of the project totaled \$33,244.72. This project was approved by the District on February 12, 2020 to send forward to the VCAP Steering committee and approved by the VCAP Steering Committee on February 28, 2020 at the \$15,000 cap. On October 7<sup>th</sup> the District received \$15,000 which has been paid to the participant including \$500 in TA for the District.
- Contract 20-20-04 was a 470 Ft. living shoreline project along Occohannock Creek. The estimated cost of the project totaled \$93,425.00. This project was approved by the District on March 11, 2020 to send forward to the VCAP Steering Committee and approved the VCAP Steering Committee on March 27, 2020 at the \$15,000 cap. On October 7<sup>th</sup> the District received \$15,000 which has been paid to the participant including \$500 in TA for the District.

There have been ten more enquires regarding VCAP. The District has conducted site visits on all ten potential projects and is in the process of obtaining applications and

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required documentation. The pandemic has had a surprising effect on VCAP driving the demand for projects. The District was notified all available funding has been allocated but has since notified the District that more funding has become available.

**D. Draft ESSWCD COVID-19 Policy:** Carmie presented a draft COVID-19 Policy to the Board for approval. **A motion was made and carried to approve the COVID-19 Policy as presented. (Holland, Thomas)**

**E. ESSWCD Annual Plan of Work Review in Accordance with the Strategic Plan:** The Annual Plan of Work was reviewed for first quarter ending September 30, 2020. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, many scheduled educational events and meetings were cancelled; however, District staff is being resourceful in meeting educational goals and holding meetings virtually when applicable.

**F. Eastern Shore RC&D:** ESRC&D has announced a new Projects Director, Caroline M. Bott. Carmie will invite her to the November District Board meeting.

**G. Required FOIA Training for Elected Directors:** Elected Directors were reminded of the required FOIA Training due by December 31, 2020.

**H. Draft Personnel Policy:** Carmie presented an updated draft Personnel Policy to the Board. The draft included an updated EEO Statement, updated non-discrimination language and the addition of the VA Human Rights Act- Pregnancy and Childbirth language that became VA law effective July 1, 2020. **A motion was made and carried to approve the updated Personnel Policy as presented. (Holland, Evans)**

## STAFF REPORTS

**District Manager Report:** Carmie Savage, District Manager, gave an oral report to Directors. Her written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

**Cost Share:**

**Agronomic Update:**

- After the September 16<sup>th</sup> Cost Share approvals, approval packets for participants were created and mailed which included the initial sign-up spreadsheet to be submitted back to the District once planting is complete. The tracking program has been completely updated to show all approvals with funding in place.
- **Whole Farm Approach Pilot Program (WFA-1):** Still awaiting the grant funding from DCR- latest updates were presented during New Business.

**Poultry Update:**

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- FY20 carryover poultry practices are moving forward. The District's second pre-construction meeting was held virtually on October 5th. Two are waiting on the County to complete zoning approvals. A few are in the design process by the private engineer. A completed design was submitted prior to the District meeting to the State Engineer for approval and another is waiting for DEQ Ag Loan funds to finalize. Projects are moving forward.

**District Audit:** The District is in the process of being audited for FY19 and FY20 by Clifton, Larson, Allen (CLA), LLP.. Carmie has scanned and uploaded all requested documents into the secure portal as required. She will be notified when the next round of uploads is due once they start selecting specific receipts, cost share files, etc.

**Resource Management Plans.** Ten plans have recently been submitted to the District for review. These plans are all under the same producer, the acreages have just been broken out for easier review. Staff will begin the review within the next month and schedule a TRC meeting in the near future. One planner has notified the District that their inspections have been completed on a few plans and they are now awaiting the District's inspection to move the plans to the certainty phase. The inspections will be scheduled soon.

**Virtual Training Blitz:** Since Graves Mountain Employee Training and the Annual Meeting have been cancelled due to COVID-19, several trainings are being offered virtually.

- 9/23/20- Attended the VASWCB quarterly meeting (virtually).
- 10/7/20- Attended a Personnel Management Training hosted by Terri Higgins, HR Specialist and VASWCD explaining all of the requirements as a result of COVID-19.

