



**Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
Farmville, Virginia
October 22, 2019 11:00 a.m.**

Board Members Present:

Larkin Moyer –Director, Amelia County / Chairman
Ricky Rash – Director, Nottoway County/Vice Chairman
Dr. Wilkie Chaffin –Director, Prince Edward County / Treasurer
Bill Powers –Director, Prince Edward County
Juan Whittington –Appointed Director, Amelia County
Horace Adams- Associate Director, Prince Edward County

Board Members Absent:

Chuck Arnason –Director, Nottoway County / Secretary
Haley Norton- Appointed Director, VCE Nottoway County
Gary Dillard – Associate Director, Amelia County

SWCD Staff Present:

Kelly Atkinson – Education Coordinator
Kevin Dunn – BMP Conservation Specialist
Deanna Fehrer- District Manager
Emily Gibbs – Residential Program Specialist
Charlie Wootton – Senior Conservation Specialist

Partners Present:

Denney Collins – DCR CDC
Derek Hancock – NRCS District Conservationist
Rachel Loveday – NRCS District Conservationist
Katy Overby – VCE agent, Prince Edward County

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

A regular meeting of the Piedmont SWCD Board of Directors was held at the Prince Edward Natural Resources and Agriculture Building in Farmville on Tuesday, October 22, 2019. Chairman Moyer called the meeting to order, welcomed directors, staff and partners and led the group in prayer. A quorum was present. Additions to the agenda include group health insurance application.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Whittington and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the September 24, 2019 minutes as presented.

TREASURER’S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Powers, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board accepted the September 2019 Treasurer’s Report as presented to be filed for audit.

CONSERVATION REPORT

VACS Application Approvals

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Dr. Chaffin and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following VACS applications:

Amelia

Joseph Watt Gills

C. Bay

(05-20-0046)

CCI-WP-2 Stream Protection with Wide Buffer- Maintenance (12,850')

Estimated Incentive \$12,850.00

Prince Edward

Edward Garnett

(C. Bay)

(05-20-0052)

FR-1 Afforestation of Hay, Crop and Pasture Land (7.6 ac)

Estimated Cost \$ 760.00

Estimated Cost-Share \$ 1,710.00

Chesapeake Bay – total approved \$14,560

Cover Crop (SL-8B) Planting date Extension-

Virginia Cooperative Extension offices in Amelia, Nottoway and Prince Edward counties provided data for the three localities on drought conditions and agriculture losses. Amelia and Prince Edward counties Board of Supervisors approved a drought disaster resolution and forwarded it to the Governor's office. According to guidance from DCR, extension of planting dates can be approved by the Board on a case by case basis if ONE of the following are met: 1) drought declaration by the Governor; 2) FSA disaster declaration; or 3) drought data from a respected source (VCE) along with appropriate climate data. Based on the data provided by VCE and the US Drought Monitor the board approved the following: **On a motion by Mr. Rash and seconded by Mr. Whittington, and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved to grant the extended planting dates for SL-8B practices by 14 days including dates to document sufficient cover for producers that requested an extension (early planting dates are not eligible for an extension).** A copy of the letters from VCE documenting drought conditions and climate data from drought monitor are attached.

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Dr. Chaffin (with Mr. Moyer and Mr. Whittington absent from the room), and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the request for an extension of 14 additional planting days and dates to document sufficient cover for the SL-8B practice on the contracts listed below. A copy of the request from each producer is in their file.

Contracts Requesting Extension

Boot Hill Dairy- 05-20-0047

John Ashman- 05-20-0006

James Garnett- 05-20-0044

Neubauer Farms LLC-
05-20-0035

Featherstone Farm-
05-20-0031

George G. Toth- 05-20-0038

John Shepherd- 05-20-0009

Triple R Dairy- 05-20-0010

Dwayne Moore- 05-20-0039

R. M. Watkins and Sons Inc-
05-20-0016

AMEVA Farm- 05-20-0024

Whitaker Farms- 05-20-0017

Don Benson- 05-20-0019

Larry Kirby- 05-20-0043

Oakmulgee Dairy-
05-20-0036

Nick Moody- 05-20-0012

Harrison Moody- 05-20-0011

David B.Lewis- 05-20-0018

Reamford Farms- 05-20-0030

Vaughan Cattle - 05-20-0027

Blanton Farms 05-20-0037

Hoot Owl Hollow Farm Inc.-
05-20-0033

Robert Jones- 05-20-0032

Dexter Jones- 05-20-0023

Wilford Poore- 05-20-0025

Brian Crowder- 05-20-0015

DEQ 319(h) Residential Septic Application Approvals

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Dr. Chaffin and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following septic applications:

Flat Creek, et al.

