## Robert E. Lee Soil & Water Conservation District

## 7631-A Richmond Hwy.

**Appomattox, VA 24522**

### Phone 434-352-2819 FAX 434-352-9405

**www.releeconservation.com**

## Board of Directors Regular Meeting Minutes

**The Spring House Restaurant**

**9789 Richmond Hwy**

**Lynchburg, VA 24504**

**April 27, 2023**

**Directors**:Brandon Schmitt, Assistant Chairman

(Present) Doug Perrow, Treasurer

Chad Barrett, Assistant Treasurer

Charles Smith

Jennifer Elliott

Bonnie Swanson

Brandon Payne

**Directors:** Jeff Floyd, Chairman

(Absent) Karen Angulo

Bruce Jones

**Staff/Partners**: Jonathan Wooldridge, RELSWCD District Manager/Sr. Ag BMP Cons. Spec.

(Present) Mark Hollberg, CDC, DCR Conservation District Coordinator

Cindy Miller, RELSWCD Office Administrator

Kelly Burke, NRCS District Conservationist

**Others:**  Garrett Evans, Virginia Department of Forestry Amherst Co

**Call to order:** Theregular meeting of the Robert E. Lee Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Directors was called to order April27 2023, at 6:02 p.m., by Brandon Schmitt, AssistantChairman, at The Spring House Restaurant, 9789 Richmond Hwy, Lynchburg, Virginia.

**Acknowledgementof Guests:** None

**Adopting the Agenda:** Brandon Schmitt, Assistant Chairman, asked if there were any changes to the agenda. M**otion was made to approve the agenda as presented.(Perrow, Barrettpassed 7/0).**

**Reading and Approving of theMarch 23, 2023Minutes:** Brandon Schmitt, Assistant Chairman, asked if there were any corrections to the minutes (copy filed with the minutes).**Motion was made to approve the minutes as presented.****(Perrow, Payne passed 7/0).**

**REPORT OF OFFICERS/PARTNERS/STAFF**

**1-Treasurer’s Report– March2023–Doug Perrow, Treasurer**, gave the treasurer’s report (copy filed with minutes). All bank statements were reconciled to the checkbook and QuickBooks program. TheMarch 2023 Treasurer’s report will be filed in the District Office.Attachment E for Third Quarter was balance and submitted to Mark Hollberg with DCR timely.

**2-DCR Conservation District Coordinator Report -** Mark Hollberg, CDCgave the Aprilreport. (Copy filed with minutes).

**Administration:**

Third quarter reports are due by Monday, April 17. Please submit electronically.

### Reminders of deliverables in the operational grant with DCR:

Review strategic plan (at least once/year) and annual plan (at least once midyear) - document in minutes

Conduct timely employee evaluations and review personnel policy

Review employee position descriptions and performance expectations

Prepare FY24 annual plan of work (board approval in June)

Prepare an FY23 annual report (expected completion in August or September)

Review *Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations* - document in minutes.

An annually review of all district policies (purchasing policy, credit card policy, etc.)is recommended.

Interview Panels and FOIA: As districts continue to hire new staff, please remember that FOIA rules apply to conducting interviews. Interview panels made up of 3 or more directors, or a quorum of Committee members, constitutes a public meeting. The interview meeting must be advertised as a public meeting and minutes should be recorded accordingly. However, the actual interviews are protected and should be conducted in a closed session. Once the interviews are completed, the meeting will need to certify the closed session and enter back into an open meeting. Please be sure to carefully follow the closed meeting guidance (I can provide).

Director Elections: Filing deadline with your local registrar is **June 20**. Talk with your registrar about the requirements. Do not procrastinate. Helpful links:

[**Instructions for Potentiel Candidates**](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/candidatepac-info/becoming-a-candidate/)

[**Candidate Bulletin for Local and Constitutional Offices**](https://www.elections.virginia.gov/media/candidatesandpacs/2023-candidate-bulletins/2023-11-07_Gen_Bulletin_Local_Offices.pdf)

**VACS:**

**Before SL-8B and SL-8H practices receive payment or tax credit**: Producers must be fully implementing a current nutrient management plan prepared and signed by a certified nutrient management planner. The plan must address all agricultural production acres contained within the field(s) that contain the cover crop acreage. **Cost-Share payments or Tax Credits cannot be issued until a current nutrient management plan is on file**.