**COVID-19 Draft Policy/ Update:** Carmie drafted the ESSWCD COVID-19 Policy which was presented during New Business. She completed the Workplace Hazard Assessment as required. Staff is in the process of completing an online COVID-19 training webinar sponsored by the VA Department of Labor. Staff has also completed the Position Hazard Assessment as required.

**Quarterly Reports/ Attachment E:** Carmie completed the Attachment E for quarter ending September 30, 2020 and submitted the electronic version along with QB's P&L Report, and QB's Balance Sheet Report to DCR on October 8<sup>th</sup>. She gave the signed hardcopy to Jaclyn Friedman at the District meeting. The 941's for quarter ending September 30 along with the VEC Report have also been completed.

**VCAP:** The District received \$31,000 for VCAP contracts 20-20-002 and 20-20-004. Details were presented on the projects during New Business. She has disbursed the \$15,000 to each recipient and tracked the \$1,000 (\$500 for each) technical assistance for the District in Quickbooks.

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**Coastal RPG State Leaders Interview:** NACS has created the Coastal RPG which is a work group focused specifically on coastal conservation. The conference call interview was conducted on October 14<sup>th</sup> with Robin, Carmie, and Bill participating. They are trying to better understand the work of coastal Districts in the coastal zone. Several other Districts and agencies participated in the call.

**Conservation Specialist Report:** Bill Savage, Conservation Specialist, gave an oral report to Directors. His written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

**BMP Cost Share:**

- Bill has been entering the Bay and Sea approvals in the tracking program.
- He has been reviewing participant folders to make sure all required information is included.
- He is working on the RUSLE 2 calculations and setting up templates for future use.

**VCAP:**

Bill gave a detailed update on VCAP to the Board during New Business. He is in the process of working with Norman to handover the VCAP administration to him on new projects.

**Groundwater Committee Meeting:**

- No Ground Water Meeting was held September.

**Training (Virtual) and (in-person):**

- Attended the (virtual) Measures of Soil Nitrogen Cycling webinar on Sept 17th.
- Attended the (virtual) Erosion Fundamentals and RUSLE 2 training on Sept. 28th.
- Completed a (virtual) COVID training on October 9<sup>th</sup>.

**VESLT Reports:**

- No monitoring reports were received this month.

**Events:**

- Home School Event at Quail Cove in Machipongo. Bill delivered and set up the soils trailer for the event, as well as packed it up and returned it to the storage lot.

**Vehicle Maintenance:**

- Soils trailer inspection set for October 19<sup>th</sup> at 9am - Shore Tire.
- District Truck brake check appointment was scheduled for October 13<sup>th</sup> at 9am – Shore Tire. The truck is having an issue with the anti-lock brake light

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indicator flashing on and off intermittently. Shore Tire determined it was a warranty issue and Bill will set up an appointment at the dealership in Pocomoke to address the issue.

**Coastal RPG State Leaders Interview:** Bill along with Robin and Carmie participated in the Coastal RPG State Leaders Interview on October 14<sup>th</sup>.

**Conservation Technician Report:** Norman Pitt, Conservation Technician, gave an oral report to Directors. His written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

**POULTRY:**

- Norman has been making calls and conducting site visits with poultry producers, concerning bid process, hiring of contractors and obtaining estimates for building the litter sheds and composters.

**RUSLE2:**

- Norman has been working with Bill in updating farms and tracts with soils type verification. The farm and track number is entered in Federal computer using ArcGIS to research the soil type. The soils and other vital information is collected and then run in the RUSLE 2 software.

**V-CAP:**

- On 09/28 and 09/30 Conducted five V-Cap site visits of potential living shoreline and rain collection projects in order to determine the site rating and their eligibility to be accepted into the program as potential projects, if funding is available. Norman has found it is important to conduct the site visits both on high and low tide.
- Currently he is assisting in administrating of V-Cap program, meeting potential clients and giving technical advice concerning BMPs, programs rules, and regulations.
- On 10/14 Norman started to take a virtual VCAP training.

