



**Piedmont Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes - Farmville, Virginia
July 23, 2024 11:00 a.m.**

Board Members Present:

Larkin Moyer –Director, Amelia County / Chairman
Ricky Rash – Director, Nottoway County /Vice Chairman
Charles “Chuck” Arnason –Director, Nottoway County / Treasurer
Jennifer Morris – Director, Amelia County
Dr. James Gates, Jr.- Director, Prince Edward County
Juan Whittington – Appointed At-Large Director, Amelia County
Mackenzie Gunn – Appointed VCE Director, Amelia County & VCE ANR agent

Board Members, Staff & Partners Absent:

Horace Adams –Director, Prince Edward County / Secretary
Gary Dillard – Associate Director, Amelia County
Dr. Kathy Gee, Associate Director, Nottoway County
Kelly Atkinson – Education Specialist

PSWCD Staff Present:

Deanna Fehrer - District Manager
Charlie Wootton – Senior Conservation Specialist
Kevin Dunn – Senior Conservation Specialist
Tyler Smith – Conservation Technician
Dennis Thompson – Watershed Dam Program Manager

Partners Present:

Denney Collins, Conservation District Coordinator, Dept. Conservation & Recreation
Jeremy Evans, NRCS District Conservationist, Farmville/Nottoway
Tara Ciavarella, NRCS District Conservationist, Amelia
Cristy Cook, FSA Director, Farmville/Nottoway
Beverly Moon, FSA Director, Amelia
Lyle Currin, VCE ANR agent, Nottoway
Erin Small, VCE ANR agent, Prince Edward
Doug Stanley, Prince Edward County Administrator
Doug Audley, Russell Schmidt, Define Mansour VA Department of Forestry
Claire Helmke, Private Lands Biologist, USDA

CALL TO ORDER & WELCOME

A regular meeting of the Piedmont SWCD Board of Directors was held at the Prince Edward County Agriculture building on Tuesday, July 23, 2024. Chairman Moyer welcomed everyone, opened the meeting with prayer and called the meeting to order. A quorum was present.

SECRETARY’S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Dr. Gates and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the June 25, 2024 minutes as presented.

TREASURER’S REPORT

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board accepted the June 2024 Treasurer’s Report as presented to be filed for audit.

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE Mr. Dunn, Mr. Wootton and Mr. Smith presented the conservation report.

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Ms. Morris and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the following conservation plans:

- Joseph A. Taylor (05-24-0081)- BMP
- James W. Garnett Jr (05-25-0004) BMP
- Robert Browning (05-25-0001) – BMP
- SR Self Directed LLC (05-25-0003) – BMP

On a motion by Mr. Whittington seconded by Dr. Gates and carried by unanimous vote, the Board accepted the following conservation plans as presented:

- Amelia County plan for CREP (1) FSA/NRCS
- Prince Edward County plan Signed by staff (1) FSA/NRCS

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

Prince Edward County

Robert Browning 05-25-0003 (589595)	SL-6W Stream Exclusion with Wide Buffer (50’/10yr) (1,450’) Estimated Cost \$ 19,960.00 Estimated Cost-Share \$ 18,962.00 (95%) Estimated Buffer Payment \$ 1,360.00 Total Estimated Cost Share \$ 20,322.00
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James W. Garnett, Jr. 05-25-0003 (589595)	SL-6W Stream Exclusion with Wide Buffer (50’/10yr) (100’) Estimated Cost \$ 25,715.50 Estimated Cost-Share \$ 24,429.72 (95%) Estimated Buffer Payment \$ 320.00 Total Estimated Cost Share \$ 24,749.72
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Nottoway County

SR Self Directed LLC 05-25-0004 (589601)	SL-6W Stream Exclusion with Wide Buffer (50’/10yr) (2400’) Estimated Cost \$ 47,460.00 Estimated Cost-Share \$ 45,087.00 (95%) Estimated Buffer Payment \$ 4,800.00 Total Estimated Cost Share \$ 49,887.00
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(589604)	SL-7 Extension of Watering and Grazing Mgmt. Systems (83.45ac) Estimated Cost \$ 11,730.00 Estimated Cost-Share \$ 8,797.50 (75%)
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Total CB VACS25 Approvals: \$103,756.22

On a motion by Mr. Rash, seconded by Mr. Whittington and carried by unanimous vote, the Board accepted the following septic application (emergency pump-out approved by staff in June):

Spring Creek Grant #16969

Sarah Chambers	RB-1 Residential Septic Pump-out		
05-24-0119 (588778)	Estimated Cost	\$	400.00
	Estimated Cost Share (90%)	\$	340.00

Mr. Smith reviewed FY25 changes in the VACS and septic programs, including cost share rate changes for several agronomic practices and for the 319 septic grants.

