



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

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

**Wednesday, January 18, 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, Carmie Savage- District Manager, Bill Savage- Conservation Specialist, Palmer Smith- Conservation Technician, Julie Head- Education Director, Jenny Templeton- NRCS District Conservationist, Norman Pitt- Associate Director, Rick Hall- Associate Director, Edwin Long- Associate Director, Hunter Blake- Associate Director, and Olivia Leatherwood- DCR.

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

Kyle Sturgis- Director, Robbie Lewis- Associate Director, Chip Turlington- Associate Director, Matt Hickman- Associate Director and Bill Shockley- Associate Director

**CALL TO ORDER:** Nick Thomas- Chair, called to order the January 18, 2023 District Board Meeting of the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District.

**MINUTES and FINANCIAL REPORTS:** Director Jim Evans made a motion to approve the December 14, 2022 meeting minutes as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously. Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the December financial reports as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.

#### **OLD BUSINESS:**

**A. n/a**

Chair Nick Thomas made a motion that the Board enter into closed meeting 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. The closed meeting is permitted under 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia. **AYES:** Directors: Ursula Deitch, Jim Evans, Sands Gayle and Sally Williams. **NAYES:** 0. The motion carried unanimously.

**CLOSED MEETING 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: Ursula Deitch, Jim Evans, Sands Gayle and Sally Williams. NAYES: 0. The motion carried unanimously.**

**RESOLUTION: CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

WHEREAS, the Eastern Shore Soil and Water Conservation District Board has convened a closed meeting on January 18, 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 the resolution, Certification of Closed Meeting, which confirms that the Board only discussed matters in Closed Meeting that were identified and lawfully exempt. AYES: Ursula Deitch, Jim Evans, Sands Gayle and Sally Williams. NAYES: 0. The motion carried unanimously.**

**Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the personal matter that was discussed during Closed Meeting. The motion, seconded by Director Ursula Deitch, carried unanimously.**

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**A. FY23 Cost Share Report- Carmie Savage:** One WP-4 Poultry project has been completed and paid since the new fiscal year started leaving a balance of obligated '20 VACS funds for Poultry projects of \$245,044.12 in Ches Bay and \$0 in OCB along with a remaining balance of \$168,847.83 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 December 31<sup>st</sup> of \$472.38 and a BMP repayment of \$980.16 leaves a new balance of \$1,947,193.54 in Ches Bay VACS. Interest earned in OCB VACS through December 31<sup>st</sup> of \$95.78 leaves a new balance of \$1,051,346.78 in OCB VACS. Approved ranked cost share requests through December 31<sup>st</sup> total \$262,251.25 in Ches Bay VACS and the approved ranked cost share requests through December 31<sup>st</sup> total \$3282,654.00 in OCB VACS leaving a remaining unobligated balance of \$1,684,942.29 in Ches Bay VACS and \$768,692.78 in OCB VACS. The approved WFA Cost Share requests total \$3,314,349.00. Additional Cost share requests for OCB VACS totaling \$117.00 and

additional WFA cost share requests totaling \$27,253.10 were presented for approval. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve the new OCB VACS and WFA Cost Share requests as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sands Gayle, carried unanimously.** After the approvals of the new cost share requests, the unobligated balance of Ches Bay VACS totals \$1,684,942.29, OCB VACS totals \$768,692.78. After applying the unobligated balances to the WFA need, there still leaves a need of \$888,084.03 to fully fund WFA requests. DCR has guaranteed the funding difference so all eligible WFA requests will be funded. Carmie explained the balances may still change as spot checks are underway. The recent final inspection by Amanda Pennington, DCR of completed poultry practices resulted in issues that need to be corrected. The private engineer has contacted the contractor and once the issues have been corrected, another inspection will be conducted. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the FY23 Costs Share report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.**

**B. FY23 VCAP Report- Bill Savage:** There are currently six potential VCAP living shore line potential projects that Bill and Palmer have conducted site visits. Of the six, two contracts have been approved by the District Board for submittal to the VCAP Steering Committee for approval of the projects. (Contract 20-22-03 and 20-22-05). The Steering Committee meets on January 27<sup>th</sup>, then the District will be notified of their decision. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve the FY23 VCAP Report as presented. The motion, seconded by Director Sally Williams, carried unanimously.**