**OTHER:**

- Still working towards obtaining DCR Conservation Planner Certification.
- Completed a virtual COVID-19 Training on October 14.

**Education Director Report:** Julie Head, Education Director, gave an oral report to Directors. Her written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

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**Butterfly Life Cycles** – Ranger Stan from Kiptopeke State Park and Julie delivered materials to both Occohannock and Kiptopeke Elementary Schools between 10/6 and 10/8.

**A Long Walk to Water –**

- Delivered books to Northampton Middle School TAG. Mr. Finnie says that they students are really enjoying the story.
- A copy of *A Long Walk to Water* was provided by VASWCD to every District in the State. The letter from the Association accompanying the book, highlighted the development of the curriculum by Julie and announced a virtual call for all to join.

**Wednesdays in the Park**

- In partnership with Erin Sill, Northampton 4-H Extension Agent, the District is doing outreach STEM activities in some of the local parks on Wednesdays. Unfortunately, only had one family show the first round in Nassawadox but are continuing to try to gain more attendance. Working on owl pellets, origami parts of a flower, and bee communication. The second round will be pollinator bombs, make your own cow genetics, and seed art. They are taking temperatures, requiring masks, and using hand sanitizer liberally. After the adoption of the District's COVID Policy, Julie will be filling out the contact form for all participants
  - i. Cheriton Firehouse – 10/14
  - ii. Nassawadox Sawmill - 10/21
  - iii. Exmore Town Park – 10/28
  - iv. Cape Charles Town Park – 11/4

**Homeschool Outreach**

- Julie had a homeschool group reach out to her about doing some programming once a month. The first date is set for October 15, 2020, probably at Quail Cove in Machipongo. They are going to cover pollination (origami parts of a flower, pollinator bombs, and the poster contest). They also met 10/6 and presented the soils trailer, soil horizon tubes, and soil babies. Additional programming will have to be suspended until some of the restrictions are lifted.

**Project Wild Training**

- Monday, October 19, at Kiptopeke State Park.

**Envirothon**

- State, Area, and Local Envirothon's must be conducted in a virtual format according to VASWCD.
- Julie reached out to local coaches and only heard back from a couple who said they possible would try to have a team but between virtual students, on-campus students, 6 feet of distancing, no shared materials, and no wet labs

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that it would be a very difficult situation. So, the District has decided it will not be holding a 2021 Eastern Shore Envirothon.

- For many of the same reasons, Area VI has opted to not have an area Envirothon. Should any teams present themselves in Area VI, they will participate in the virtual Envirothon at the state level.

### Upcoming

- 1013 – VASWCD Education Panel
- 10/16 & 10/17 pd with DOF and DCW at KSP
- 10/20 – VASWCD presentation on A Long Walk to Water
- 10/22 to 10/23 Project Learning Tree Facilitator Workshop in Charlottesville

## PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS:

**Department of Conservation & Recreation Update:** Jaclyn Friedman, DCR CDC, gave an oral report to Directors. Her written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office

### Administration and Operations:

- FY21 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter Attachment E and QuickBooks Reports Due by 10/15/20. Jackie acknowledged her receipt of the District's report.
- Extension Agent Appointment: Current VA Cooperative Extension (VCE) agent appointments to the SWCD Board of Directors will expire 12/31/20. Jackie reported Eastern Shore has submitted the required documents.
- Strategic Plan/4 year Plan: Due to Covid-19, if Strategic Plan/4 year Long Range Plan has expired or will be expiring soon (12/31/20 or 6/30/21) a district may extend their current strategic plan by 1 year so long as formal board action is taken and recorded in the minutes. Carmie reported ESSWCD's Strategic Plan does not expire until 2022.

