

LOUDOUN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS' MEETING
750 Miller Drive, SE., Suite F-3, Leesburg, VA 20175

Thursday, April 11, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chairman James Christian. Attending: JAMES CHRISTIAN, CHAIRMAN; UZMA RASHEED, VICE CHAIR; PETER R. HOLDEN, STUART VERMAAK, DIRECTORS; and Barbara Christian, ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR; Suzanne Brown, Patricia McIlvaine, Jay Frankenfield, Chris Van Vlack, Jennifer Venable, Kay Powell, Fletcher Dilldine, Kris Dennen, STAFF; Debbie Cross, DCR and David Ward, B&D.

ACTION ITEMS:

◆1) **Approval of Minutes:** (Distributed for review prior to the meeting).

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the March 20th District board meeting. Approved as presented. (Vermaak-Christian, 3-0).

◆2) **Treasurer's Report:**

The Finance Committee provided an update on District accounts and the Attachment E and quarterly reports. A motion was made to approve the Finance Committee report (Attachment E and 3rd Quarter reports) and file for audit. Approved as presented. (Holden-Vermaak, 3-0).

Reports/Actions: Committee Reports

◆3) **Technical Review Committee**

a) **VA Ag BMP Cost-Share Program and Ag BMP Tax Credit Program**

Item 1: A motion was made to approve the Technical Review Minutes from 4/03/24. Approved as presented. (Vermaak-Rasheed, 4-0).

Item 2: A motion was made to approve 13 PY24 VACS cost share instances totaling: \$194,574.79 and 5 related conservation plans. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).

Item 3: A motion was made to approve 3 Floodplain no-rise certifications totaling \$ 11,235.00. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).

Item 4: A motion was made to approve 1 pet waste station totaling \$7,000. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Vermaak, 4-0).

Item 5: A motion was made to approve 2 VCAP landscaping projects totaling \$13,995.51. Approved as presented. (Vermaak-Rasheed, 4-0).

◆4) **Finance Committee**

a) **Committee Mtg. Minutes 3-20-24**

A motion was made to approve the Finance Committee meeting minutes from 3/20/24. Approved as presented. (Vermaak-Holden, 4-0).

b) **Audit**

After discussion with DCR, the committee suggests to the Board to forgo the previously approved 7 month audit as DCR will be conducting a full 1 year audit in the fall (as required due to staff departure). A motion to approve cancellation of interim audit. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Vermaak, 4-0).

c) **New Accounts**

The committee will meet with the CPA in May/June to work on FY25 budget and updating Att. E for the new year. The committee suggests waiting to open the new money market account for operating funds until we have the year-end review with the CPA. A motion was made to postpone the opening of the money market account for operating funds until after year-end review with the CPA. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

d) VSWCB

The VSWCB met on 3/27/24 and voted to levy a \$250 fine for any District that was noted for the paying of sales tax in the fall 2023 audit.

5) Executive Committee

No report.

◆6) Personnel Committee

a) A motion was made to advertise for a full-time Education Outreach Specialist. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Vermaak, 4-0).

◆7) District Operations - Action Items

a) **Desktop Computer**

A motion was made to approve the purchase and installation of a desktop computer that would accommodate the running of ArcGIS Pro. Total purchase: \$2678.80. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

b) **Staff Merit Increase**

The District historically follows Loudoun County government for merit increases, cost of living, etc. for staff. During the recent budget cycle the approved budget includes a 7% merit increase for eligible staff that meet performance expectations. In addition, a 5% adjustment to the beginning and end of each pay scale. These increases for eligible staff would not take effect until September'24. **A motion was made to follow the County in awarding a 7% increase for eligible staff and adjusting the pay band by 5%. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).**

Reports: Cooperating Agencies/Entities

DCR-Division of Soil & Water Conservation– Debbie Cross, Conservation District Coordinator

(Report distributed prior to the meeting)

Administrative/Operations: Carryovers - projects needing DCR approval to carry over a third time into a 4th program year must be submitted to Sara Bottenfield by 5/15. *** **Nutrient Management Plans (NMP)** – VACS practices that require a nutrient management plan on file, must have current plan on file before payment. ***

Signatures for VACS contracts – Ensure a system is in place for someone to review every contract for all signatures prior to payment. *** **Technical Advisory Committee (TAC)** – there are openings on the TAC committee if you would like to help with the FY26 program. The deadline for suggestions related to the PY25 program is 4/26. ***

Secondary Considerations and Average Cost Lists must be approved before 6/30/24. ***

New Director Training: Director Holden and Director Rasheed completed online Director Training. Phase II will be held in-person at the Area II Spring meeting in the afternoon. *** **Grant agreement deliverables**: Loudoun is on target for operational deliverables. ***

Ag Community Outreach Event: Loudoun's event will be in Centerville in partnership with Northern Virginia SWCD. *** **Budget amendments** – The state still does not have a budget. The Governor's budget reduced administrative/operational funding from 3 million to 1 million. The General Assembly has a special session on 4/17. ***

Upcoming dates to remember: Area II Spring meeting on 4/17 at Grelen Nursery in Somerset, VA, hosted by Culpeper SWCD; VSWCB meets at Twin Lakes State Park on 4/22; the VASWCD will host a Zoom call "Conservation Chat" for Directors on 4/30. *** VACS training on 6/13 (9 a.m. - 12 p.m.) or 6/18 (1p.m.-4 p.m.). See report for additional dates.

