

LOUDOUN SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS' MEETING
750 Miller Drive, SE., Suite F-3, Leesburg, VA 20175

Wednesday, March 20, 2024

The meeting was called to order at 4:02 p.m. by Chairman James Christian. Attending: JAMES CHRISTIAN, CHAIRMAN; UZMA RASHEED, VICE CHAIR; PETER R. HOLDEN, STUART VERMAAK, DIRECTORS; and Barbara Christian, Marina Schumacher, Robin Bartok, and Derrick Clarke, Associate Directors; Suzanne Brown, Patricia McIlvaine, Jay Frankenfield, Chris Van Vlack, Jennifer Venable, Kay Powell, Fletcher Dilldine, STAFF; Debbie Cross, DCR and David Ward, B&D; Lindsey Long, VDOF; Guest: Amy Ulland, Karen Jimenez

Karen Jimenez, YCLI student: Salt watch in Courtland Rural Village.

Karen presented on the impacts of salt and testing chloride in the water after the road has been treated. Her study included neighborhood road observations, testing data, the HOA use of sand instead of salt, and the review of site observations. There were 12 sites without spikes (no stormwater draining into these sites). Sites with spikes were affected by outfall and trash. Her study showed that brine is a smarter choice, and other salting alternatives. Karen plans to report to the town on large salt piles on local roads, will attend SEAS event, and write an article about the project.

ACTION ITEMS:

♦1) **Approval of Minutes:** (Distributed for review prior to the meeting).

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the February 8th and March 1st District board meetings. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

♦2) **Treasurer's Report:**

The Finance Committee provided an update on District accounts. A motion was made to approve the Finance Committee report and file for audit. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).

Reports/Actions: Committee Reports

♦3) **Technical Review Committee**

a) VA Ag BMP Cost-Share Program and Ag BMP Tax Credit Program

Item 1: A motion was made to approve the Technical Review Minutes from 3/13/24. Approved as presented. (Vermaak-Rasheed, 4-0).

Item 2: A motion was made to approve 14 PY24 state cost share instances totaling: \$506,294.23 and 9 related conservation plans. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

Item 3: A motion was made to approve 1 VACS tax credit totaling \$7,877.74. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

Item 4: A motion was made to approve 1 County cost-share instance and 1 County funded floodplain study totaling \$5,131.69. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

Item 5: A motion was made to approve 6 Pet Waste Stations projects totaling \$28,410.28. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

As of today, Loudoun has achieved over 90% allocation goal for FY24 VACS cost share.

♦4) **Finance Committee**

a) Committee Mtg. Minutes 2-08-24

A motion was made to approve the Finance Committee meeting minutes from 2/08/24. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).

5) **Executive Committee**

No report.

◆6) **Personnel Committee**

Tabled to the end of the meeting for closed session.

◆7) **District Operations - Action Items**

a) **YCLI Student Stipend**

Loudoun's YCLI student, Rachel Jimenez is working on a project focusing on road salt and water quality. She received a \$100 grant from VASWCD and \$150 grant from the District. She is requesting additional funding in the amount of \$220 to perform additional tests. **Total request: \$220. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).**

b) **Area II Spring Meeting**

The Area II Spring meeting will be held on April 17th at Grelen Nursery in Somerset, VA. Registration for the event starts at 8:30, with the meeting starting at 9 a.m. There will be Phase II Director training in the afternoon. **A motion was made to approved attendance for Directors, Associate Directors and staff at this meeting, to include lodging (if needed). Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).**

c) **VASWCD Education Foundation**

The VASWCD Education Foundation will hold a 'Fore Charity' Golf Tournament on Wednesday, May 8th at The Hollows Golf Course located in Montpelier, Virginia. Fundraising for the Foundation is the sole reason environmental education programs such as Envirothon, Youth Conservation Camp, scholarships, teacher workshops, district training opportunities and classroom outreach activities/events across the Commonwealth are possible. The Foundation is dedicated to creating a way to enable individuals, corporations, foundations, and others to participate in the conservation of the natural resource base of the Commonwealth. Participation and donations to the VASWCD Educational Foundation are not only tax deductible but a means of outreach and networking while assisting Foundation efforts of sharing the word of conservation with our next generation. A motion was made to sponsor the event at the tournament level. **Total request: \$500. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).**

d) **Staff Training Request**

Stephanie DeNicola of Culpeper Soil & Water Conservation District is organizing a trip for students, teachers, Master Naturalists, and SWCD staff to visit Port Isobel Island in the Chesapeake Bay. In nearly 20 years of working for Culpeper, Stephanie has taken well over 300 students on exciting Bay trips with her. Plans for this year's trip include water quality testing, baiting crab pots, visiting the Tangier museum, oyster dredging, and much more. We will have the opportunity to meet with local watermen who can trace their families back in the area to the 1600's. This trip will be a wonderful environmental and cultural experience for all involved.