**C. 2023 Officers and Committee Appointments:** A copy of the current 2022 officers and committees were included in the meeting packet. The 2023 Board officers will stay the same as well as Directors, FOIA Officer, and Records Retention Officer. Associate Directors were updated to remove Bill Shockley. Operations Committee was updated with Olivia Leatherwood, DCR CDC, Endowment Committee was updated with the addition of Sally Williams, and the Technical Review Committee was updated with the addition of two Associate Directors: Matt Hickman and Chip Turlington. Olivia Leatherwood, DCR CDC was also included. **Chair Nick Thomas made a motion to approve and accept the recommended 2023 Officers and Committee appointments as discussed. The motion, seconded by Director Sands Gayle, carried unanimously.**

**D. FY23 Annual Plan of Work Review for Quarter ending Dec. 31, 2022:** A copy of the review was included in the meeting packet. The District has met most goals for the quarter reviewed. Some dates were changed or meetings/ events cancelled.

**E. Endowment Committee Draft Minutes- Dec. 15, 2022 meeting:** The Endowment meeting held on December 15<sup>th</sup> set the budget and deadlines for the year. Two scholarships will be advertised and were set at \$1,000 each, sponsorship of two students to Youth Conservation Camp will be advertised and were set at \$550 each, and four Spring Grants will be advertised and offered at \$400 max each. The total budget was set for \$4,700 with the

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flexibility to move unobligated funds to spring grants. The Committee decided on the following essay topic: *“Around the world, pollinators are in trouble. Why should the average person care and what can the average person do to help them (list at least three).”* Deadlines for applications were set.

**F. Eastern Shore Ag Conference:** The 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual Agricultural Ag Conference will be held at the Exmore Moose Lodge in Bell Haven on January 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup>. The District will have an exhibit and has purchased eight oyster roast tickets.

**G. Issues with meeting District deadlines:** After much discussion, the Board adopted a policy effective immediately to encourage the submission of documents to the District in a timely matter. Cost share sign-up must be received by the sign-up deadline or the cost share request will not be accepted. Requested information from participants, ex. reported planting data, must be received by the deadline set by the District. If not received within seven days past the deadline, the contract will be terminated. The District's approved FY23 Secondary Considerations states the following: (5) *“Participants who currently have non-compliant practice contracts will not be eligible for cost share for any best management practice until non-compliant contracts have been satisfied and/or repayment has been made in full to the District. Then they may become eligible again the following program year. Applicants must be diligent in the application process and the completion of the practice.”* Participant contracts that are not reported within seven days following the required deadline and are terminated will be presented to the Board and may fall under this secondary consideration. **Director Ursula Deitch made a motion to approve new adopted policy effective immediately. The motion, seconded by Director Jim Evans, carried unanimously.** Staff will send out letters to notify all participants of the new policy.

## **CORRESPONDENCE AND PRESS:**

**A. n/a**

**CHAIR REPORT FROM ANNUAL MEETING:** Chair Nick Thomas included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. He presented his report to the Board.

**Monday 12/5/22**

**Morning session** (all staff)

Guest speakers Dr. Martinez-Martinez, NRCS and Matt Wells, DCR Director

**Breakout** (solo)

Understanding cost share

Staff responsibilities, Director responsibilities, and structural engineering procedures.

**Lunch** (all staff, Partners, guest, and Rob Bloxom)

Awards

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Jim Evans-Coastal Basin  
John Malbon- VCAP  
Rob Bloxom- Legislator of the year

**Afternoon Breakout** (Carmie & Palmer)

Admin/ Ops  
Personal management and salary/ benefit guidance.  
Employee retention  
Retention policy

**Area 6 meeting** (all district staff)

General business

District reports- Julie gave a detailed report of the many education activities in our district highlighting the importance of education in our district. (It is important to note that most districts do not have a full time education staff member, generally part of staff member's duties.)

Our district discussed, and educated the other districts in our area, about the non-funding of the education line item in the budget template and how it is a deliverable.

