

## Franklin County NRCB Board of Supervisors Meeting Minutes

February 27, 2025

In Attendance: Lauren Weston (District Manager), Orenna Brand (Community Engagement Coordinator & Field Technician), Richard Noel (Chair), Vicky Drew (Supervisor – on Zoom), Lynda Ulrich (Supervisor – on Zoom), Molly Magnan (Supervisor), Walter Hutcheson (Prospective Associate Board Member), Kent Henderson (Prospective Associate Board Member)

Conducted at 431 Franklin Park West, Suite 100a, St. Albans and on Zoom  
Minutes recorded by Orenna Brand

*The written minutes are a synopsis of the discussion at the meeting. Motions are as stated. Minutes will be subject to correction by the Board. Changes, if any, will be recorded in the minutes of the next meeting of the Board.*

### Minutes:

11:04: Meeting called to order. Quorum present.

11:05: Prospective Associate Supervisor Walter Hutcheson introduces himself.

11:07: Richard Noel and Lauren Weston share updates from attending VACD/NRCB Advocacy Day at the Vermont Statehouse.

11:20: Vicky Drew shares VACD updates.

- Michelle Monroe was hired to replace Jill Arace as Executive Director, starting next week. Jill Arace will work another month to help with transition.
- Capacity Building Committee and strategic consultant results will be shared next month.

11:27: Supervisors review minutes from January 30th, 2025, meeting. Molly Magnan makes motion to accept meeting minutes. Dan Pipes seconds. All in favor, motion carries.

11:29: Kent Henderson enters.

11:30: Lauren Weston reviews FY25 Financials to Date. Board accepts.

- Vicky Drew and Lauren Weston applied for a credit card for FCNRCB.
- Lauren Weston and Orenna Brand are planning to update financial policies after completing WUV Clean Water Work Force Capacity Building Grantee Financial Management Training Series.

11:37: Attendees do a round of introductions and review of board procedures.

11:46: Lauren Weston discusses applying to host a VHCB or ECO AmeriCorps member. Dan Pipes makes a motion to approve application to ECO AmeriCorps program; Vicky Drew seconds, all approve, motion carries.

- Cost to District: ~\$11k for 12 months of service.
- Supervisors agree it is a good contingency plan in case other paid positions at the District end given unknown around existing contracts.
- Kent Henderson offers that he has had great experiences hosting ECO AmeriCorps members for the last 10 years.

- Mel Auffredou will be the main supervisor.

11:56: Orenna Brand presents proposals received for Giddings Brook Riparian Buffer Planting project. Lynda Ulrich makes a motion to select Redstart Natural Resource Management Vicky Drew seconds; all in favor; motion carries.

11:50: Lauren Weston shares impacts of federal funding and executive orders to NRCS on behalf of Sarah Larose, NRCS District Conservationist.

- working on FY25 planning, pre approvals are trickling in.
- Existing contracts with IRA funds payments can now be made as well as modifications.
- other IRA funding on hold still
- NRCS Program Assistant one of the many probationary employees terminated, figuring out how to manage that workload and keep office running smoothly
- working on FY26 Local Funding Pool
- discussing and preparing for FY26.

12:10: Orenna Brand presents Local-Led Conservation Survey results.

- Vicky Drew inquires about board involvement. Lauren Weston will review completed Local-Led findings at next board meeting.

12:27: Richard Noel shares updates from NRCC Finance Committee meeting.

- Committee is working on a conflict-of-interest policy.
- FCNRCD One-Time Core Services award was recalculated.

12:29: Supervisors discuss impacts of federal funding and executive orders to the District.

- How does FCNRCD position itself to be less impacted by administration changes? Is there a way to minimize risk?
  - o Diversify funding streams, applying for foundation grants
  - o Be less person dependent, more systems dependent
  - o Focus on maintaining rather than expanding
- Lauren Weston shares that there is added uncertainty because even contracted funds are not guaranteed.
  - o May explore incorporating as non-profit in the future to be able to apply for foundation grants (fiscal sponsorship).
  - o Still considering buying a building and generating income as landlord
- How will the District reduce its workforce if it comes to that? Need to plan for the worst.
  - o Lauren will prepare a document listing which grants each employee is funded by.

12:40: Lynda Ulrich exits.

12:50: Next FCNRCD Board Meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 19th, 2025, from 3-5pm at 431 Franklin Park West, Suite 100a, St. Albans, VT.

- Next meeting will focus on potential board revisioning activities.

12:56: Lauren Weston shares updates on potential subcontract with Franklin Watershed Committee.

- Activities: Lake Wise assessments, Stream Wise assessments, running boat greeter program (cleaning), water quality sampling at 11 sites around the lake, admin tasks, education/outreach tasks.
- Lauren Weston to list pros, cons, and concerns for next board meeting. Supervisors want to examine the risk more closely. Consider reaching out to partners to get their perspective.

1:07: Lauren Weston shares upcoming events/meetings.

- Land and Water Conversations with Abenaki community:
  - o Friday, March 14th, 2025 - 6pm to 8pm
  - o Friday, April 18th, 2025 - 6pm to 8pm
- Hosted by VAAF: Future of Dairy Conversations
  - o March 7th 1-3 pm, St Albans City Hall
  - o April 17th 1-3 pm, St Albans City Hall
- Tree Plantings: April 8, April 15, April 16, April 19, April 22
- Tree Sale Sorting: April 28 – May 1

1:10: Supervisors enter executive session.

1:20: Supervisors exit executive session.

1:20: Vicky Drew makes motion to adjourn. Dan Pipes second. All in favor, motion carries.