FINANCE COMMITTEE – Chair Arnason

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board accepted the previously signed FY25 DCR grant agreements as follows:

Approval of DCR Admin/Ops 503OPS-25-34-GF total grant \$336,946 includes:

\$273,946 (PY24 216,988) for Admin/ops core funding (includes funds for dam technical assistance) and \$63,000 for dam maintenance (\$4,500/dam).

Approval of DCR Cost Share/Technical Assistance 503CSTA-25-34-GF grant

includes: \$3,694,690 CB; \$245,507 OCB; Technical Assistance \$592,788 (base \$80,520). (PY24 CB \$2,728,447 OCB \$227,991 and Technical Assistance \$276,937 (\$80,520 base)).

Ms. Fehrer reviewed a few of the changes in deliverables for each grant.

Last month the Board approved a draft budget in the amount of \$4,608,471 pending receipt of final figures and grant agreements. **On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved an updated FY25 operational budget as presented in the amount of \$4,669,529 (see below).** Budget workpapers are filed in the office.

FUNDING	Income	
VACS Income	\$ 3,940,197.00	CB \$3,694,690; OCB \$245,507
DCR Dam Maint.	\$ 63,000.00	Dams (\$4500/dam)
PE Dam Maint.	\$ 5,000.00	Level funding PE Co.
VACS Technical Assist	\$ 336,646.00	\$80,520 Base + \$256,126 addition (TA budget based on return \$1.97M CS and related TA)
DCR Admin& Oper	\$ 273,946.00	DCR Operations
Local Government	\$ 28,240.00	Level funding
Equipment Program	\$ 18,500.00	Projected Receipts
319 Septic Grant Admin Costs	\$ 4,000.00	2 grants Flat & PE
Total Funding	\$ 4,669,529.00	

EXPENDITURES		
VACS Cost Share Exp	\$ 3,940,197.00	CB \$3,694,690; OCB \$245,507
Dam Expense	\$ 68,000.00	Regular maintenance; remote monitoring
VACS Technical Assist	\$ 336,646.00	Support of VACS Program
Operational Expense Septic Program Implementation	\$ 302,186.00	Operations**
Equipment Program	\$ 18,500.00	Salaries, Maintenance, Truck, Storage expenses
TOTALS	\$ 4,669,529.00	

** Operations:		Technical Assist.		
Salaries, benefits,taxes	\$174,264	\$218,243		Includes merit increases, health insurance (2 FTE), employer taxes, retirement payment
Staff travel & training	\$6,500	\$21,500		Vehicle expense (gas, maintenance, insurance), travel costs for mtgs, trainings
Office Operations	\$9,802	\$4,553		Office Supplies, liability and business insurance, misc expense
Equipment	\$3,000	\$5,200		Field equipment; Office equipment
IT Support	\$15,000	\$11,500		ISP fees, software licenses, remote license, zoom; New software for computers
Phone System	\$15,000	\$16,500		New phone system - hardware, monthly fee, installation, training (7 phones, 3 lines)
Rent	\$15,000	\$9,500		
Director Travel Vehicle -Prgm Support	\$12,000	\$4,150		Mileage, lodging, meals, monthly board meeting
Soils Trailer Human	\$4,000	\$6,500		Office vehicle expense not covered under travel Ramps, banners, and other accessories; increase in insurance
Resource Cons.	\$7,500			
Dues	\$10,500	\$12,000		60 hours @\$350/hr - 5 hrs/month
Promotion & outreach	\$5,500	\$2,000		VASWCD, VFGC, VACDE, NACD
Education	\$6,000	\$16,500		All programs; Expenses to meet grant deliverables
Programming	\$14,220	\$3,500		Supplies and costs to support education programming (not salaries)
Office Furniture	\$2,000	\$5,000		As needed - desk, chair, file cabinets
Scholarships	\$4,000			
Admin other Programs	\$1,900			Admin costs for other programs
Total Operations	\$306,186	\$336,646.00		

On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Ms. Morris and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the July 11, 2024 minutes from the Finance Committee. (attached)

Ms. Fehrer reported the DCR Desktop Guide has been updated for FY25 and she reviewed with the Finance Committee. An electronic copy is available as well as a printed copy in the office. The Desktop Guide is used by the auditors to help determine district compliance with financial procedures.

PLANNING

On a motion by Dr. Gates, seconded by Mr. Rash and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved Erin Small as an Associate Director from Prince Edward county. Ms. Small is the VCE agent for Prince Edward.

Ms. Fehrer reviewed the Annual Plan of Work for August.

Ms. Fehrer prepared a summary of FY24 accomplishments and shared with the Board. The summary will be used to prepare the annual report. She thanked staff, board and partners for all their work.