**Review carry-over procedures** on pages II-41 to 44 in the VACS manual. Board action carrying over this year’s eligible bmps is needed before the end of this fiscal year. Notify Sara Bottenfield by **May 15** of any bmps needing DCR approval prior to district approval.

**FY24 Secondary considerations** should be approved both by DCR (Sara Bottenfield) and the District BOD prior to approving 2024 VACS contracts. 2024 average cost lists need to be approved by district boards and submitted to Sara B. before any 2024 VACS contracts are approved. Training on secondary considerations and average cost lists will be held on 4/21.

**Miscellaneous:Cassi Camara** has been hired as an Environmental Education Specialist at DCR within the newly re-established Office of Environmental Education within DCR/DSWC.

Meeting information is on file.

**3-USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service Report –**Kelly Burke District Conservationist- gave the April report. ( Copy is filed with minutes).

Program Updates/ Deadlines:

The Rustburg, VA office is managing conservation on cropland, pasture and forest through the NRCS EQIP and CPS programs

* May 26, 2023 CSP Classic Ranking Deadline
* August 7, 2023 FSA Continuous-CRP Application Deadline
* August 15, 2023 Final EQIP Obligations Deadline
* Sept 8, 2023 Continuous-CRP Conservation Plan Deadline
* Sept 15, 2023 EQIP-IRA Obligations Deadline
* Sept 29, 2023 FY24 EQIP/CSP Application Ranking Deadline

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP):

14 EQIP Contracts:

* 3-Amherst Co
* 3-Appomattox, Co
* 15-Campbell Co

1 EQIP CIC Contract:

* 1-Campbell Co

45 EQIP Applications

* 14-Amherst Co
* 12-Appomattox, Co
* 23-Campbell Co

3 EQIP CIC Applications

* 1-Appomattox Co
* 2-Campbell Co

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)-

30 CSP-GCI (Grassland Conservation Initiative) Contracts:

* 10- Appomattox Co
* 20-Campbell Co

25 CSP Contracts:

* 4-Amherst Co
* 5-Appomattox Co
* 15-Campbell Co
* 2-Pittsylvania Co

2 CSP Applications:

* 2-Campbell Co

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP)

* None at this time.

Conservation Reserve Programs/ Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CRP/CREP)

* 36 Crep contracts
* 7 General CRP contracts
* 0 Continuous CRP contracts
* 12 CREP expiring 2023
* 6 General CRP expiring 2023

All trainings are on file.

NRCS letter provided for Stream Crossing Issue for SWCD practice number 10-19-0006. NRCS offered three options for the practice to be corrected, practice is pending a response from the property owner.

**4-Virginia Department of Forestry Report– Garrett Evans,**  Forester Amherst Co –verbal report was provided.

Garrett introduced himself as the new Forester for Amherst Co with Bill Perry moving to Nelson Co. Garrett stated that planting season has ended and new Cost Share will start soon.

**5-Virginia Cooperative Extension Report–**Bruce Jones, Appomattox VCE Agent–written report provided for April 2023.

1. Central Virginia Livestock Show – Lynchburg Livestock Market
2. Friday, May 5 – swine show (4:30 pm – 8 pm)
3. Saturday, May 6 – cattle, sheep, goats and sale (starts at 8 am with sale at 7 pm),
4. Agro-forestry Workshop – Charlotte County – May 11 ($10 fee) flier attached last month
5. Summer Soil Health Show and Tell Farm Visits – Bramble Hollow Farm; 2108 Hutchens Road, Montvale, VA  (10:30-2:00)
6. Central VA Crops Expo – August 18 – Hat Creek

Our meeting season is slowing down and workload transitioning to farm/site visits and on-farm research/demonstration plots.

**6-RELSWCD District Manager/Sr. Ag BMP Conservation Specialist Report:** Jonathan Wooldridge gave the April report (copy filed with minutes).