The trip will start on June 6th and ends on June 8th. The cost is \$225 per person and includes all activities, 4 meals, and lodging for two nights. **A motion was made to approve this staff training request for Conservation Specialist, Kay Powell. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).**

e) **Education Expense**

Jennifer has recently received nitrate test kits from the Izaak Walton League of America (IWLA) for stream monitoring of a local stream that is below a current cost share project. This is a project the interns will participate in with staff over the summer. The IWLA provided these kits at no cost but do seek donations in kind. Staff suggest a \$50 donation to the IWLA. **Total Request: \$50. Approved as presented. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0).**

f) Event Sponsorship

Associate Director Clarke is making a formal request for \$500.00 to support the Healing House Event being held at Harmony Hall in Hamilton, Virginia on April 12th.

This event will be used to educate and reach out to our community on the benefits of being aware and how to apply conservation measures for soil and water resources which are made available through LSWCD educational and technical programs. He will also be promoting the benefits of composting and the support of local farmers and business owners.

This event will be followed the next day, April 13th by a program at Oatlands "Amplifying Indigenous Women's Perspectives – for Healthy Soil and Water". The program will include presentations, panel discussion, music, and educational booths. **A motion was made to sponsor the event, up to \$1,000. Approved as presented. (Holden-Vermaak, 4-0).**

g) LIRA Project

At the last District Board meeting, the Board indicated the need to discuss the project with staff and evaluate current staff workload. A letter of support was provided to LIRA with the intent to vote at the 3/20/24 meeting in regards to the District agreeing to be the financial agent for the \$250,000 provided by Loudoun County for the LIRA project. Current staff have shown a great deal of interest in working on the project. From an administrative perspective, the District is well equipped to handle the financial responsibilities associated with this type of project and have a proven track record of managing this type of grants. **A motion was made to serve as the financial agent for the \$250,000 provided by the Loudoun County Government for the initial phase of the LIRA project. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 3-0, 1 abstention).**

h) Meeting Date Change

The June meeting date is one we frequently move to a little later in the month to accommodate year-end wrap up for administrative and cost-share items. A motion was made to move the June Board meeting from Thursday, June 13th to Thursday, June 20th. This will also allow us to publicize the new date early on our website. **A motion was made to move the June '24 Board meeting from June 13 to June 20. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).**

Reports: Cooperating Agencies/Entities

DCR-Division of Soil & Water Conservation– Debbie Cross, Conservation District Coordinator

(Report distributed prior to the meeting)

Administrative/Operations: Phase II Director Orientation will be held on 4/17 in the afternoon. *** Quarterly reports are due by 4/15 *** Nominations for Extension Agent appointments will go to the VSWCB in September 2024. *** The District is on target for Grant deliverables. *** The Budget has gone to the Governors office and is expected to be signed by 4/17. **AG & Cost Share:** VACS Program Best Management Practices (BMPs), such as cover crop and animal waste, require that a Nutrient Management Plan be prepared and signed by a certified nutrient management planner before such BMPs can be certified as completed and paid.*** Loudoun has planned their outreach event this spring in partnership with NVSWCD. *** **Upcoming dates to remember:** VSWCB meeting on 3/27; VASWCD quarterly board meeting will be held 4/3 in Glen Allen; Area II Spring meeting on 4/17 at Grelen Nursery in Somerset, VA, hosted by Culpeper SWCD; VSWCB meets again at Twin Lakes State Park on 4/22; 4/30 the VASWCD will host a Zoom call "Conservation Chat" for Directors. *** VACS training on 6/13 (9-12) or 6/18 (1-4). See report for additional dates.

USDA-NRCS (Casey James)(Absent)

(Report distributed prior to the meeting).

Virginia Department of Forestry-VDOF (Lindsey Long)

It's fire season again, and no burning before 4 p.m. is allowed. *** Tree seedlings are in and available, let Lindsey know if you need seedlings. *** VDOF is partnering with certain nurseries on a "Throwing Shade" program. They will offer a 25% off discount off of \$25 or more for native plants.*** Lindsey updated on the success of the Callaway Pear Replacement program for this year.

Virginia Cooperative Extension: (Stuart Vermaak)

Extension Agent Beth Sastre is partnering with LIRA for the “Scrape the Grape” program to scrape egg masses of Spotted Lanternfly. *** Extension won the Environmental Excellence Award from the Loudoun Environmental Commission. Extension partnered with Parks and Rec to build raised gravel beds. There are currently gravel beds at Claude Moore and at Franklin Park. The saplings that were raised in the beds will eventually go to the parks for planting.

