



## **EASTERN SHORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

### **MINUTES OF DISTRICT BOARD MEETING**

**Wednesday, May 17, 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, Ursula Deitch- Director, Jim Evans- Director, Sands Gayle- 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, Matt Hickman- Associate Director, Edwin Long- Associate Director, and Olivia Leatherwood- DCR.

**The following Board Members and Staff were unable to attend:**

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

**CALL TO ORDER:** Nick Thomas- Chair, called to order the May 17, 2023 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

**MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS:** Director Sally Deitch made a motion to approve the April 19, 2023 meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Kyle Sturgis, carried unanimously. Director Sands Gayle made a motion to approve the April financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. Environmental Education Council Minutes- May 16<sup>th</sup> meeting:** Provided for Review.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. VCE Director Resignation from Board:** Director Ursula Deitch submitted her letter of resignation from the District Board with an effective date of May 24, 2023. She has accepted another position and will no longer be working for VA Cooperative Extension. She would like to remain on the Board as an Associate Director and on the District committees she currently serves on. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to accept Ursula Deitch's letter of resignation as a Director as presented and appoint her as an Associate Director. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**

**APPROVED:** \_\_\_\_\_ **SIGNED:** \_\_\_\_\_

BOARD CHAIRMAN

BOARD SECRETARY

**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 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 April 30<sup>th</sup> of \$1,591.85 and BMP repayments of \$1,167.66, and an additional \$500,000 VACS allocation leaves a new balance of \$2,448,500.51 of Ches Bay VACS funds. Interest earned in OCB VACS through April 30<sup>th</sup> of \$957.25 and BMP repayments of \$46.00 leaves a new balance of \$1,052,254.25 in OCB VACS funds. Approved ranked costshare requests through May 17<sup>th</sup> total \$260,119.35 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 \$692.40 leaving a new balance of \$3,211.87 in Ches Bay unobligated VACS funds. The approved ranked cost share requests through May 17<sup>th</sup> total \$282,171.80 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 \$2,546.00 and the transfer of \$1,340.92 from WFA OCB funds back to OCB VACS, have left a remaining balance of \$1,340.92 in unobligated OCB VACS funds. 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 \$1,886,051.00 plus new BMP WFA CB cost share requests of \$1,768.80 leave a remaining balance of \$56,478.55 in unobligated WFA Ches Bay funds. The approved WFA OCB Cost share requests total \$1,314,385.30, new WFA OCB costs hare requests totaling 8,179.20 and the transfer back to OCB VACS of \$1,340.92 leaves a balance shortage of \$555,167.71 in WFA OCB funds. The additional Cost share requests for Ches Bay VACS totaling \$692.40, OCB VACS totaling \$2,546.00, WFA Ches Bay totaling \$1,768.80 and additional WFA OCB cost share requests totaling \$8,179.20 were presented for approval. **Chair Sands Gayle 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 Sally Williams, carried unanimously.** DCR has guaranteed the funding difference so all eligible WFA requests will be funded. **Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the FY23 Costs Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, 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. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the FY23 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**

**D. FSA Updates/ Announcement of 2023 County Committee Elections:** A written report was included in the meeting packet.

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**E. District Vehicle Update:** During the April 19<sup>th</sup> District meeting, the Board asked Bill to acquire several quotes for the purchase of a new District vehicle to replace the current van. Bill gathered several quotes ranging from \$46,000 to \$59,000. The 2023 Chevrolet Tahoe seemed to have the 4 Wheel Drive and seating capacity the District is looking for. The dealership in Berlin, MD, that sold the District the new truck, offered a 2023 Tahoe at \$51,900.00. Carmie provided the District with a funding breakdown to show where the funds can be pulled from for the new purchase. She also asked that the Board approve changing the funding source that purchased the District truck from Contingency funds to the '23 VNRCF TA Funds obligated to "Cost Share Support." **Director Nick Thomas made a motion to approve changing the funding source that purchased the new District truck from contingency to '23 VNRCF TA funds. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.** Carmie also asked Olivia Leatherwood, DCR, if any of the '23 VNRCF TA funds could be used towards the purchase of the new vehicle the District will be purchasing. Olivia will be looking into that and getting back to Carmie with the information. After much discussion, the Board suggested Bill purchase the '23 Chevy Tahoe with a budget of \$56,000 and trade in the current van using VNRCF TA funds if permitted and contingency funds if needed. **Director Sally Williams made a motion to approve the purchase of the '23 Tahoe up to \$56,000 using VNRCF TA funds if permitted and Contingency funds if needed. The motion, seconded by Director Sands Gayle, carried unanimously.**

**F. 2023 Local Working Group Questionnaire for Board input:** Ben Young, NRCS, asked the Board any input they would like to give for the Local Working Group questionnaire. Input was gathered. Carmie sent the questionnaire to the rest of the 2023 Local Working Group and has received a couple responses to date.

