

State Natural Resources Conservation Council

An Agency of Vermont State Government, Serving Vermont's 14 Conservation Districts

Meeting Minutes

USDA Service Center, Berlin

March 7, 2016

Present: Bill Manner (Southeast Union Rep), Alan Shelvey (South Central Union Rep), Rick Hopkins (VT DEC), Larry Hamel (Northeast Union Rep), Kim Komer (Lamoille County NRCD), Kerry O'Brien (NRCC Administrator, Caledonia County NRCD), Rick Hopkins (VT DEC), Louise Waterman (VTAAF), Vicky Drew (NRCS), Jill Arace (VACD), Mike Middleman (VTAAF), Michelle Gudorf (on phone for first 30 minutes)

Meeting Opened: 12:40pm

Rick Hopkins agreed to act as chair to facilitate the first part of the meeting, and called the meeting to order.

NRCC Member and Administrative Duties and Elections

Michelle summarized roles she played as Chair. She recommended going back to co-chairs and consider having a treasurer lead the Finance Committee. Tasks are:

Financial/Contractual

- Head-up Finance Committee. This meeting would include Kerry, NRCC Treasurer and one other Supervisor
- Quarterly Budget Checks
- Develop Annual Budget and Present to Board and VTAAF
- Review and Authorize payment and administration
- Approve invoices outside budget
- Review and Sign Contracts

Legislative/NRCC Program Development

- Develop NRCC meeting agenda/communicate with Administrator
- Communicate with board to set up meetings, reserve space
- NRCC and NRCD Program Development
- Assistance to Underperforming Districts
- General Support to Administrator
- Support legislative interested, funding, statute updates
- Written summaries, notes as needed

Kerry noted that overall some of the tasks Michelle has performed could be considered tasks for NRCC Staff/Administrator, however due to funding and time limitations for Administrator, Michelle has picked up some of work.

Michelle will follow up with the NW Supervisors to discuss a replacement. Vicky said that perhaps the Ledgerwood trainings may provide an opportunity to discuss the NRCC leadership positions.

Alan and Mike R were discussed as possible co-chairs. No decisions were made so the co-chair elections were tabled. More discussion on email, next meeting.

Securing and expanding funding within VTAAFM – Addison and Franklin counties are still a huge priority for agricultural water quality according to VTAAFM. There was discussion about addressing work through VACD in those areas until the Districts are higher performing. Does NRCC think there is an imperative to address ag with NRCC funds? While the funds are within the AAFM budget, yes. NRCC discussed including small farm outreach into the NRCC agreement next year. Vicky pointed out that the NRCS MOU's with NRCDs includes Districts handing in an annual work plan to NRCS each year that would show what they're doing for NRCS. This should be included in contractual agreements as well. NRCS provides about \$10,000 per District it hosts in office space, computer and IT.

FY2017 Budget Draft

The board reviewed a draft of next year's budget and deliverables. Ways to make administration more efficient were discussed. Vicky suggested that she could match \$19,600 next year, which could be added to public meetings, natural resources assessments and capacity building. Kerry will refine the budget with NRCC's suggestions and include NRCS proposed funds and distribute via email to the NRCC board for approval.

District Trainings

NRCC reviewed District training agenda. They thought the fiscal responsibilities of the board should be included, Staff supervision and role of the Chair. Corrections to locations. Vicky is sending it out to DCs. Kerry will reach out to Renae about St. Albans meeting and planning lunch. Kerry will send out Supervisor Directory link to contact the Districts.

Targeted District Assistance Meetings

Franklin County: Mike R. and Mike M. went to Franklin County and Michelle and Jill were on the phone. Mike M. noted a lack of communication between the board and staff – lack of accountability, and Franklin County NRCD noted that they felt that NRCC had not communicated effectively with them. NRCC suggested that copying the board members into communications could be necessary. Next steps were not clear. Kerry or Mike has not heard from Renae. NRCC will be checking in with partners on performance. A meeting is scheduled for Otter Creek and reps from NRCC March 8, 2016

Mike Middleman is resigning from NRCC and Louise Waterman is taking his place.

Meeting Adjourned: 3:45pm.