Loudoun County Building and Development (David Ward)

Distributed 15th Annual Water Resources Monitoring Data Report. This document provides data not analysis. *** Loudoun County has a great deal of historical groundwater data.

Reports/Actions: District Programs

Staff Monthly Reports (Reports distributed prior to the meeting)

a) **Senior Conservation Specialist -- Pat McIlvaine**

No additional comments.

b) **Conservation Specialist III -- Jay Frankenfield**

No additional comments.

c) **Conservation Specialist I – Robert Wilbur (Absent-at Equine Alliance Event)**

d) **Conservation Specialist I – Fletcher Dilldine**

No additional comments.

c) **Education/Conservation Specialist – Kaylea Powell**

No additional comments.

d) **Urban/Ag Conservationist -- Chris Van Vlack**

The Prime Ag Soils Public hearing will be held on April 10th. *** Associate Director Earman met with Gem Bingol, Mike Kane, Chief of Staff from the Chair’s office regarding prime soils. Tia is also meeting with each of the Supervisors. Chair Randall understands the value and importance of this prime soils issue. Important to have those in support in attendance at the 4/10/24, Board meeting, starting at 6 p.m. *** Chris attended a meeting with NextEra, the company looking to build the new power lines in western Loudoun *** Gave a presentation to REDC on LSWCD’s cost share programs, and attended two trainings for planner CEU’s.

e) **Education Outreach Specialist -- Jennifer Venable**

The local Envirothon was held in partnership with Northern Virginia SWCD. There were 12 teams total, 4 being from Loudoun. This was the most teams Loudoun has ever had participate. Thanks to Robert, Fletcher and Kay for helping on 3/09 with the local Envirothon and helping with local Science Fair.

f) **Program Assistant -- Kristin Dennen (Absent-Equine Alliance)**

No additional comments.

g) **District Operations Manager -- Suzanne Brown**

County Budget request will be voted on 4/02/24.***Upcoming meetings: Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board and the VASWCD Quarterly Board meeting.

Potomac Council/Roundtable:

John Marshall will be hosting the next Potomac Council/Roundtable meeting on 4/5 in Fauquier. Marina and Derrick will represent Loudoun at the meeting.

Rural Economic Development Commission (Robin Bartok)

Discussion at ZOAM meeting regarding the list of stakeholders. REDC was not included on the list. Discussion continued about whether REDC should be at the table. Most county supervisors feel REDC should be at the table.

Board Comments:

No comments.

Chairman’s Report:

No comments.

Associate Directors:

Associate Director Clarke thanked the District for their support of the upcoming “Healthy Soil and Water” event.

Other:

***Closed Session:**

Director Christian made the motion for the Board to go into Closed Session as provided for in the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711(A) (1) to discuss personnel matters. Approved. (Christian-Holden, 4-0). The Board entered Closed Session at 5:55 p.m.

Director Holden made the motion to reconvene the Board into an open meeting at 6:20 p.m., as per (Code 2.2-3712 (D)) Approved. (Holden-Rasheed, 4-0)

Pursuant to the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712 (D) Director Rasheed made the motion to certify that to the best of the Board's knowledge, only matters lawfully exempted and as identified in the motion by which the Closed Session was convened were heard or discussed by this Board during the Closed Meeting. Approved. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).

◆ Director Rasheed made the motion to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to award a 5% merit increases to Conservation Specialist, Kay Powell and Fletcher Dilldine as they have now completed their probationary period. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).

◆ Director Rasheed made the motion to accept the recommendation of the Personnel Committee to award a 5% merit increases to Robert Wilbur for completion of Nutrient Management certification. Approved as presented. (Rasheed-Holden, 4-0).

Upcoming:

The Technical Review Committee will meet on Tuesday, April 3rd at 1 p.m.

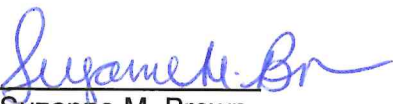
The Finance Committee will meet on Thursday, April 11th at 3 p.m.

The next scheduled District Board meeting will be held Thursday, April 11th at 4 p.m.

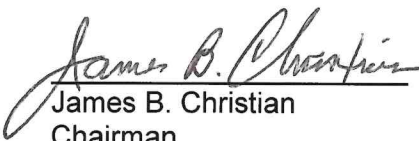
Adjournment: There being no further business, a motion was made to adjourn the meeting. Approved as presented. (Holden-Vermaak, 4-0) The meeting was adjourned at 6:35 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Approved:



Suzanne M. Brown
District Operations Manager



James B. Christian
Chairman

April 11, 2024
(Date)