**G. Operations Committee Verbal Update:** The Operations Committee met prior to the District Board meeting at 4:00 p.m. on May 17, 2023. Budget funding sources and amounts were reviewed. The 2023 Annual Plan of Work was recommend for approval. **Director Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the 2023 Annual Plan of Work as recommended by the Operations Committee. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.** The Attachment D (Budget Template) for FY25 and FY26 was discussed. The Committee will begin working on the draft District Budget and draft Attachment D for approval during the June 21 District Board meeting. The Attachment D report is due to DCR by July 17<sup>th</sup>. The Committee will be meeting on June 21<sup>st</sup> prior to the District Board meeting.

**H. Reminder:** Election notice for Directors- November 7, 2023 elections- Required paperwork due to Registrar's Office by June 20, 2023 to be listed on the ballot.

**I. Update from OAG's office regarding wording on Part 1 of DCR Cost Share Contracts:** Ross Phillips, OAG's office, emailed draft changes to not only the Part 1 but also the Part 11 of DCR's Cost Share Contracts. He will be submitted the proposed changes to the VA Soil and Water Conservation Board for review and approval during the May 25<sup>th</sup> meeting.

## **CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:**

- A.** A thank you note was sent to the District from the Eastern Shore Community College for the support of Robin Rich-Coates Opportunity Scholarship.

## **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:** Adjusting cost share and paying out Nutrient Management Plans, Cover Crop, and WFA- NM-1a as they are submitted. Keeping up with the accounting in tracking and spreadsheets.
- Processing Non-compliant BMP repayments as received and adjusting current funding pots accordingly.
- **Poultry Update:**
  - Contract 20-20-0164 (1 manure shed) contacted on 3/10/23: original participant has sold farm, wants to transfer practice to new owner. New owner looking for a contractor. Aware has to be completed by June 30<sup>th</sup>. No more carryovers available.
  - Contract 20-21-0176 – (2 manure sheds) contacted on 3/10/23: contractor plans to begin in 2 weeks and will have it completed by June 30<sup>th</sup> (Local funding) Contacted on 5/2 and is in process- issues with contractor now plans to build himself.

**Accounting:** Daily accounting procedures and payroll ongoing.

**Operations Committee:** Prepared meeting packet, plan to participate in meeting on 5/17 and will draft the meeting minutes. Have been worked on many agenda items that will be discussed and reviewed during meeting.

**Local Working Group:** That time of year for the Local Working Group questionnaire so that NRCS can submit results to their State Office. The questionnaire gathers input on how well USDA NRCS programs address natural resource concerns and was emailed to all stakeholders.

**Admin/Directors Training:** Attended this training on 5/9 at the Drury Plaza Hotel in Glenn Allen. The morning was focused on how to correctly fill out the Attachment D Budget Template that complied from all 47 Districts and is presented to the General Assembly for funding requests. The afternoon was focused on HR issues, some being generational changes that the workforce is now facing.

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

**Webinars/ Meetings/ Conferences:**

- May 17<sup>th</sup>- Operations Committee meeting @ 4pm
- May 17<sup>th</sup> District Board meeting @ 5pm
- May 25<sup>th</sup> Coastal Resilience Steering Committee Training
- June 7<sup>th</sup>- VASWCD Amin/Ops Committee meeting
- June 21<sup>st</sup>- Operations Committee meeting @ 4pm
- June 21<sup>st</sup> 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 NMP's and filing as they as they are reported. – Ongoing
- Checking Split App on Wheat forms as reporting – Ongoing
- Logging in Kill down dates as reported - Ongoing
- SL-15A Repayment letter mailed on 3/6/23 for Contract 20-22-0170 for the amount of \$126.00. Repayment due by 5/8/23. Repaid in Full 4/21/23

**VESLT Reports:**

- Two reports filed this month.

**VCAP:**

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

**Trainings:**

- 4/21 Attended Virtual Average Cost List Info Session.

**Vehicles:**

- Bill has been gathering information on new Ford and Chevy SUV's as per last month's meeting.

**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
- Split app on small grain forms have been coming in and we've been making the necessary changes on tracking
- Recording cover crop burn down dates
- Carmie has been training Palmer on the payment process in tracking

**Groundwater Committee Meeting 4/18:**

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- No public participation
- Britt from Arcadis gave a presentation of the 80% drawdown criteria and recommended:
  - To get the results of the total permit withdrawals from Eastern Shore groundwater model from DEQ
- Meeting mainly discussed the need for a newsletter or article in the Eastern Shore News to increase education and outreach efforts
- Next meeting: May 16, 2023 at the ESVA Chamber of Commerce

#### **Trainings and meetings:**

- 4/24-4/26 → Conservation Selling Skills Training in Lynchburg
- 4/29 → Arbor Day in Cape Charles
- 5/16 → Perennial Stream Determination Workshop in Williamsburg

**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.

**Envirothon** – Broadwater Academy won first place at the Area VI Envirothon so they will be moving on to the state competition. This is being held May 21 -22 at Virginia State University.

