

Franklin County NRCD Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

June 6, 2019

In attendance: Daton Fleury, Richard Noel, Brodie Haenke, Jeannie Bartlett, Liza Lemieux, Eileen Trudell

50 S. Main St., St. Albans, VT 05478

minutes recorded by Jeannie Bartlett

Minutes:

9:46 Meeting called to order. Quorum established.

Discussion and showed pictures of Paradee planting project in Stowe that the District organized. Planting included not only riparian stream-side area, but also shade trees in their pastures, forage trees, and crop trees. Staff expressed interest in more diverse projects like that.

Discussion and showed pictures of District nutrient management agricultural assistance. Brodie and Liza followed-up with someone who took a farmer who took the class last winter to help with record-keeping for the first time, implementing the NMP, and weighing the manure spreader. First time the staff had weighed a manure spreader and it was easy to do. They found the spreader held about half as much manure as they thought it did, which substantially changes his Plan.

Staff noted that the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP) is back in Vermont. Discussion of farms that have sold or are selling their cows. Discussion of Pleasant Valley Farms' new commodity feed shed.

Discussion of water quality sampling programs. Liza has been going out three times every other week for tile drain monitoring, Hungerford Brook, Black Creek and Deer Brook.

Discussion and showed pictures of stream restoration projects. Engineer should have concept designs to share with landowner next week. Brodie and NRCS staff conducted survey. Stream was straightened in 1995 and is now readjusting. Purpose of project is to help stream regain a more natural state and remove the sediment to be spread back in fields rather than washed into waterways. Hope that once we execute this project, we will be more prepared to do similar projects that require this kind of active restoration.

Discussion and showed pictures of stream connectivity dam removal project at Johnson's Mill Dam in Bakersfield. Aging, unmaintained infrastructure that serves no purpose, and the landowner wants the dam removed. Goal of our partners at Fish and Wildlife is to restore fish passage, but we don't know for sure that fish passage will not be blocked by natural bedrock underlying the dam. Initial phase of project is for engineers to determine whether fish passage will be possible if the dam is removed. It's also a water quality project, because if the dam fails in the next decades, the stream will rapidly readjust and lose a huge volume of sediment downstream. Richard reports that the mill was a sawmill, and the pond used for floating logs.

Discussion and showed pictures of tree sale. Richard noted that the pickup day flowed much better, because of Jeannie learning from past years and having so many more volunteers for our prep days. Jeannie reviewed which nurseries we get our trees from, and new offerings of mushrooms and hops.

Discussion of tire dumping and need for tire sales operations to take back tires free of charge to mitigate dumping. Farms no longer need tires to cover their bunks, because farms are going out and the remaining ones have the tires they need. Small towns and communities are very frustrated with tire dumping and towns having to pay to dispose of them. There is a need for state legislation to avoid dumping.

Discussion of Lyme disease. Reminder to staff to wear long sleeves and bug spray.

10:35 Brodie and Liza left for soil sampling

10:36 Discussion of Jeannie's planned departure from the District sometime in the summer or fall of 2020. That will make four years she has served as the District Manager. She will be leaving so that she can gain new perspectives and be closer to her family. She is invested in planning for her succession in a way that best builds on the work she has done to

develop meaningful programs for the District. Supervisors agree, and actively request her assistance in hiring her replacement. All parties express the aspiration that the District have enough funds to hire a new District Manager before Jeannie leaves, so that there can be overlap and on the job training. That discussion will continue as the bookkeeper provides more detailed financial reports.

10:50 Review minutes from 4/4/2019. Richard makes a motion to accept minutes as printed, Eileen seconds. Approved.

10:52 Jeannie draws attention to June/July e-newsletter for review.

10:55 Review of financial reports from S&D Consulting. Richard proposes that bookkeeper meet with Board once a year; Jeannie proposed the August meeting to review previous fiscal year.

11:03 Richard makes a motion to approve the financial reports as printed, Eileen seconds. Approved.

11:04 Discussion of birds. Daton reports that he sees less killdeer and songbirds, and Richard speculates that it's because of intensive hay harvest and small buffers in Daton's neighborhood. Richard reports birds he has not seen before frequently on his former farm.

11:08 Jeannie asks that the Supervisors consider paying out on paid leave she accrued but did not spend. She took leave that was unpaid early in this fiscal year, before there was a paid leave policy. Supervisors asked for information on where funds for this payment might come, and Jeannie supplied that the tree sale earned \$3,700 in net revenue and that they are coming under budget in at least one grant. Richard makes a motion to pay Jeannie this accrued paid leave that she took unpaid from the summer of 2018 in the amount of \$1620. Eileen seconds, approved.

11:18 Richard reports from May Council meeting. Districts will be updating our Memorandums of Understanding with the Agency of Agriculture and USDA-NRCS. The agreements will document how many seats and workstations we have, and what work we're doing that furthers the NRCS mission. Council received some excellent grant awards from the State that the Districts will be able to apply to use. Richard learned from his Planning Zone meeting that a farm in Highgate applied to NRCS for a methane digester.

11:25 Discussion of mud on the roads. Discussion of decommissioning pits when farms sell cows. Daton reports that there's no fence around the new St. Pierre pit, and that a lot of silage must be coming out of the bunkers since he harvested moist spring hay.

11:42 Discussion of tile drain contract and reasons for terminating subcontract with Otter Creek. Discussion of possible additional tile drain sites to monitor in Franklin County.

11:47 Shared application materials from ECO* AmeriCorps applicant for 2019-2020 Allie Dinwiddie.

11:50 Next meeting set for Thursday, August 1, 9:30am.

11:52 Meeting adjourned.

Follow up:

- ✓ Jeannie will bring up tire issue to other Districts and possibly state representatives.
- ✓ Invite Steve Mengel, bookkeeper, to August meeting.
- ✓ Look into manure pit decommissioning as an NRCS practice.
- Jeannie will talk to Phil about his farm, as well as learn about Jonathan Branon, Paradis, and others who are selling their cows. Perhaps direct outreach efforts to former-farmer landlords.
- Jeannie will look into possible tile drain sampling on Ron Machia's farmland on Russel Rd.