

1/27/16

Minutes

Watauga Soil & Water Conservation District

971 West King Street, Boone NC

January 27, 2016 Meeting # 7

Present

Denny Norris- Chair

Janie Poe

Angela Gragg

Fred Alexander- NRCS

Al Childers

Rob Baldwin- Area Coordinator

Joey Clawson

Kelly Hedgepeth- NC Ag. Cost Share Program Manager

Rob Hunt

Brian Chatham

Denny Norris opened the meeting.

Angela Gragg recused from voting on any contracts pertaining to Paul Gragg.

Minutes were accepted as presented.

Kelly Hedgepeth – Supervisors Responsibilities / Job Approval Authority.

Discussed each program we offer and Supervisors and staff were able to ask questions.

ACSP- Water Quality

CCAP – Urban/ Suburban WQ- can do well de-commissioning on abandon/old home site

AgWRAP- Water Quality – Ag purposes. Working on rules.

Payment Request (RFP) has to be reviewed, signed off on by 3 different people in Raleigh before payment can be made. Requires hard copy submitted at this time.

If written priority system is required by rule, and supported by statute and SWCD policy. This policy should be reviewed and revised as conservation needs of the district are reviewed and changed.

1/27/16

Strategy Plan shows Districts needs.

AgWRAP- \$20,000 limit on ponds under AgWrap (10 yr service life for O&M)

Water Supply Wells AgWRAP requires a full conservation plan

Responsibilities of the Board

- CSP- Supervisor's Responsibility
- Administration of CSP
- Ensure that programs are run according to legislative and commission policy.
- Certify that cooperators in District are being assisted correctly and fairly
- You can be sued

Protection

- Follow policy & rules
- Under some circumstances, County Attorney or AG's office may represent individuals or Boards that are sued but, not always.
- Use priority ranking form consistently for all applicants
- Make sure staff is communicating correctly with cooperators in the District.
- Follow-up with landowners to make sure that they are being told about spec's and standards.
- Make sure that staff doing work have necessary documentation and JAA
- Keep copy of JAA available at Board meetings
- Avoid appearance of conflict of interest or bias
- Determines whether secondary employment of District Employees could be a conflict of interest.
- Follow open mtg's and public record laws.
- SWCC can take away TA funding from District.

What requires SWCC approval?

- All Supervisors contracts
- Repairs for Supervisor contracts
- Contracts on government property or with a government entity(ACSP only) i.e. University, Comm. College
- Special financial considerations
- Contracts on operations started in last 3 years the SWCC has the ability to approve a contract which has been in operation for less than three years, however, they seldom do so.
- The contract is not approved until an email is rec'd from the ACSP specialist.
- Approval email from Division should be printed and placed in contract folder or can be documented in Cons 6 notes.
- Resource concerns are prioritized in Strategy Plan – June 1st deadline

1/27/16

Strategy plan is basis for written priority system.

Outreach

- Outreach materials are available from Div. Intern has update many of the materials

BMP Effects

- NC law requires that every cost share site be evaluated for WQ (or Water Quantity if AgWRAP)

Conservation planning is important

Districts can be more restrictive than Division

- Policy must be established at the beginning of program year.

RFP's

- Supervisors must vote to approve all requests for payment.
- Authority to approve can be deligated by the Board to a person (Board Member) not a position.
- All contracts for supervisors, district employees or county owned property must be spot checked the first year by NRCS or Division staff.

Compliance Issues

- Supervisor must ensure that cooperators adhere to O&M agreement
- If a property is sold or changes owner, the district must have the new owners sign the transfer of parties' agreement, or proceed with cost recovery from the previous owner.
- Forms can be included with original contract especially leased/ rental properties.
- Any operations with out- of- compliance BMP's are notified pursuant to rule 02 NCAC 59D
- Required by law to report animal waste violations

Role of Advisory Committees

- i.e. new BMPs

Every Supervisor can request access into the CS2 program.

SWCD can do a 6 month extension but need to make sure work is going to be completed by the end of 6 month extension period.

NRCS- Alan Walker tries to match or exceed ACSP funding for Districts

District Report- Brian Chatham

- Holly Whitesides- AgWRAP contract # 95-15-003-14 Micro- Irrigation System- Installation & constructed was approved by Brian without JAA. Kelly called Alan Walker since NRCS has

1/27/16

Technical oversight. Kelly covered the process if installation meets or does not meet NRCS standards. ~ \$6,000 payment was made. Brian will include a copy of his JAA with each contract submitted to SWCD Board for approval.