**Projects:**

The supply issues have slowed down field work . Working on plans and designs for new projects. Monitoring progress on projects under construction, meeting new producers that are interested in our programs. Working on estimates and maps for new projects, Nutrient Management plans and Soil testing.

**Practices and Conservation Plans for Board Approval:**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Contract** | **Instance** | **Co.** | **Est. Cost** | **CS amt.** | **Comp/Date** | **Fund** | **Practice** |
| 10-23-0009 | 507104 | AP/CB | $112,900.00 | $121,996.00  Includes:  $9,096.00 Buffer Payment | June 30, 2024 | PY23  CB  VACS | SL-6W/  110 |
| 10-23-0049 | 526444 | AM/CB | $90,707.75 | $102,419.75  Includes:  $11,712.00  Buffer Payment | June 30, 2024 | PY23 CB  VACS | SL-6W/  120 |
| 10-23-0050 | 526445 | AP/CB | $64,427.50 | $64,427.50  Includes:  $8,688.00  Buffer Payment | June 30, 2024 | PY23  CB  VACS | SL-6W/  110 |
| 10-23-0051 | 526446 | CAM/OCB | $714.20 | $714.20 | June 30,  2023 | PY23  OCB  VACS | NM-1A/  90 |
| 10-23-0052 | 526447 | CAM/OCB | $733.80 | $733.80 | June 30, 2023 | PY23  OCB  VACS | NM-1A/  90 |
| 10-23-0053 | 526448 | CAM/OCB | $711.60 | $711.60 | June 30, 2023 | PY23  OCB  VACS | NM-1A/  90 |

**Motion was made to approve all practices as printed above. (Payne Smith passed 7/0).**

**Watershed Dams:**

Watershed dams are doing well and are checked on as the rainfall events happen. Will be putting out advertisement for bids for the district maintenance contract in May.

**Spot Checks:**

9-21-2022: 7 spot checks in Appomattox and Campbell. Had two contracts that needed gravel tending around water troughs (complete), 1 needing fence tending to get cows out of the buffer and stream crossing rebuilt. Have been in contact with the landowner of the steam crossing and the rebuilding is still working with NRCS addressing that stream crossing issue

Meeting information is on file.

Hours/Mileage:

110hrs worked

1388 miles traveled

**7-RELSWCD Conservation Technician-** Dustin Woodall provided a written report for April (copy filed with minutes).

* Performed monthly duties
* Conducted field visits
* Conducted check-up on cover crop termination
* Assisted with Area V Envirothon
* Attended VFGC Fencing School
  + Plan to attend Perennial Stream Determination Workshop May 16, 2023. Requesting approval for overnight lodging due to distance (145 miles to James City County Library from office.

**Motion was made to approve overnight lodging for the Perennial Stream Determination Workshop. (Perrow , Barrett passed 7/0).**

**8-RELSWCD Conservation Education Specialist-** Katelin Savageprovided her April report. (copy filed with minutes).

April Activities:

* April 5th: 4-H Center Aquatic Ecology class (8 students; Rustburg Highschool)
* April 13th: 4-H Center Aquatic Ecology class (45 students; Buckingham Elementary)
* April 18th: Area V Envirothon (~100 participants)
* April 19th: Energy Resources Lesson at Yellow Branch Elementary (82 students)
* April 20th and 21st: Trout in a Classroom Field Trip (Amherst Middle School ~80 students)
* April 24th: 4-H Center Life Cycles/Macro Lesson (Rustburg Elementary 64 Students)
* April 26th: Appomattox Library Storytime (20 participants)

Upcoming Activities:

* April 29th: Enviroscape with Campbell County Girl Scouts at Camp Sacagawea

Notes: The education committee reviewed three scholarship applications and will discuss during committee report. The committee also reviewed the draft grant application and advertising for the program will begin in the upcoming months. The Envirothon was a great event and thank you to Bonnie and Doug for volunteering. Halifax County High School was the overall winner followed by Buckingham and Cumberland in 2nd and 3rd place. All three teams will compete at the state Envirothon on May 21st-22nd. Cindy and I have volunteered to assist with the state Envirothon at VSU. The underground classroom trailer project is still estimated to be completed in the fall.

