

Windham County Natural Resource Conservation District
Supervisory Board Meeting Minutes (DRAFT)

Wednesday, May 6th, 2026, 6:30 pm

USDA Service Center, 28 Vernon Street, Suite 332, Brattleboro, VT 05301

Hybrid Meeting

Present: Cory Ross, Executive Director; Arrow Branwen, Administrative Assistant; Heather Blunk, Agricultural Specialist; Meg Kluge and Linda Corse, board supervisors;

Zoom Participants: Pieter van Loon and Katie Morrison, board supervisors; Olivia Carlson, NRCS

Land Acknowledgement: *We respectfully acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, unceded territory of the Abenaki People, who have stewarded this land throughout the generations.*

1. Review Agenda for Additions or Changes
 - a. Cory wants to add: Petition to allow bear baiting; Geof felt strongly that we should comment as a district
 - b. Heather wants to add: DEI

2. New Business
 - a. NRCS Updates (Arrow will review this)
 - i. Conservation stewardship program, ranking deadline May 15th
 - ii. Training on May 25th
 - iii. Vernal Pool training 5/7
 - iv. Understanding program delivery of Wetland Compliance training in Randolph, VT
 - b. FY26 Q3 Financial Reports
 - i. Cory was able to take in our budget to estimate when we will get funding for grants with Quickbooks
 - ii. 99% of expected income for this time period
 1. Overperformance in sales income, underperformance in grant income
 - iii. 80% expected expenses, somewhat tentative
 - iv. Meeting expenses more than expected due to Act 59 listening session, had grant funding to partially cover this
 - v. Budget amendment approved by USFWS

- vi. Increased net assets over first three quarters, anticipated a shortage but have a surplus due to various income streams that were not expected
 - vii. Three of largest grants haven't dispensed any funds during this quarter due to the timing of when they pay funds
 - viii. Have a bit of a cushion cashflow wise currently; still a challenge, but doing better than we were a couple of months ago
 - ix. FY27 should include full cashflow prediction for the entire fiscal year
 - x. Budget to actual shows that total income is at 91% of total budget, at 81% of total expenses, running a bit below projected budget but are still expecting some funding to come in before end of FY26
- c. 2026 Greeters and Invasive Species Technician Hires - Board to Potentially Approve Hires
- i. Invasive Technician Hires:
 1. Have 3 candidates being recommended to be hired, have funding for 3 positions
 2. Want to rehire a former technician who worked last year as a crew leader to be paid a little more; \$23 for the crew lead who is the technician who has worked in the past, and \$21 for the other two
 3. Finding housing for summer workers continues to be a challenge; try talking to Landmark and SIT if there is summer housing available
 4. Will start on or around June 1st - end of August
 5. Meg moves to approve recommended hires for IST
 - a. Pieter seconds the motion
 - b. No other discussion
 - c. All in favor, none opposed
 - d. Motion passed 7:08PM
 6. Meg moves to approve recommendation that one of the IST hires that has worked for us before is giving the Crew Leader role
 - a. Pieter seconds
 - b. No other discussion
 - c. All in favor, none opposed
 - d. Passes 7:09PM
 - ii. Greeter Hires
 1. Have several former greeters who want to come back, but don't want to work as many hours, so will need at least a couple more greeters

2. South Pond, Harriman, Somerset, and Lake Raponda coverage needed
3. Meg moves to accept recommendations for 7 hires for Greeters with the knowledge that it may be needed to hire more
 - a. Pieter seconds
 - b. No further discussion
 - c. All in favor, none opposed
 - d. Motion passed 7:14PM
4. Meg moves that Cory has discretion to perform hiring if we get applications and want to hire someone ASAP before the next board meeting for greeter program
 - a. Pieter seconds
 - b. No further discussion
 - c. All in favor, none opposed
 - d. Motion passed 7:18PM