Holly Whitesides has installed her pipeline. Contract/Supplement & RFP were presented by Brian. More pipeline than originally planned. Brian has JAA to approve pipeline, but it is not a separate BMP. It is a part of the irrigation system. This contract/ supplement, RFP will have to be tabled until Gra-Mac Irrigation System is received.

Billy Kennedy contract # 95-15-008-14- Brian asks the Board for a partial RFP for \$3,503.00 for Filter cloth, spring header casing, stone, excavation, and water tank pipe. He still lacks fence, and abandoned Christmas tree removal.

Joey Clawson made a motion to approve partial payment for contract # 95-15-008-14 for \$3,503.00. Rob Hunt seconded. Al Childers had stepped out of the room, all others were in favor. Angela Gragg did not vote.

Bob Shipley contract # 95-2016-004-14- Brian informed the Board it was approved at the January Commission meeting. It was considered a Supervisor contract since Paul Gragg leases land and will benefit from improvements. Brian said he was waiting to hear from the Cultural Resource Office before he starts.

Angela Gragg asks the Board if she could back up on Billy Kennedy's contract # 95-15-008-14 RFP. Angela was looking through the contract file and could not find the design in the folder. It appeared to her things were missing in the file. Brian indicated that he had job approval authority, but had not prepared a design.

Angela Gragg made a motion to resend the last motion to approve the partial RFP for contract # 95-15-008-14 for \$3,503.00 for Billy Kennedy until the file was complete with design etc. Al Childers seconded all were in favor.

Angela explained to Brian the importance of getting the standards on each contract.

Angela talked again about job approval authority and let the Supervisors know they should be asking question and looking at the contract files.

Bob Shipley contract # 95-2016-004-14 Brian informed the Board he had taken the feeding pads out of his contract.

Last Batching Period January 15, 2016-

- Rodney Presnell- applicant – Carrie Harmon-land owner for Feed Pad & access road. Brian has not been out yet. Al Childers made a motion to accept the application for Rodney Presnell. Angela Gragg seconded it; all were in favor.

1/27/16

- Paul Gragg- applicant- Marjorie Hrozencik- landowner for a watering system (may need a well), feed pads, livestock exclusion. Brian discussed with the Board that he had been working with Paul Gragg for a few years before he and Angela were married to let the new Board members know Paul's farming back ground.
Al Childers made a motion to accept the application for Paul Gragg. Joey Clawson seconded; all were in favor with exception of Angela Gragg who abstained from voting. (This is a supervisor contract)

CCAP

Brian asks the Board to vote on an RFP for contract # 95-2015-501-10- Watauga High Bio- retention. Conner Boyle PE provided as- built plans. Ron Henry's(BOE) will have to sign RFP and as-builts will be sent for approval by Daphne Cartner. We can approve but it will have to be pending a sign off letter by the Engineer. Brian told the Board they lacked putting up split rail fence and kiosk, but that was not funded by our program.

Joey Clawson made a motion to approve RFP for contract # 95-2015-501-10 pending Engineers approval. Rob Hunt seconded; all were in favor.

Brian asks the Board to approve travel for he and Janie to attend a Voluntary Ag. Farmland Preservation Workshop in Forsyth Co. on March 17 and also attend the Area 2 awards night in Caldwell County.

Angela Gragg made a motion to approve travel for Brian & Janie to attend Farmland Preservation Workshop and come back up to Caldwell for Area 2 Awards night. Joey Clawson seconded; all were in favor.

NRCS Reports- Fred Alexander – Team Leader- Discussed new field structure we are part of team 3. There are 6 counties from Alleghany to Yancey. Christine Vance has returned to our team 3 area she will be primarily in Avery, Mitchell and /or Watauga short term. Team 4 may help some in Ashe and Alleghany. David Tucker is now classified as a Resource Leader Planner he will still meet with the Boards at their monthly meetings. If for some reason he can't Fred or Christine one will be available. Fred also went over EQIP and the ranking pool. Fred discussed letters that were sent out and asks Janie if anyone called in about the letters to refer them to him or David. Soil Conservationist will be assigned to Spruce Pine.

Alan Walker will supervise team leaders. Team Leaders will be supervisors for NRCS employees on their team.

- David Tucker is still primary planner for Watauga, Ashe, and Alleghany.
- Fred will try to attend District Board Meetings approximately twice a year (in lieu of Alan Walker).