**9-RELSWCD Office Administrator Report–**Cindy Miller gave her April report.(copy filed with minutes).

Monthly duties are kept up to date.

Additional duties for April 2023

* Assisted Katelin with activities as needed.
* Processed and submitted Quarterly tax reports.
* Completed and submitted attachment E to Mark Hollberg.
* Assisted with preparing documents for the Personnel and Budget & Finance Committee meeting.
* Prepare draft FY 2023 Budget.
* The Envirothon Competition was held on April 18th at Holliday Lake Education Center with our District hosting along with the Peaks of Otter District. Several Districts helped us with the event. Several District had volunteers and Directors assist, REL was able to get help from Bonnie, Doug and Barbara Miller.
* The trailer for the Underground classroom should be ready for pickup before the end of the first week of May. At that time we will deliver it to Gropen in Charlotteville VA for the graphics to be started.
* Coordinated the pick up of the computer tower with NRCS and Kelly.
* Coordinated getting the bathroom floors and hall stripped and rewaxed for the landlord.
* Registered team for Golf Tournament for Wednesday May 3, 2023 10 am located at Montpelier, Virginia .
* Registered Jonathan and I for the Admin/ Director Training for Tuesday May 9th.

Meeting information is on file.

Our next Board of Directors meeting will be on Thursday, May 25, 2023 at 6 p.m.

**10-Timberlake WID-**verbalupdate provided by Doug Perrow.

The budget was approved by the state and a formal letter has been received.

The Timberlake Board discussed plans for the next 5 years and ideas to help maintain the lake at their last Board meeting.

**REPORT OF COMMITTEES:**

**Personnel Committee:** Minutes were reviewed from the Personnel Committee meetingfrom April 26, 2023( meeting minutes are on file at the District Office). Personnel Poicy recommendation was to change Bereavement days from 2 days to 3 days. Job descriptions were reviewed for DM Conservation Specialist, Education Specialist and Office Administrator, with no changes recommended. Annual review for DM Conservation Specialist with recommendation of 5% increase, Office Administrator with recommendation of 5% increase and 6 month review for Education Specialist with recommendation of 5% increase all to be increased on July 1, 2023. Education Specialist recommendation for a $2500 bonus to be paid on next payroll.

**Motion was made to approve all recommendations as made by the Personnel Committee (Perrow, Payne passed 7/0).**

**Education Committee:** Minutes were reviewed from the Education Committee meeting from April 26, 2023( meeting minutes are on file at the District Office). Education Committee recommended the following Scholarship applicants to receive $2000 each; Nathan Neblett and Micah Johnson. With Nathan Neblett’s application to be forwarded to VASWCD to be considered for an additional $1000 in Scholarship funds.

**Motion was made to approve all recommendations as made by the Education Committee (Perrow, Smith passed 7/0).**

**Budget & Finance Committee:** Minutes were reviewed from the Budget & Finance Committee meeting from April 26, 2023 ( meeting minutes are on file at the District Office).The committee completed the annual review of the Credit Card Policy, Annual Plan of Work, Strategic Plan, the Check Signing Policy, the Purchasing Policy, the Employee/ Director Expense Reimbursement Policy and the FOIA Request Fee Schedule. Desktop Procedures for District Fiscal Operations reviewed with no changes made. The Draft budget for FY 2023/2024 was reviewed and recommendations were made to increase the training budget line for each employee by $1000 each. Inventory list was reviewed and all updates have been made.

**Motion was made to approve recommendations as listed. (Perrow/ Barrett passed 7/0).**

**UNFINISHED BUSINESS– None**

**NEW BUSINESS- None**

**PUBLIC COMMENT - None**

**ANNOUNCEMENTS – None**

**ADJOURNMENT -** The Chairman adjourned the meetingat 6:49 p.m.**Approved(Barrett/ Perrow 7/0)**

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Brandon Schmitt,Assistant Chairman Cindy Miller, Office Administrator