USDA-NRCS (Casey James)(Absent)

(Report distributed prior to the meeting).

Debbie reported that Casey mentioned at the John Marshall SWCD meeting that the 3rd vacant position and intern position have recently been filled.

Virginia Department of Forestry-VDOF (Lindsey Long)(Absent)

Virginia Cooperative Extension: (Stuart Vermaak)

A new Marketing Coordinator has been hired; VCE participated with Loudoun Invasive Removal Alliance in the "Scrape the Grape" project for Spotted Lanternfly removal. There were 400 volunteers and 600,000 egg masses were removed. *** The spring water testing program has sold out.

Loudoun County Building and Development (David Ward)

David Ward announced that he would be retiring June 1. A Water Resources Engineer 3 position is being advertised. *** The Riverbend Stream and Outfall Restoration project near Potomac Falls High School and River Bend Middle School is underway as a County project.

Reports/Actions: District Programs

Staff Monthly Reports (Reports distributed prior to the meeting)

a) Senior Conservation Specialist -- Pat McIlvaine

Pat reported that she has multiple spring tree plantings scheduled. *** The Arbor Day posters were judged today.

b) Conservation Specialist III -- Jay Frankenfield

2019 YCLI student Rebecca Kauffman, finished her degree at VA. Tech. She recently was hired at Fish and Wildlife. *** Jay participated in the Unison Conservation Speed Dating event. A Loudoun landowner talked with his neighbors and invited them to come and hear from environmental agencies. It was an informative event and should result in some cost share signups.

c) Conservation Specialist I -- Robert Wilbur

Robert reported the Environmental Commission would host a Public Forum on 5/14 at the Academies of Loudoun. It will be an open house style event. The forum will provide an opportunity to provide input to the commission. Robert will be in attendance and staff the LSWCD table for the event.

d) Conservation Specialist I -- Fletcher Dilldine

No additional comments.

e) Education/Conservation Specialist -- Kaylea Powell

No additional comments.

c) Urban/Ag Conservationist -- Chris Van Vlack

Chris extended thanks to everyone who attended the prime soils public hearing last night. The meeting ran until 3 a.m. The prime soils vote will take place at the June 12th Board meeting. *** Robin will meet with Supervisor Letorneau next week to discuss prime soils. *** The cost-share outreach event being held in partnership with Northern Virginia SWCD will be held on 4/30 in Fairfax.. *** The Waterford Foundation will be presenting an award to the District on 4/16 for assistance with riparian buffer planting.

d) Education Outreach Specialist -- Jennifer Venable

Jennifer sent scholarship applications to the Directors for review. Directors should select their 1st and 2nd choice and she will then forward the selected applicant to the VASWCD for consideration.

e) Program Assistant -- Kristin Dennen

No additional comments.

f) District Operations Manager -- Suzanne Brown

FY25 County Budget request was approved in the amount of \$881,509. Upcoming meetings: Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board at Twin Creek Lake State Park on 4/22.

Potomac Council/Roundtable:

Associate Directors Derrick Clarke and Marina Schumacher attended on behalf of the District.

Rural Economic Development Commission (Robin Bartok)(Absent)

The REDC did a review of Ag Census numbers. According to the report, minority farm numbers increased. Associate Director Bartok wrote a letter to the Board regarding staff and Director attendance and participation at the Board of Supervisors public hearing on prime soils, read by Chairman Christian.

Board Comments:

Prime Soils Public Hearing: Director Rasheed commented that the Prime Soil public hearing was a great and informative meeting and she looks forward to being in attendance in June.

Chairman’s Report:

No report.

Associate Directors:

No report.

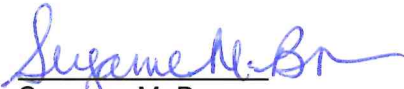
Upcoming:


The Technical Review Committee will meet on Wednesday, May 1st at 1:30 p.m.
The Finance Committee will meet on Thursday, May 9th at 3 p.m.
The next scheduled District Board meeting will be held Thursday, May 9th at 4 p.m.

Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0) The meeting was adjourned at 5:12 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:


Suzanne M. Brown
District Operations Manager


James B. Christian
Chairman

May 9, 2024
(Date)