**Spring Pollinator Education** – Due to high mortality last year we are building outside enclosures to raise the caterpillars in. Confirmed interest from Occohannock, Kiptopeke, Montessori, Cape Charles Christian, Accomack Christian, Chincoteague, and Metompkin Elementary Schools. Caterpillars are late because of the cold weather.

**Environmental Education Committee** – this will be reconvening on May 16<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m.. They will be discussing a revamped watershed education program for 6<sup>th</sup> graders. Possible topics include water chemistry, keystone species, migratory birds, area history going back to native Americans, animals of the Chesapeake Bay, and possibly others. Another agenda item will be the possibility of organizing a Regional Science Fair.

**Arbor Day** – Another very successful event. In addition to the giveaways, they were able to talk to a lot of people about the advantages of Native Plants.

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

#### **Upcoming Dates**

- a. 5/21 – 22 – State Envirothon
- b. 7/19 – Master Naturalist Presentation
- c. 7/27 – 28 – Junior Ag Camp at the Barrier Islands Center
- d. 8/1 – 8/2 – Ag Camp at the Barrier Islands Center

## **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**

- Return of Funds to meet 90%: will need Board motion before or during June Board meeting.
- Return of Funds to DCR: if you would like to get funds off your books for the start of next year, please have invoice requests submitted to me by June 15 for processing before the end of the year. All other funds will be returned as part of EOY returns once reports are reconciled.
- FY24 Budgets: FY24 Budgets should be approved by your Board by June 30.
- FY23 Self-Assessment Questionnaire: are due on or before July 17.
- Public Notice of Upcoming Elections: Notice of the date for filing such petitions and the time of the election shall be posted in a prominent location accessible to the public at each district office at least 30 days before the filing date (June 20). In addition, districts may use newsletters, websites, public service announcements, and other notices to advise the public of elections of district directors.

## **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.
- Carryover Practices: Encourage BMP Participants to complete their projects in time for payment prior to the close of the fiscal year to minimize carryover into FY24. Please review pages II-41-44 in the VACS Manual regarding carryover procedures as well as the Logi report ("Cost-Share Program Carryover Report for BMPs To Be Completed, Canceled, or Carried Over into FY24"). Practices nearing completion but requiring a 4th year carryover are due for review to Sara Bottenfield by May 15.
- 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. Recording of Secondary Considerations and Average Cost List Training available at the following link:<https://youtu.be/p6yWr1RQhMU>

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- 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.

**GRANT DELIVERABLE REMINDERS** - Must be satisfied by 06/30/2023

- Annually Review and Document in Minutes: Strategic Plan, Annual Plan of Work, Desktop Procedures for District Operations, Fixed Assets Inventory, Employee Personnel Documents (personnel policy, position descriptions, and performance expectations)
- Host Outreach Event: plan, coordinate, and deliver an outreach event that meets the required criteria
- FY24 District Budgets: District Board approved by June 30
- FY24 Annual Plan of Work: District Board approved by June 30

**DATES TO REMEMBER**

**May**

- May 9 – Admin/Director Training, includes Attachment D Budget Template Training, Drury Plaza Hotel
- May 15 – Deadline to submit 4th year carryovers to Sara Bottenfield
- May 16 – Perennial Stream Identification, James City County Library, 9:00am - 4:30pm
- May 25 – VSWCB Meeting, Department of Forestry Headquarters, Charlottesville

**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 15 – VACS Update Session, Virtual (9:00-12:00), Password: 9f7mgQXvAJ
- June 20 – Filing Deadline, Last day to file election documents with local registrar
- June 21 – VASWCD Quarterly Board Meeting (virtual) 9:30am, Register Here

**Other Dates**

- July 17 – End of Year Reports and Attachment D due to DCR
- 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

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

**VA NRCS Operational/Personnel Updates:**



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- 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.

- **2023 Local Working Group:**

Working with the District on gathering input on how well USDA NRCS programs address natural resource concerns.

- Maggie has been working on easement monitoring. She is also working on CSP spot checks.

**VA Cooperative Extension:** Ursula Deitch, Northampton County Extension Agent, gave a verbal report to the Board.

- **Farm Tours:**

- September 19<sup>th</sup> for Accomack County students
- September 20<sup>th</sup> for Northampton County students

- **Well Water Testing:** scheduled for August 28<sup>th</sup>

**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.
- Due to change in staff, Clean the Bay Day event (Parskley) has been cancelled.

**The May 17, 2023 Board meeting was adjourned.**

*Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage*

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