WATERSHED - Chair Arnason

Mr. Arnason reported that when the contractor, Bander Smith, removed the woody debris and mud from around the gate valve riser at Bush #2, they discovered that the cold water-draw system and trash rack needed to be replaced along with the trash rack around the low gate valve. **On a motion by Mr. Arnason, seconded by Mr. Whittington and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved a change work order in the amount of \$15,850 for installation of the 3 components.** DCR has a 15% contingency fee built into the approved small dam repair fund that can be applied to the project.

Mr. Thompson gave a report on the gate valve repairs at Bush #2, Bush #5, Bush #6 and Bush #7 that included some pictures of the equipment and lake levels. All four sites had lowered the lake levels in order for the mud and debris to be removed. There were large amounts of debris (39 dump truck loads) from Bush #2. All gates are now operable.

On Tuesday, July 30, there will be a pre-bid site visit for contractors at Bush #2 and Bush #5 for the RFB to replace wave berms on both dams.

PERSONNEL COMMITTEE - Chair Dillard

Ms. Morris reported that she, Ms. Fehrer and Mr. Dunn interviewed a candidate for the equipment program manager position. **On a motion by Ms. Morris, seconded by Mr. Arnason and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved to hire William H. Patterson of Blackstone to fill the position contingent upon a successful DMV driving record check and criminal background check.** Compensation details are in the budget workpapers.

On a motion by Mr. Whittington, seconded by Dr. Gates and carried by unanimous vote, the Board approved the job description for Assistant District Manager to be included in the Personnel Policy.

LEGISLATIVE COMMITTEE - Chair Rash

Mr. Rash reviewed a sample legislative agenda from Area 2 that can be used as a template for Area 5. Mr. Dunn asked for any feedback and suggestions in preparing a legislative agenda coming from Area 5.

COMMUNICATION / EDUCATION – Chair Gunn

Mr. Rash shared an opportunity for the district to put up an exhibit at Mercy Fellowship Church event in Blackstone on September 21.

DISTRICT MANAGER AND PARTNER AGENCY REPORTS

District Manager & Staff reports (Attached)

Ms. Fehrer covered most of her report during the meeting. Nora Dunn the summer intern has prepared a ‘Conservation Matters’ exhibit that will be placed in the local libraries.

Ms. Fehrer also shared 'At a Glance' postcards that Ms. Dunn prepared that highlights accomplishments the past program year. She will get these printed for directors and staff to hand out to clients, partners and local governments.

Department of Conservation and Recreation (Attached)

Ms. Collins reviewed several highlights on her report including upcoming deadlines and trainings.

Virginia Cooperative Extension

Mr. Currin reported on behalf of Ms. Gunn and Ms. Small. Several upcoming events include: August 23 – Central VA Crop Expo in Brookneal; August 21 – Crop Field Day at Featherstone Farm; August 26 – Amelia Cattlemen beef cattle sale.

Virginia Department of Forestry

Mr. Audley announced his retirement at the end of this month. He introduced his replacement, Mr. Russell Schmidt who is from the Saylor's Creek area.

USDA-NRCS – Farmville & Amelia (Attached)

Ms. Ciavarella and Mr. Evans shared their reports that were included in the Board packet. Ms. Ciavarella also announced a gleaning opportunity (July 24 and July 31) at a corn farm in Amelia that will go to local food pantries. Mr. Evans reminded everyone of the Local Working Group meeting following the Board meeting and that he is now teleworking on Wednesdays and Fridays. All programs have an October 11 signup deadline. Mr. Evans introduced Claire Helmke, the new private lands biologist, who will be working with NRCS, Quail Forever and Virginia Department of Wildlife to promote conservation habitat programs.

USDA-Farm Service Agency (attached)

Ms. Cook reported her office is finalizing FY24 crop acreage reports. She will be meeting with the County Emergency Board this afternoon to discuss drought and crop conditions in Nottoway and Prince Edward counties. Ms. Moon reported the Amelia Emergency Board met and is asking producers to keep crop and precipitation records.

Prince Edward County

Mr. Stanley updated on several happenings in the county including: 5 Pillars meat processing facility has been approved by USDA and an open house and producers meeting hosted by VCE will be held August 31; two solar site agreements have been approved that are predicted to generate \$18,200 in annual revenue to the county; PE Cannery received \$28,000 in grant funds to upgrade equipment; Kinex has completed 348 miles of high speed broadband cable in the county; ground has been broken for the Harbor Freight store across the street from the District office; and the Comprehensive Plan for the county is about 80% complete. There will be a public hearing in August for the solar project off of Falkland Road.

Roundtable

Dr. Gates shared an article out of the latest Farm Journal that provided statistics on farmland that is foreign owned.

ADJOURNMENT:

The meeting was adjourned at 1:00 pm.

ATTACHED DOCUMENTS:

Treasurer report; DCR Grant agreements; FY25 budget; FC minutes; Change Order Contract with Bander Smith; FY24 Summary of Accomplishments; Staff & partner reports

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

Approved By: _____ Date: _____
Horace Adams, Director / Secretary