Elizabeth Irby (05-20-0048) Nottoway County	RB-1 Septic Tank Pump Out (2) Estimated Cost \$ 700.00 Estimated Cost-Share \$ 350.00 (50% cost-share rate)
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Christa Morris (05-20-0049) Amelia County	RB-1 Septic Tank Pump Out Estimated Cost \$ 350.00 Estimated Cost-Share \$ 175.00 (50% cost-share rate)
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Spring Creek, et al.

Judith Kennedy (05-20-0050) Prince Edward County	RB-1 Septic Tank Pump Out Estimated Cost \$ 350.00 Estimated Cost-Share \$ 228.00 (65% cost-share rate)
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Ms. Gibbs reported that the District will be notified by DEQ in mid-November if an extension to 2020 will be approved for the Flat Creek grant. If DEQ does not approve and the District receives applications for repairs, the staff will process using the “Emergency approval policy”, so that the repairs can be made before the grant ends. Ms. Fehrer reported that Ms. Gibbs had a progress review of both grants with DEQ and that Piedmont will be given 10 additional points for each RFA application (both grants), based on performance of the grants.

Conservation Plans

On a motion by Dr. Chaffin, seconded by Mr. Whittington and carried by unanimous vote, with Mr. Moyer absent from the room, the Board approved the following conservation plans as written:

Amelia(20)

Tract	Producer	Program
2712	Lee Smith Williams	EQIP
1016	Lewis E Harvie	EQIP
2857	Ralph G Hall	EQIP
2600	Big Meadows Farm LLC	EQIP
1864	Byrd Archer	EQIP
57	Hard Acres Farm	CTA
2859	Easter Design Inc	CTA
2184	John T Courter	CTA
2866	John Carson Ashman	CTA
573	John Carson Ashman	CTA
1549	David P Jarck	CTA
1485	John Carson Ashman	CTA
2430	Brian T Crowder	CTA
2936	Dwayne Moore	CTA
2988	Hard Acres Farm	CTA
	Oakmulgee Dairy Farm	
769	INC	CSP
2556	John Carson Ashman	CTA
739	John Carson Ashman	CTA
1829	James R Fleming	CSP-GCI
1519	Carrol Harris	CSP-GCI

Conservation Plans Signed by Staff:

Prince Edward	Wilkie Chaffin	1617	CRP
	Laura Nash Rice	871	CREP

Equipment Purchase

Last month the Board directed Ms. Fehrer to withdrawal the loan application from DEQ for the zero-interest loan/50% forgiveness for the purchase of a no-till drill, and to obtain quotes from several manufacturers to include a native warm season grass box (for fluffy/chaffy seed). Ms. Fehrer received 3 quotes from different vendors for HayBuster models, one quote for a Great Plains model and one for a Truax model. She also provided an update on the loan process from DEQ. Currently the loan process for SWCDs is on hold because there are questions about the ability for SWCDs to incur debt. DEQ, Virginia Resource Authority (VRA) and DCR are working with the Attorney General's office to get an opinion and resolution. SWCDs incur debt on a regular basis using credit cards, leases for office space and other normal operating expenditures. **On a motion by Mr. Whittington, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved moving forward with the loan application to purchase a new Haybuster Model 107C 10' no-till drill that includes a native warm season grass box attachment (per quotation specs) at a cost of \$31,439 from James River Equipment.** The loan application can be submitted and DEQ will hold until the process is resolved.

Other Conservation Items

Mr. Whittington voiced concerns over the cost share rate for FR-1 practices (new rates this program year). Based on the District's per acre cost of this practice (\$100/acre), the amount of cost share was significantly higher than the average cost to install this practice in our District. Mr. Whittington commented that is sending the wrong message to taxpayers about the VACS program and SWCDs. Mr. Wootton and Mr. Dunn explained that this was an item that the Technical Advisory Committee reviewed and that it was sent to the Forestry sub-committee for review and ultimately approved by the TAC, DCR and the Virginia Soil and Water Board. Mr. Rash commented that during his experience serving on the TAC, there have been other instances concerning the cost of the practice versus the efficiency of the practice. **On a motion by Mr. Whittington, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board directed the staff prepare a letter outlining the concerns and send to the Area V representatives on the State Soil and Water Board and VASWCD Board, as well as to the chairman of the TAC.** Mr. Wootton reminded the Board that the TAC is currently reviewing program changes for PY21 and will not accept any additional comments or concerns and it is likely this will not be addressed at the TAC until next year, when they begin their work of program review for 2022.