1/27/16

- EQIP funds will be awarded to team- not county- compete at team level
- Local work group- set of questions have been merged for ranking process.
- \$17 million Federal funding – approximately the same as last year.

Since Last Farm Bill

- Funding pool established(17 funding pools)
- Allows competition between similar practices (i.e. – Pastureland pool, National pool, High Tunnel state pool, Agir-chemical handling facility Area pool, WNCSI Local pool. Approx. \$10 million of the \$17 million in allocations for Cropland Applications, Pastureland)

NRCS can enroll application in more than one pool. If they are funding at a higher level pool, then application is removed from lower level pool.

Conservation Plans are presented to and approved by SWCD Board.

Personal Identifiable Information (PII). PII prohibits disclosure of name, etc. in open meeting

1st batching period ended November 20th Ranking completed for Watauga. 4 out of 16 were determined ineligible because they did not update information at FSA.

2nd batching period announced for February

- Organic pending-organic pool open 1 applicant from Watauga could update at FSA prior and be eligible.

Requires new application to get back in system if you are determined ineligible

If low ranking, NRCS staff need to work with producer to see if they can make changes to improve ranking.

4 ineligible in Watauga were in the following pools:

- 1- Pasture
- 1- High Tunnel
- 2- Golden Winged Warbler

Becky answers a lot of questions and is knowledgeable about programs.

WNCSI- Pools stratified by Watershed

By Watershed- French Broad/ Holstein – Mitchell, Watauga, and Watauga River – all may get funded

Cropland application in Avery with 1 in Watauga usually access road.

Approximately \$1 million in applications were ranked in Team Area

1/27/16

RC&D Report- Al asks about the dues. Janie told him they would be mailed out this week. Brian said RC&D have started surveying on Middle Fork of New River (Pane Branch).

Rob Baldwin made a brief Division report.

Janie Poe- Reported

We need to discuss our phone system and bill. Since NRCS changed the phone systems we are now paying for long distance calls that are not our calls. Janie called Gary Ahearn and spoke to him about the problem and he is in the process of fixing it. Janie will keep the Board informed. He said the same thing happened to Ashe County so he knew what to do. Brian and Janie explained problems with the phone and Fred Alexander is going to check into it with Gary Ahearn. Money is available to pay current bill and future bills in Other Supplies.

Janie asks the Board to vote on doing a budget amendment for \$300 out of other supplies to put in our telephone line item.

Al Childers made a motion to do a budget amendment for \$300 out of Other Supply Line Item to Telephone Line Item. Angela Gragg seconded it; all were in favor.

Contest night will be Thursday February 25th, 2016 at 6pm

Cost Share training in Wilkes February 10th from 9-4

School of Government February 9th -10th, 2016

Deadline for AgWRAP Regional Applications February 12th, 2016

Area 2 Spring Meeting March 10th Stokes County

Area 2 Contest night March 17 at Caldwell

Janie asks the Board to vote to renew the Subscription to Watauga Democrat.

Al Childers made a motion to renew the subscription for \$69. Joey Clawson seconded; all were in favor.

Janie asks the Board to vote on my travel to Burke County for Envirothon Meeting February 16th.

Angela Gragg made a motion to approve travel for Janie to Burke for the Envirothon meeting. Rob Hunt seconded; all were in favor.

Janie asks the Board to vote to approve \$900 for award money for the poster contest. The County will issue the check to hee and she will get cash for the awards. 6 out of 8 schools participate--both 4th & 5th grades. Janie reported it was a good contest.

Al Childers made a motion to pay \$900 for awards money. Rob Hunt seconded it all were in favor.

1/27/16

Rain Barrel sales has started. They will deliver them June 1st and we will have pick up downstairs June 3rd. They are \$75 plus tax. Janie will keep the Board informed.

The Board went into closed session to discuss personnel.

The Board resumed the open meeting.

Denny Norris reported that in closed session the Board discussed personnel issues. (Minutes during closed session were kept by Rob Baldwin.)


Al Childers made a motion to give the current District Technician Brian Chatham the opportunity to resign or be dismissed. Joey Clawson seconded; all were in favor.

Action items:

- Janie to check with County on posting minutes on the SWCD site.
- Board to look over equipment document drafted by the County Attorney.

With no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Minutes submitted by: Janie Poe

 signed 2-24-16 date

Denny Norris, Chair