

May 24, 2023

MINUTES

Watauga Soil & Water Conservation District

971 West King Street, Boone NC 28607

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Present:

Denny Norris - Chair

Chris Hughes – by phone

Bill Moretz

Todd Combs

Amber Shirley

Jennifer Hanifan

Mikey Woodie

Michelle Kasey

Katie Krogmeyer

Denny Norris called meeting to order at 7:56 am.

Approval of the minutes- Chris Hughes made a motion to accept, Bill Moretz 2nd.
Minutes accepted.

Approval of the agenda- Bill Moretz made a motion to accept, Todd Combs 2nd.
Agenda accepted.

Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder:

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every board member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict. Does any board member have any conflicts of interest or appearances of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the board today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearances of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.

Katie Krogmeyer, NRCS

Gave presentation on Restoration of Green Valley Park Tributary & Riverbank.

Ms. Krogmeyer requested a partnership between New River Conservancy and

Watauga County Soil & Water, DEQ requests a government entity as a sponsor to

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release funds for the project. Project includes Floodplain restoration, designing cross vanes and resloping of the unnamed tributary. Also includes treatment of invasive plants and adding native plants. They are also partnering with New River Soil & Water in Ashe County. This partnership requires a Resolution Sheet. Ms. Krogmeyer stated that she can create a MOU for the partnership stating that Watauga County Soil & Water will not be held responsible for future repairs or maintenance of the area. Watauga County Soil & Water will be the applicant and New River Conservancy will do the project management and write the grant. Chris Hughes made a motion to approve contingent on no future financial responsibilities. Bill Moretz 2nd. Partnership was approved. Rick McSwain stated that it is a requirement that the funds come through a government entity.

Denny Norris stated that our new Board Member, Jennifer Hanifan was sworn in this week after being approved last Wednesday at the Soil & Water Commission meeting in Wilmington, NC last week.

District Report - Mikey Woodie

- Taught about soil issues and conservation at ASU Soil Forum
- Getting closer to obtaining JAA for livestock exclusion systems
- Attended Conservation Fundamentals Training May 8-12

New Applications: None

Contracts that need approval:

95-2023-001 Scott Jensen – Spring development, tanks, HUAP, fencing

Bill Moretz made a motion to approve the Jensen contract, Todd Combs 2nd. Contract was approved.

95-2023-501 Valle Crucis Community Park- Grassed swales, backyard rain garden, storm water wetland

Chris Hughes made a motion to approve, Bill Moretz 2nd. Contract was approved.

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Ag Cost Share - updates

95-2021-003/95-2023-004 Michael Greene - Feed pad, heavy use area protection, Ag Road repair, diversion, livestock exclusion fencing. Mr. Greene requests an extension for the 2021 contract. Engineers were delayed for over a year, then took another 6 weeks to rework the project with a new location for feed pad, then another 3-month delay by engineer. Denny Norris – Has it been 2 or 3 years? If 3 years, it has to go to the State Commission. Chris Hughes stated that the state has a backlog of engineering. Rick McSwain asked if 1/3 of the project has been completed. Mikey Woodie stated that no, the project got approved by the division. Rick McSwain stated that Mr. Greene should purchase the fencing materials. Chris Hughes made a motion to send the contract to the State requesting an extension. Bill Moretz 2nd. Motion carried.

95-2021-004 Kris Kuhn Cooperator requests extension. Amber Shirley state that they were hoping to start in August, but having a hard time finding culvert material. Denny Norris asked what type of farming? Ms. Shirley stated that they had planted 2000 Christmas trees. The contractors that had been hired originally didn't agree with the design for the broad base dips and caused a delay. Rick McSwain suggested that they purchase the geotextile, Class 2 non-woven material for the project prior to asking for an extension from the State. Todd combs made a motion to send the contract to the State requesting an extension. Bill Moretz 2nd. Motion carried.

95-2022-005 Dale Cornette – Ag Road Repair Construction complete as of 5/19/23.

95-2022-007 Jessica Miller – Stream crossing/well & pump, water tanks, exclusion fencing. Ms. Miller requests an extension of the 1/3 completion date. Well company now saying June or later. Bill Moretz made a motion to give extension on 1/3 completion date. Todd Combs 2nd Motion carried.

95-2023-001 Scott and Dawn Jensen – Spring development contract to be submitted to the State.

Ag Wrap

95-2022-801 Genevieve Mente - Yadkin Well construction scheduled for August – September.

95-2023-801 Daniel Brown – Survey for spring development is complete. Need signed contract.

Green Valley Park – DOT installed some rock – more rock to be delivered this week.

STRAP:

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Elk Creek Section 1 – Waiting on landowner to sign contract. Chris Hughes suggested we send contract by registered mail to have proof he received it along with a self-addressed stamped envelope.

Elk Creek Section 2 – Compete. RFP sent to State.

Elk Creek Section 3 – Work to begin this week.

Stone Mtn Branch – Woodie has met with all but one landowner. This small creek floods a few farms.

Impaired and Impacted Survey – Mikey Woodie – Survey was submitted to the Board by email for review. No changes were needed. Need projects to keep funding.

Spot checks – Mikey Woodie – Need a supervisor on each spot check. Jennifer Hanifan stated that she would go to learn about our projects. Denny Norris stated that he would help if Mrs. Hanifan couldn't go. Mikey Woodie mentioned that a spot check on Charles Norris's project reflected that a supplemental project and design may be needed.

Strategic Plan – Mikey Woodie – A copy of the draft was given to each Board member to review. Proposed changes were highlighted in yellow. The highlighted green areas were questions for the Board. Additional advertising of our programs is needed. Mrs. Woodie stated she could use more content for the Instagram page.

There is also a question about partial payments. If a BMP is finished, could the policy be changed to pay for that BMP and not be held up for the completion of the project.

Denny Norris asked how most of the counties do it? Bill Moretz suggested setting up the policy as a percent like 2/3. Mikey Woodie asked if we could do it case by case.

Denny Norris suggested that if the project is a small amount, then no partial payment.

Todd Combs suggested that the policy be west up as 2/3 if the project is \$10,000 or more.

Denny Norris asked if there have been any problems with the ranking forms?

Mikey Woodie stated that there have been no problems to date. Chris Hughes made a motion to approve the Strategic Plan with changes. Todd Combs 2nd. Strategic Plan was approved. Chris Hughes requested that once the plan has been submitted that Mrs. Woodie send a copy to the board members.

NRCS Report – David Tucker – No report – not in attendance

Division Report – Rick McSwain - McSwain stated that he has had multiple

questions regarding how and when to advertise meetings and the rules around Closed Session meetings. He has made a guide for this and will be sending out.

There are also changes coming. Vernon Cox is retiring. McSwain has been asked

to take Areas 3 & 8. He will continue to cover Area 2. McSwain and David

Williams to be out on vacation – contact Ralston James (Piedmont Region

Coordinator) with any issues or questions.

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RC&D: Chris Hughes No report for RC&D

Chris Hughes – NCASWCD Annual Meeting will be in Raleigh, NC; THE NACD SE meeting will be August 6-8th in Savannah GA. Preregistration is open at a discounted rate.

Admin Report:

Michelle Kasey – CET September 18-21, 2023 Greensboro, NC

Kasey asked board if permission was needed to attend and make reservations in advance. Bill Moretz made a motion to allow Kasey and Woodie to attend CET and make reservations in advance. Todd Combs 2nd. Permission was granted.

Meeting was adjourned at 10am.

Next meeting will be June 28, 2023

Minutes submitted by:



Signed

6-28-23

Dated

Denny Norris, Chair