### Director Reminders

- **Area meetings will be held electronically this fall, likely in November.**
  - Scheduling of Area meetings will be coordinated with the Association and their Zoom account.
- **VASWCD Training Blitz:** There is a full list of trainings available on the VASWCD website.
- **"VACS 101 for Directors"** District Directors are now able to register for the training to be hosted by the Association on October 27th at 1 pm. This session will provide an overview of some of VA's popular cost-share practices that can improve water quality. It is informative for Directors but is not a mandatory training.
- **FOIA Training for Locally Elected Officials:** The VASWCD has scheduled a FOIA training in coordination with the FOIA Council as part of the Training Blitz. The link is on the Association website and will be held on December 15, 2020 – 3:00PM-4:00PM. Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) Training – Meets Code of VA Training Requirements. Targeted for Directors but also Open to Staff .The link on the FOIA Council website is getting better. If unable to

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attend the session scheduled on December 15, 2020, you can take the course online. Elected officials have until Dec 31, 2020 to complete the training.

**AG COST SHARE:**

- **Please be aware of the deliverable in FY2021 CS&TA grant:** *“Data entry in the AgBMP Tracking Module is entered to the satisfaction of [DCR], including the entry of a practice location point, path to stream (where required), digitized practice components to facilitate resource reviews, and accurate practice measurements including soil loss rate value based upon site specific soil type(s).”*
- **Be sure to thoroughly review Part I of the VACS contract with each applicant.** Make sure applicants understand that cost-share is considered income. Applicants may benefit from getting professional tax advice prior to submitting a W-9 and signing contract Part I. A form is available in the VACS manual (page II-49) to document the transfer of a contract to a new participant PRIOR to BMP completion. In these cases a new Part I and W-9 will be needed. The procedure is described on pages II-47.
- Also make clear to prospective VACS applicants that if they accept cost-share and/or Tax Credit they are responsible for maintaining the practice through its lifespan even if they lose control of the property due to the “sale, lease, or changed use of the property.” This conversation provides an opening to also mention how a participant can transfer maintenance responsibility to a new party after their BMP is completed. The “Transfer of Responsibility Form” (page II-50) can be used to request DCR to change the name and SSN/Tax ID in tracking associated with the BMP record in tracking.

**Information regarding EAN for SL-8B:**

As a reminder, the 2021 VACS Manual (pgs II-43-45) includes a provision for an individual District Board to extend the standard SL-8B cover crop rates due to an Extreme Act of Nature (EAN). An EAN is a sudden and irreversible act of nature that could not have been foreseen or prevented. As such, any local District Board may authorize a one-time per planting season extension of up to 14 days beyond the specified standard planting date for their region as detailed in the SL-8B practice specification. The date for meeting performance criteria (i.e. 60% cover) will also be extended for the same length of time. *Please note that the early planting date and cover requirements cannot be changed even with an EAN.*

Additionally, since the EAN is really meant to be used as a rare tool, the District's action must be substantially supported by (a) a disaster declaration from the Governor, (b) a disaster declaration from the Farm Service Agency, or (c) documentation from another local credible source, such as VCE, and documentation from a professionally recognized climatology expert referencing the EAN circumstances in the HUCs being considered for the extension. This could be correspondence from the State Climatologist Office or citation from their website, etc. In the absence of the formal declarations

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outlined above (i.e., (a) and (b)), the District Board will have to put forth some effort to satisfy Option C.

Finally, please note that EAN extensions to standard SL-8B cover crop planting dates should be granted by the local District Board on a HUC-by-HUC basis since conditions can vary greatly across the District. The District decision for each HUC should be well documented by Board action in the minutes and a record should be kept in the participant folder (minutes). Please refer to pages II-43-45 should the district be considering the EAN process.

Please note that the local Districts cannot extend SL-8H cover crop planting without formal action from the DCR Director in consultation with the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board.

The DCR Ag Incentives Program Manager must also be notified any time a local EAN is approved.

**Conservation Planner Certification program reminders-** Participants working towards certification should:

- Put completion dates into the Training Tracking Module as soon as possible after completing each training
- DO NOT put future dates of training into the Training Tracking Module
- Only enter completion dates for courses that have been offered.
- Please add the contact hours for courses attended, along with any attachments for verification
- Reports are pulled from Logi to see which staff need courses, where courses should be held, and timing of offering courses based on the data entered by staff into Training Tracking Module. To ensure you do not miss an upcoming course invitation, please keep your training record up to date record in the Training Tracking Module. If you have any questions please contact Carl Thiel-Goin.