We were fortunate enough to have James Martin (Director of Soil and Water Conservation Districts) and Dr. Kendal Tyree (VASWCD Executive Director) in the room. We learned that there is a legislative item to address this issue, hopefully it will pass.

Other districts discussed tire programs and the associated cost and labor issues.

**Later that evening** (staff and partners)

We had a night on the town in downtown Roanoke with good food and a lot of laughs.

**Tuesday 12/6/22**

**Morning session**

Leadership session (all staff)

**Director and partner lunch** (partners and directors)

Learned from the Soil Health Coalition about their collaboration partners and the Virginia 4 The Soil education and outreach efforts.

**VASWCD Annual Membership Business Meeting** (solo)

Updated policy and legislative items. Including speeding up the structural engineering approval process and request to the general assembly for additional funds associated with cost of goods increase data from the cost assessment survey for FY22 and FY23.

Area reports to board.

**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.

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**New District Server:** Carmie reported to the Board that the District's server crashed. Some files were able to be recovered and the back-up was installed. The new server cost \$880 through the D&D Computing, which the District uses for all computer issues. He came and took the old server, installed the new and set-up all staff computers to it.

**FY 2023 Cost Share:**

- **Agronomic Update:** Sign-up for split application and side dress practices are underway though January 23<sup>rd</sup>. Signup sheets have been mailed out. Payments are being adjusted and tracking is being kept up-to-date as spot checks occur.
- **Poultry Update:** One completed project was found to have issues during the final inspection on December 21<sup>st</sup>. The private engineer has notified the contractor to correct the issues. Once completed, a re-inspection will be scheduled.

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

**Local Funding FY24 Budget Requests:** Carmie submitted the FY24 budget request for &10,898- level funding to Northampton County on January 6<sup>th</sup>.

**2022 Tax Forms:** All 2022 tax forms including 1099G, 1099 Misc., 1099 NEC, 1096, W2, and W3 have been completed and mailed.

**Workers Comp Audit:** The Workers Comp audit for period 12/22/21 – 12/22/22 was completed and submitted on January 6<sup>th</sup> along with copies of 941 forms for all quarters as requested.

**Attachment E Report:** Carmie completed the Attachment E report for quarter ending Dec. 31, 2022 and submitted it to DCR on January 11<sup>th</sup> along with QB Balance Sheet and QB P&L reports as requested.

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

**Webinars/ Conference Calls:**

- n/a

**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:**

- Completed mapping of cover crop
- Began field spot checks of cover crops
- No-till qualification inspection on Jan 10<sup>th</sup>

**Groundwater Committee Meeting:**

- December meeting was cancelled. Bill attended the January 17<sup>th</sup> meeting and a report will be provided at the February 15<sup>th</sup> District Board meeting.

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**VESLT Reports:**

- Two reports filed his month.

**VCAP:** Explained in detail in the VCAP monthly report under New Business.

**Meetings:**

- Poultry Litter Shed Inspection on Dec. 20<sup>th</sup>
- Meeting with landowner to discuss potential BMPs available on Jan 10<sup>th</sup>

**Events:**

- Staff will be attending the Ag Fair at the Exmore Moose Lodge on Jan 25<sup>th</sup> & 26<sup>th</sup>

**Trainings:**

- VCAP Certificate Level 1 (virtual) trainings on the 18<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup>, & 25<sup>th</sup>

**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:**

- Finished making edits as the reported planting sheets were submitted and finished mapping tracts
- Currently in the middle of doing cover crop inspections in Northampton County

**Admin Trainings and meetings:**

- Started some administrative training with Carmie in Quickbooks and will continue as time allows.

**Trainings and Meetings:**

- 12/20- Poultry manure shed inspection with Amanda Pennington, DCR and Bill
- 1/10- met with landowner to discuss possible assistance programs
- 1/18- 1 of 4 VCAP certificate training on Zoom

**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-** Training date is set for March 1<sup>st</sup> and testing day will be March 23<sup>rd</sup>. The District received a \$1,000 grant from Dominion Energy. Julie is using the funds to buy pelts and skulls or skull replicas to increase the District's training materials. Judges have been asked. The State is offering a state level virtual training for the special topic. This way teams will be provided a link and can view on their own. Other Districts from Area 6 will be attending the training day so Area 6 is using the District training as the Area training and will be paying for lunch.