FINANCE

Ms. Fehrer reminded the Board that the FY20 budget included providing a health insurance benefit for eligible employees. Ms. Fehrer obtained quotes from several insurance companies on comparable policies and the policy that is being recommended is about half the cost of the budgeted expense. **On a motion by Dr. Chaffin, seconded by Mr. Powers and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the purchase of a health insurance policy carried by Anthem through Farm Bureau. Ms. Fehrer and Mr. Wootton are waiving coverage because they are already insured under other policies, but Ms. Gibbs will be enrolled in the program.** The District will pay 80% of the monthly premium with an approximate cost to the

District of \$3,900. The coverage will begin January 1, 2020. Ms. Fehrer will be reviewing all application documents with Dr. Chaffin.

PLANNING

Ms. Collins reviewed the COIA training requirement that recently changed for all elected officials in Virginia. As of July 1, 2019 all elected officials must complete a COIA training by December 31, 2019. The training must be provided by the Virginia Conflict of Interest and Ethics Advisory Council and is available online and will also be given at the VASWCD annual meeting in December. Local clerks in the county offices are responsible for tracking and maintaining completion records. DCR will still provide COIA and FOIA training by the Attorney General's offices at Area Spring Meetings, although this does not meet the requirement by the Ethics Advisory Council **and is an optional training**. At-large and extension agents are not required to complete the training.

Ms. Fehrer reminded the Board of several work items in November including officer elections and locality budget requests.

WATERSHED

Ms. Fehrer reported that 10 proposals from engineering firms were received in response to the RFP for a Term Contract for small dam repairs that includes 10 SWCDs. Participating districts reviewed and scored the 10 proposals. The scores were averaged and the top four firms will be interviewed on November 15, 2019. Those firms are Schnabel, AMT, OBG and Hurt & Proffitt. The interview committee consists of DCR Soil & Water engineer, Charles Wilson, NRCS engineer, Mat Lyons, and representatives from Blue Ridge, Hanover-Caroline, Peter Francisco, Piedmont and Southside SWCDs. At the November Piedmont Board meeting, a contract will be put forward for approval.

LEGISLATIVE

Dr. Chaffin reported that SWCD's Attorney General representative, Robert Drewery, has taken another job. His replacement has not been announced. Mr. Rash reported that state agency budget requests are now public documents and can be viewed on the Town Hall website.

PERSONNEL (no report)

COMMUNICATION / EDUCATION

Ms. Atkinson reported there are 10 participants signed up for the upcoming teacher workshop. Mr. Moyer thanked Ms. Atkinson for submitting a news article to the Amelia Monitor about the District's education program. Ms. Gibbs reported the annual reports were distributed and that this month's radio spot was completed.

DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT *(See attached report)*

Ms. Fehrer referenced her report and highlighted staff's workload accomplishments this month. She reported the VCAP Steering Committee was awarded the Virginia Soil & Water Conservation Society's 2019 Merit Award and that she will be attending the October 28 meeting to receive the award on behalf of the Piedmont SWCD who is a charter member of the VCAP Steering Committee.

PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS:

Department of Conservation and Recreation: *(See attached report)*

Ms. Collins reviewed her report. She thanked staff for submitting their quarterly reports on time. She also reported on the memo that was sent to SWCDs from Director Cristman that reminded districts that resource reviews must be submitted when practice components receive a notification about possible impacts to cultural resources or threatened or endangered species. Piedmont had several practices where the resource reviews had been completed by NRCS because it was in conjunction with a federal project and staff questioned why DCR was asking for this to be done as it is duplicate work. In addition, several septic repairs that had already been permitted by the Health Department and were completed were on the list as well. Ms. Collins reiterated that guidance from the manual must be followed for any and all ground disturbing practices that are entered into the DCR tracking program regardless of funding sources and there will be a VACS update webinar on November 12 and 21 that will focus on this requirement.

USDA-NRCS *(See attached report)*

Ms. Loveday reviewed her report. Field offices are waiting on National Policy from Washington, DC, before they can move forward on approving applications. Mr. Hancock reported they can accept applications for programs, but cannot review until guidelines have been set, with the exception of the CSP-Grasslands Initiative program.

Dr. Chaffin reported that the VASWCD has not received a response from the NRCS State Office in regards to questions concerning the MOU with districts that was presented at their last board meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

ATTACHED REPORTS:

Conservation Report; DCR CDC Report; Staff report; NRCS report.

Submitted By _____ Date: _____
Deanna Fehrer, Piedmont SWCD Staff

Approved By: _____ Date: _____
Charles Arnason, Director / Secretary