**Clean Water Farm Award (CWFA)**

- Since ESSWCD opted not to participate in the Clean Water Farm Award process this year, Jacklyn chose not to elaborate on the submission steps to the Board.

**DCR Staff Update:**

- Stuart Blankenship has joined the Division of Soil & Water as the new Nonpoint Source Data Manager. "Stu" started in the position previously held by Roland Owens on August 10<sup>th</sup>.
- The Tappahannock CDC position has been advertised. Applications are currently under review.

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**Important Dates:**

- October 20: Training Blitz – Education Outreach, Water Conservation and Literature
- October 21: TAC Subcommittee Animal Waste webinar
- October 27: Training Blitz - VACS 101 for Directors
- October 29: Training Blitz – Legacy Planning for Farm/Forest Owners (VDOF and VCE)
- November 1: CWFA Local and Basin Nominations Due
- November 11: Training Blitz – Director Meet and Greet
- November 12: TAC Subcommittee webinar Cover Crop & Nutrient Management
- December 1: TAC Subcommittee webinar Stream Protection and Forestry
- December 2: Training Blitz – VCAP
- December 7: VASWCD Virtual Board Meeting 9:00 am – Noon Stay-tuned for more details from VASWCD
- December 7: VASWCD Virtual Business Meeting 2:00-4:00 pm Stay-tuned for more details from VASWCD
- December 15: Director FOIA Training, VAWCD hosting 3:00pm-4:00 pm
- December 17: Full TAC Webinar

**NRCS District Conservationist:** Jane Corson-Lassiter, NRCS District Conservationist, gave an oral report to Directors. Her written report was included in the meeting packet and is on file in the District office.

Jane presented a snapshot of the year for the Accomac Field Office to the Board.

<b>FY 2020 EQIP by Fund Code</b>	<b># Applications</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Obligated</b>	<b>\$\$ Funds</b>
Livestock	20	EQIP	3	585,921
Organic Transition	2	EQIP	2	7,333
WLFW American Black Duck	5	EQIP	5	44,207
High Tunnel	4	EQIP		

<b>FY 2020 CSP</b>	<b># Applications</b>	<b>Program</b>	<b>Obligated</b>	<b>\$\$ Funds</b>
CSP Renewal	1	CSP	(1 contract) 929.9 ac	63,842
CSP Classic	13	CSP	(2 contracts) 7,276.3 ac	356,624
<b>PRIOR YEAR ACTIVE</b>				
Crop and Forestry		CSP	7	
Multiple Fund Codes		EQIP	23	

**EQIP- 30% 2020 applications funded**

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- Demand for assistance on poultry farms continues at a high volume.
- During FY20 implementation was substantially completed on five projects under the WFLW American Black Duck initiative.

**CSP- 20% 2020 applications funded. Active contracts on 18,000 acres****CRP/ CREP- Spring Pollinator Habitat Outreach**

- A CREP CP-23 wetland restoration, CP-42 upland pollinator planting, and CSP salt-tolerate pollinator planting are performing well and have served as sites for several outreach events.

**ACEP- GPSP LLC Wetland Reserve**

- Accomac Field Office continues coordination on this 90-acre site in Northampton County. Closing is anticipated in late fall with site restoration to begin spring 2021.

**Chincoteague NWR Grazing Plan**

- The Central National Technical Support Center Grazing Specialists have completed the draft grazing plan for Chincoteague NWR and the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company for management of the Chincoteague Ponies on the refuge's barrier island. In 2019, the refuge staff reached out to the Accomac field office for assistance.

**Featured Project- wetland creation (under Black Duck Initiative)**

- Landowner requested assistance to convert wet area in field to suitable duck habitat. Area was regraded and a water control structure was installed to manage fall/ winter precipitation, then planted with wetland, herbaceous species. A picture of DU Biologist and NRCS (Jenny and Jane locally) working with the participant was featured in a story in the September/ October issue of DU Magazine.

**The October 14, 2020 Board meeting was adjourned.**

*Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage*