

Windham County Natural Resource Conservation District Minutes

January 27th 2026

Geof's house, 301 Barrows Road, Brattleboro, VT

In person: Cory Ross: Executive Director; Heather Blunk: Agricultural Specialist, Geof Dolman, Linda Corse, Pieter Van Loon board supervisors

Zoom: Isabel Bowman: Conservation Specialist, Abby Reed: Americorps Member, Olivia Carlson: NRCS, Meg Kluge and Katy Morrison: board supervisors

NRCS updates:

- MOU - Memorandum of Understanding
 - Relationship between conservation district and NRCS
 - Page 4 B1B : districts will adopt
 - This is a statewide issue and we would like council to review it and we believe a lawyer should review it for us
 - There has not been a time outlined
 - Facts out to board by January 12th
- UCA
 - Unfunded Coop Agreement. Staff gets gov laptops, us not being able to access offices
 - One on one communication to work through some concerns
 - Gets updated every time we have a new staff member.
- At the next staff meeting we would like to go over the Job Approval Authority (JAA). Building this so that we can become more independent. Cory and Olivia would work together to decide employees JAA. B1d: change language here
 - Conservation Binder goes over all job approval authority. Are you able to reference standards when going out to talk with farmers?
 - Right now Emma K needs to sign our packets so we are trying to streamline these processes.

- This is just a guidance for when working with NRCS and not daily operations.
- We are concerned with the 5-seat limit. We would like to be able to access the office period with everyone so we would just need people to go through background checks and don't even need LINC passes for most employees.
- PII (personally Identifiable Information) we could be held liable if someone violates that
- **REMIND LINDA TO PUT ON THE NATURAL RESOURCES CONSERVATION COUNCIL (NRCC) AGENDA TO GO OVER THIS (POSSIBLE FEBRUARY 26TH)**
- CSP Annual payment is due by February 6th, Brattleboro/Windham is in good shape
- CART EQIP March 27th 2026
- CSP May 8th 2026
- Conservation evaluation CMA (216) reworked to help streamline
- Trainings Food security act HEL 1026 form Feb 3rd
- Resources Staff will be doing review tomorrow ATTEND THIS
- RPP national priority, 25% of our applications will be going through this. Trainings tomorrow and Thursday.
- Agro Forestry January 29th 1-2pm NH putting it on
- Changes to payment rates: big upsets.
 - Are we going to set up restrictions that will be assessed in the local fund pool or should we allow other practices to be assessed, in hopes of being able to spend all our money assigned in the fund pool. We are leaning towards accepting other practices, unless money changes.
- We are hoping rates will be locked in soon.

Financial Reports

- TOTAL ENDED FOR LIABILITY AND TOTAL EQUITY \$ 17,629.83
- TOTAL FOR GRANTS \$ 330,093.77
- NET INCOME FOR FIRST HALF OF YEAR \$ 41,527.00
- Received all our payments for one grant

- Created a new chart of accounts, did not change amounts of anything but rewrote definitions and lumped and pulled apart.
- Plants and trout expenses are now in income as Cost of Goods sold because that's how Dave recommends we should show it. Includes description of changes, second document shows same thing without description
- Uploaded budget and created a budget of actual yay
 - You can create seasonal budget lines - Cory will get there one day
- We are at 82% income for what we budgeted so far, on track for expenses as well. We are on track for what budget is called for, yay team.
- NACD has committed to give us money, so we don't have cash flow issues.
- This report includes 6 weeks of shut down where we could not bill for the NACD TA grant or AFT grant.
- We have paid all of dues for the year
- \$775 dues to NACD

Cost of living index

- We are revisiting now that we have more information. Cory believes that we can afford it. 3% increase to our pay scales and that we do so retroactively which would be a total of \$4,386.37.

A motion to accept a cost of living increase for district staff was moved, seconded and passed.

Listening Session

- We have applied for a \$4,000 grant to host a listening session for ACT 59 from VHCB. Could be a board meeting and has to be open to the public. Ideally this would replace March Board Meeting, we can cover meeting too
- We can request a VHCB moderator, or we can do it ourselves.
- Act 59 is to do with 30x30, 50x50 concept of conserving land in Vermont.
- Listening sessions are times for us to voice opinions to get to 30x30 to help VHCB develop that plan.

MARCH 16th in the evening. Roughly 5:30

Southeast Supervisory Reunion Meeting

- **February 24th 7pm** Will be in person but doesn't have to be you can come in zoom.

WE WILL MOVE FORWARD WITH NOVEMBER Soul Fire Farm Training 6-9PM TRAINING

VACD has taken lead on two different grants: NACD TA grant and AG CWIP Grant.

- VACD will be deciding on factors as to how money is dispersed. Because we will not be getting all of the money we requested.
- Governors budget is out and we are level funded and we are in there for around 600,000 ish dollars
 - Isabel's proposal to work with a student team at Dartmouth on Rock River project planning was selected! Cory and Isabel met with the professors on 12/11 to discuss the proposal. Cory and Isabel met with this team on 1/14 and will meet with them over the course of two semesters to plan these projects. The first meeting was on 1/16, where students selected three projects to focus on.

Motion to accept December minutes moved, seconded and passed

NEXT BOARD MEETING WILL BE ON FEBRUARY 24TH AT 6PM

A motion to go into executive session for personnel matters was moved, seconded and passed.

The Executive Session ended at 8:45 PM.

Motion made, seconded and approved to approve Isabel Bowman's performance review and find her performance satisfactory.

Motion made, seconded and approved to approve Arrow Kitchen's performance review and find their performance satisfactory and to remove the probationary label from their position.

Motion made, seconded and passed to adjourn the meeting.

Respectfully submitted,

Heather Blunk