

MINUTES

Catawba Soil and Water Conservation District held at Newton, N.C.

Meeting Number 2

February 2, 2024

Supervisors Present:

Steve Killian

Julia Elmore

David Caldwell

William (Bill) Shillito

Others Present:

Randy Willis, Soil Conservation Supervisor

Blake Henley, Soil Conservation Technician

Leia Hamlyn, Education Coordinator

Jim Propst, NRCS Team 5 Supervisor

Will Faulkner, NRCS Catawba

Elise McLaughlin, Area 2 Regional Coordinator

Steve Killian read the following statements then called the business meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.:

The State Government Ethics Act mandates that at the beginning of any meeting the Chair reminds all the members of their duty to avoid conflicts of interest and inquire as to whether any member knows of any conflict of interest or potential conflict with respect to matters to come before the Board. If any member knows of a conflict of interest or potential conflict, please state so at this time.

Statement of Professionalism

Supervisors are reminded of their responsibility to uphold the laws of the United States and North Carolina and their constitutions. Business is to be conducted in a professional manner, free of bias, of interactions that violate policies or individual liberties and that address business issues only. Interactions are to be held with integrity, courtesy, honesty and in compliance with the highest ethical standards.

Bill Shillito made a motion to approve the minutes from the January 5, 2024, board meeting. Julia Elmore seconded. All in favor. Minutes approved.

Randy Willis and Blake Henley gave the Catawba District Operations Report:

District Operations and Technical Assistance

- STRAP- Maps and landowner information has been submitted to the county legal office for the creation of easements. We have also looked at other locations per landowner requests.
- YMCA- We worked with a local nursery to find a plant list that fits the requirements of the grant and meets the needs of the YMCA. We are looking to plant the trees and shrubs on February 15th with the help of the Rotary Club of Catawba Valley.

- Your Land Your Legacy- We have participated in the first two sessions and we will be giving a presentation on the Cost-Share programs at the next session on February 15th.
- Attended our monthly drone training.
- Evaluated storm/tornado damage.
- Met with a landowner about some water/soil coming onto her property from a crop field.

NCACSP

- Contacted the 2 contracts that will expire in June 2024.
- Meet with contract 18-22-02-03 about fence placement.
- David Caldwell made a motion to accept Contract application 18-24-01-03. Bill Shillito seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.
- Julia Elmore made a motion to approve Contract 18-24-01-03 in the amount of \$15,430.00. Bill Shillito seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

AGWRAP

- Applied for a supplement allocation in the amount of \$11,534.00.
- David Caldwell made a motion to approve Contract 18-24-801-03 in the amount of \$11,534.00. Julia Elmore seconded. All in favor. Motion passed.

CCAP

- Contract Cancellation 18-22-501-01.

Leia Hamlyn gave the Education and Outreach Report:

- Education Awards Banquet on Thursday, February 22, 2024, at 6:00 p.m.
- Contest deadline was Monday, January 22, 2024. Received 5th Grade Posters, 8th Grade Essays, 8th Grade Poetry, 9-12th Grade Essays and 9-12th Grade Poetry.
- No participants for the Speech Contest this year.
- Envirothon Meeting on February 7 following DIC Meeting.
- March 15 (Friday) is clean-up day for the Envirothon
- March 18 (Middle School) and March 19 (High School) Envirothon dates

Upcoming Dates

- Board of Commissioners Meeting on February 5, 2024, at 7:00 p.m. Catawba SWCD staff will be presented with a plaque from NRCS.
- Area 2 Spring Meeting March 14
- Area 2 Contest Night March 21
- Your Land Your Legacy February 15th

Will Faulkner and gave the Catawba NRCS Supervisory Soil Conservationist's Report:

ACTIVE EQIP/CSP:

6 EQIP contracts
1 CSP active
2 contracts that have been cancelled (SHT)
1 EQIP extended through 3/31 to complete

FY 2024

4 EQIP applications that are eligible- ~\$500,000 estimate (CAFO & SHT)

CAFO 2024 ISSUE

2 CSP applications (signup ended 1/12)

Estimated allocation EQIP \$22.6M + \$30.2M (up from \$39M in FY23)

CSP \$13.8M + \$8.2M (up from \$15M in FY23)

Fieldwork: Team members working on several projects, as well as assisting SWCD personnel, Waste Storage Systems, Stream Exclusion/Water Systems, several follow-up measurements/site evaluations for newly ranked projects.

Jim Propst gave the Team 5 NRCS Supervisory Soil Conservationist's Report:

FY 24 EQIP/CSP:

EQIP:

In process of generating contracts for the Act now participants in EQIP, mostly high Tunnels in Urban within our team.

Beginning to rank remaining applicants with date of Feb. 23 to have them all ranked, probably 30% or so across Team 5 ranked at this point. Any Act now participants that did not meet threshold will go into ranking now as well.

CSP: Applications accepted and now in eligibility process, next step is evaluation. Team 5 has a record 27 applications, though some may go with EQIP.

Lenoir Soil Conservationist: Position has been advertised, closed 1/18/24, HR processing applications. There should be some good candidates if the people that contacted us for additional information applied.

Fieldwork: Team members working on several projects, as well as assisting SWCD personnel, (9) Waste Storage Systems, (4) Stream Exclusion/Water Systems, several follow-up measurements/site evaluations for FY24 EQIP & CSP applications. Some assistance to SWCD's with Strap projects as well.

Team 5 Overall Staff Meeting: Meeting hosted by Catawba SWCD at FO, attended by almost all staff within Team 5 (SWCD & NRCS) except McDowell. Great overall discussion on topics such as upcoming contests/banquets, Strap challenges, Use of drones for recon, training, ongoing projects, and networking for newly hired employees (Alexander, Burke, Caldwell, & Alexander). Excellent meeting and very appreciative of support & attendance.

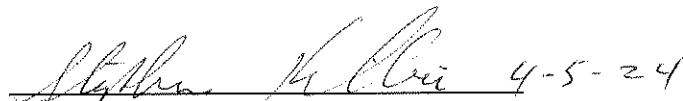
Elise McLaughlin gave the Division Report highlights including supervisor training hours and information regarding the upcoming Area 2 Spring Meeting.

New Business

Randy Willis presented Blake Henley with an Outstanding Performance Award and monetary bonus recognizing his exceptional job performance.

Julia Elmore made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Bill Shillito seconded. All in favor. Meeting adjourned at 10:11 a.m.

Minutes taken by Leia Hamlyn.


Stephen Killian, Board Chair 4-5-24