

November 15, 2023

MINUTES

Watauga Soil & Water Conservation District

971 West King Street, Boone NC 28607

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Present:

Denny Norris - Chair

Bill Moretz

Todd Combs

Jennifer Hanifan

Chris Hughes

Michelle Kasey

Mikey Woodie

Alan Walker

Daphne Cartner

John Beck

Dale Evans

Denny Norris called meeting to order at 7:56 a.m.

Denny Norris opened the meeting in prayer.

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

Approval of the agenda- Denny Norris moved Chris Hughes RC&D report to after Alan Walker – to allow him to get to Commission meeting on time. 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.

Statement of Professionalism:

Supervisors are reminded of their responsibility to uphold the laws of the United States and North Carolina and their constitutions. Business is to be conducted in a professional manner, free of bias, of interactions that violate policies or individual liberties and that address business issues only. Interactions are to be held with integrity, courtesy, honesty and in compliance with the highest ethical standards.

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Alan Walker, Research Institute – RI would like to partner with Watauga County Soil & Water on a stream project with EQUIP. It would consist of 4600' of the Watauga River and 8000' of Baird Creek. It would be around \$460,000 with a 60/40 split between Federal and State funding. The cooperator is Henry Reece. The Resolution would be the same as Vanderpool and RI would also need a Conflict-of-Interest form signed by the Board Chair. Chris Hughes made a motion to partner with RI and Jennifer Hanifan 2nd the Motion. Motion carried.

Mr. Walker also stated that the Vanderpool Spring Development construction to begin after the Trout moratorium in April.

RC&D Report – Chris Hughes – The RC&D has not met since our last meeting, but they did sponsor the Farm City Banquet. They are also partnering with the District on the Valle Crucis Park project.

Mr. Hughes stated that The Soil & Water Commission is meeting in Watauga County at 9:00am today for the first time.

Mr. Hughes stated that the Commission had a tour of De La Cruz farm on November 14th followed by a talk by James Wilkes, a professor at Appalachian State University about his Bee Keeping Software. The 2nd Tour after lunch will be to Joey Clawson's Christmas tree farm. Dinner will be at 4:30 at the Dan'l Boone Inn with a work session in the Watauga County Commissioner's room in the County Building. He thanked the staff and Jennifer Hanifan for everyone's help with this.

District Report - Mikey Woodie

New Applications: ACSP – Adriana Saenz Ms. Saenz has applied for Stream restoration, feeding areas, watering tanks and heavy use area protection. Some of these won't meet our requirements. Ms. Saenz has also applied with NRCS. Bill Moretz made a motion to accept the application, Todd Combs 2nd the motion. Application was approved.

Contracts needing approval: none

Ag Cost Share:

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95-2021-003 & 95-2023-004 Michael Greene – Fence and tank to be installed soon, pipeline and tank are complete.

95-2021-004 Chris Kuhn - Cooperator injured, preconstruction meeting rescheduled. Contract expires this summer.

95-2022-007 Jessica Miller – Waiting on well drilling. Andrew Cox helping with stream crossing.

95-2023-001 Scott Jensen – Construction has not yet begun.

95-2023-003 Ronnie Joe Brown – Waiting on well pre-construction meeting.

95-2023-006 Bart & Robina Walker – Need to stake out watering tanks.

Ag Wrap:

95-2022-801 Genevieve Mente – Waiting for pump installation.

95-2023-801 Daniel Brown – Constuction complete, RPF is ready for approval. Chris Hughes made a motion to approve for payment, Bill Moretz 2nd the motion. Request for payment approved.

CCAP:

95-2022-502 Blue Ridge Conservancy – Waiting on preliminary design from engineers.

95-2023-501 Valle Crucis Park – Preliminary design not complete and there are permitting issues.

StRAP

Construction on Elk Creek Section 3 – Complete; submitted RPP for project.

Construction on Elk Creek Section 1 – To begin late November. Have told Contractor that this has to be complete by 12/31/23.

Mikey Woodie stated that the StRAP application period is from November 27th, 2023 to February 9th, 2024.

Stone Mountain Branch – Bidding complete. Woodie would like permission to take to the County Commissioners for approval. Bill Moretz made a motion to allow Woodie to take before the Commissioners. Chris Hughes 2nd the motion. Motion carried. Woodie to take bids to County Commissioners for approval on the December 5th Commission meeting.

John Beck – Review of old contracts revealed a farm where the Cooperator has died and the property was sold in 5-acre plots. A lot of these have turned up

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lately and we are requesting guidance from the Attorney General on how to handle.

Denny Norris asked how to make sure we are covered going forward with all the land transfers here. Part of this farm is still in existence.

John Beck stated that we will need more information before a discussion can take place.

NRCS Report – None

Division Report – Rick McSwain – Interviews for Area 2 position are in Boone today at noon in Ag Building.

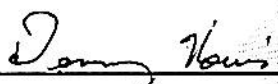
Admin Report: Michelle Kasey

Poster Contest is underway with students from Virtual Academy, Imagine Bilingual and the public schools. Deadline is December 12th.

Meeting was adjourned at 8:41am.

Next meeting will be January 24, 2024

Minutes submitted by: Michelle Kasey

	Signed	1-24-24	Dated
Denny Norris, Chair			