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### **New Programs**

- 5th grade science review bingo
- Dichotomous key for clouds
- Rainfall monitoring
- Natural resources- defining and classifying natural resources
- Natural resources- how we waste natural resources

**Certified Environmental Educator Training with VAEE** – Julie has almost completed Criteria 1. She is waiting for the last couple of modules to work on the website. Criteria 2 will begin in June.

### **Upcoming Dates**

- 1/13- CES- Neal
- 1/18- Area VI Envirothon meeting
- 1/19- AES- Holland
- 1/20- CES Neal
- 1/25-26- Ag Show
- 1/30- Science Fair judging Classical Conversations
- 2/7- VASWCD Education Committee Virtual Meeting
- 2/7- VDOE Environmental Education Advisory Committee
- 2/17-3/1- changing attitudes through social media- virtual
- 3/2- NHS Reality Store

### **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.

### **Admin & Ops**

- **End of Lifespan Verification Reimbursements-** will be included in the next DCR disbursement letter
- **Directory Changes-** Inform VASWCD of changes in District personnel, directors, officers and associate directors and meeting date/time for 2023 to ensure the information is accurate in the 2023 District Directory.'
- **IRS Mileage Rate for 2023:** Changed to \$.655 beginning January 1, 2023
- **Governor's Proposed Budget:** Olivia stated the breakdowns of proposed funds

### **Ag Cost Share**

- **2022 Tax Credits-** January 31<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for Districts to provide their producers with all required documentation for any agricultural BMP tax credits certified in 2022.



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## **Grant Deliverable Reminders**

### **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

### **Dates to Remember**

- 1/25- VA Forage and Grassland Council Winter Conference, Southern Piedmont AREC, Blackstone, VA
- 1/31- Deadline to mail 1099's, tax credit certificates, and supporting documentation to participants

**Accomack Field Office NRCS Report:** Jenny Templeton, NRCS District Conservationist, included a written report in the meeting packet and it is on file in the District office. She presented her report to the Board.

### **PROGRAM UPDATES/ DEADLINES:**

#### **FY23 Programs**

#### **Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**

Ranking deadline for High Tunnel and CAP (Conservation Activity Plan) fund pools:

2/23/23

- High Tunnel applications: 5
- Forestry CAP applications: 2

Ranking deadline for all other fund pools: 3/23/23

- Poultry applications: 9
- Black Duck applications: 3
- Livestock-1
- Wildlife- 8
- Forestry- 3

#### **Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) Renewals:**

- 3 applications received, none preapproved

#### **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

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- Wetland Easements annual monitoring will be scheduled for this winter/ spring

### **EQIP engineering spot checks 1/11**

#### **OUTREACH**

- Jenny attended the VA Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts 2022 Annual Meeting Dec 4-6

#### **VA NRCS Operational/ Personnel Updates**

- Natural Resource Specialist position opened for recent graduates December 2022. Maggie Herrman (Southern Illinois University & Louisiana Tech graduate) was selected for position; start date unknown
- COVID operation status- No masks required, but employees, customers, and visitors are welcome to continue wearing a mask if they choose. COVID status update received weekly.

#### **Training Opportunities in the Area/ State (JEDs, Webinars, Field Days**

- Eastern Shore Ag Conference & Trade Show- 1/25-26
- VA Forage & Grassland Council Winter Conference- 1/24-27
- Fundamentals of Food Labels (webinar) 2/7
- February JED (Joint Employee Development) training- 2/9

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

- **ES Ag Conference-** January 25-26, 2023 at Exmore Moose Lodge in Belle Haven. Theresa and Ursula have been working hard to line everything up.
- **Faculty Reports –** They are in the middle of writing these reports
- **Planning a Commercial Pesticide Recertification Training**
- **Planning Spring Trainings**
  - Food Safety Training
  - Paraquat Training

**Eastern Shore RC&D:** Edwin Long, RC&D Chair, gave a verbal report to the Board.

- **County Budget Requests for FY24-** required paperwork has been submitted to both counties.

**The January 18, 2023 Board meeting was adjourned.**

*Meeting minutes were recorded by Carmie M. Savage*

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