3. On-Going Items

- a. Update from Budget and Building Acquisition Subcommittee
 - i. The space is still available, but there is still other interest
 - ii. Have to spend USFWS by November, a great deal of it is for personnel, but we did get the funding for that
 - iii. Needs to be mapped out a little better
 - iv. Funding has been passed for now, but the budget could be vetoed; uncertain of state funding at this time
 - v. AG-CWIP is highly unlikely that there will be any changes to awards for districts
 - vi. No idea when we will know about NACD
 - vii. We could schedule a special meeting for the end of May to try to make a decision, or wait until we have funding news to schedule special meeting; need 3 day notice for special meeting for open meeting law
 - viii. Meet as needed
- b. Technical Service Provider Work
 - i. No news on this yet
 - ii. One of the districts tried to get FA funds to do conservation planning, but NRCS did not want that
 - iii. Haven't heard of when MOU needs to be signed with NRCS, Olivia said end of the year
 - iv. Still a concern of separating district work and TSP work

1. Not using government laptops to do TSP work

c. 2026 Plant Sale and Plant Palooza Debrief

- i. Not sure on total revenue yet; have trout sale costs still, and have to figure out trees pulled from plant sale inventory for tree planting and workshops
- ii. Over \$55000 earned from total sales this year; about \$14000 more than last year
- iii. Hours and time for staff working on plant sale is not included yet, because it is all in the middle of a pay period
- iv. Good visibility
- v. \$1066 in credits of what wasn't able to be filled, only \$160 actually issued in refunds
- vi. Lots of people came just to browse, most left having bought something
- vii. The rain did not deter anyone, everyone was very excited
- viii. One of the smoothest run plant sales in the last few years, both prepping and day of
- ix. Want to provide something to the folks at Green Mountain Orchards in thanks
 1. Send certificate to Andrea for Putney Diner to share with other staff to enjoy
- x. Having more information for how to plant certain things next year
- xi. Looking into donating leftover plants to various places
- xii. Need some roping in Green Mountains area to close it off from our sale
- xiii. Bigger plant palooza event not possible without an Abby Reed/other Americorps person who is able to take that on; Abby's work was great

4. Secretary's Report

- a. Approve minutes from April 15
 - i. Pieter moves to approve April 15th minutes
 - ii. Meg seconds
 - iii. No other discussion
 - iv. All in favor, none opposed
 - v. Motion passed 8:20PM
- b. Review Upcoming Supervisor Meeting Dates:
 - i. Next meeting: June 10

5. Other Business

- a. Petition to allow bear baiting; Geof felt strongly that we should comment as a district
 - i. Petition from Vermont Bowhunters Association to be allowed to bait bears to specific locations to be able to target them
 - ii. Most people spoke against at USWF board meeting
 - iii. Basic understanding of executive director is that baiting is typically bad, goes against science, not good for populations and the behavior of bears
 - iv. Meg in favor of sending a letter strong opposing the passing of this petition; not in best interest of bears and human neighbors; make sure to stress that hunting in general is fine and necessary as long as it is done ethically and does not endanger the populations of the wildlife and humans
 - v. None of the landowners in the area seem to have voiced any support or opposition to this petition
 - vi. Meg moves to authorize a letter to go forward to state fish and wildlife board about our concerns about bear baiting
 - 1. Pieter seconds
 - 2. Katie agrees with the thoughts so far. Cory will ask Geof if he wants to try to write some of it as well. Cory does not feel like it compromises us at all to take this stand; concerned that our voice will likely not matter, maybe not worth our time if we know that it isn't going to pass anyway.
 - 3. Meg would like to amend that the sending of this letter is based on whether Cory hears that the state fish and wildlife board is seriously considering allowing this to pass or not
 - 4. All in favor, none opposed
 - 5. Motion passed 8:41
- b. DEI Exercise at Soul Fire Farm
 - i. November 3hr training
 - ii. Sent a packet for everyone to complete
 - iii. This months was an exercise about where we came from
 - iv. Some thoughts about the map not being US-centric, Heather's family coming over from the Mayflower from England, not being especially proud of them in general but acknowledging that they must have had a lot of courage to leave the life they knew to live in a place that was not established in a European way at all
 - v. Meg's grandparents came to the US from Germany

6. Motion to adjourn meeting:

- **Seconded**
- **All in favor, none opposed**
- **Passed 8:53PM**

Respectfully submitted,

Arrow Branwen

7. Future Agenda Items:

- a. None at the end of the meeting

8. FY27 Budget and Work Plans

- a. Start working on/approve budget next meeting