

January 22, 2025

MINUTES

Watauga Soil & Water Conservation District
971 West King Street, Boone NC 28607

January 22, 2025

Present:

Denny Norris, Chair
Chris Hughes
Bill Moretz
Jennie Hanifan
Nate Coppenbarger

Michelle Kasey
Mikey Woodie
David Tucker
Samantha Dame
Brandon Turlington
Jonathan Hartsell
Jake Myers

Denny Norris called meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Denny Norris opened the meeting in prayer.

Ethics Awareness and Conflict of Interest Reminder:

In accordance with the State Government Ethics Act, it is the duty of every board member to avoid both conflicts of interest and appearances of conflict. Does any board member have any conflicts of interest or appearances of conflict with respect to any matters coming before the board today? If so, please identify the conflict or appearances of conflict and refrain from any undue participation in the particular matter involved.

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.

Approval of the minutes – Chris Hughes made a motion to accept, Jennifer Hanifan 2nd. Minutes accepted.

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Approval of the agenda – Chris Hughes made a motion to accept with amendment; Holland Whitesides signed contract and this contract will need to be approved by the board. Jennifer Hanifan 2nd. Agenda accepted.

Vote in Officers:

Jennifer Hanifan nominated Chris Hughes for Vice Chair. Bill Moretz 2nd the nomination. Chris Hughes was voted in as Vice Chair.

Bill Moretz nominated Jennifer Hanifan as Secretary, Chris Hughes 2nd the nomination. Jennifer Hanifan was voted in as Secretary.

Chris Hughes nominated Denny Norris for Chair. Bill Moretz 2nd the nomination. Denny Norris was voted in as Chairman of the Board.

District Report - Mikey Woodie

New Applications: None

Contracts needing approval:

95-2025-002 Holland Whitesides – Repair to project from 2022. No proper drainage was installed. Bill Moretz made a motion to approve contract; Jennifer Hanifan 2nd. Contract was approved.

Contract Updates:

ACSP:

95-2021-004 Chris Kuhn – Mikey Woodie suggested sending a certified letter to Kuhn. No progress has been made on contract other than a pre-construction meeting. Start date has not been set. This contract has been extended twice.

95-2023-001 Scott Jensen – Significant damage from Helene. 1/3 of project is complete.

95-2023-003 Ronnie Joe Brown – Severe damage, landslide. Well contract was Dewey Wright – who is not closed. Will need an extension for this contract.

95-2023-004 Michael Greene – Contract expires in June. Send letter.

95-2023-008 Bart and Robina Walker – Gave them list of materials and have not heard back. Denny Norris stated that we need to send them a letter.

95-2024-003 Charles Norris – Hoping to start in spring. Construction delayed due to Hurricane Helene.

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95-2024-006 Valley View Land Company – David Tucker, NRCS, to look at next week.

95-2024-007 Al Zimmerman – Construction to begin in spring. Permits not required for this project.

95-2025-001 Will Kulczyk – Waiting on signature of cooperator.

95-2025-002 Holland Whitesides – Waiting on engineer's preliminary design.

95-2025-003 Larry Kitchens – Preliminary design was sent to landowner.

95-2025-004 Diane Deal – Waiting on landowner's approval for preliminary design.

AgWrap:

95-2025-802 Daniel brown – Waiting on engineer's design.

CCAP:

95-2022-502 Blue Ridge Conservancy – Waiting on grant funding decision. Will need an extension.

95-2023-501 Valle Crucis Park – Project has been staked out.

95-2024-501 New River Conservancy at Green Valley Park – Waiting on engineer's response.

StRAP Updates:

2022 Funds: Woodie suggested waiting to use these funds until the Army Corp of Engineers have done their project. She suggested to use the funds to do what the Army Corp doesn't do. Woodie coordinating with Samantha Dame, Brandon Turrington and Paul Payne at Emergency Services.

2024 Funds:

Woodie has given the new County Attorney, Nathan Miller, the new contract draft to review and approve.

General Updates - Mikey Woodie

Mikey Woodie, Samantha Dame and Brandon Turrington are working to map stream debris in our streams and rivers. Volunteers from surrounding Counties

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will be coming on January 24, 2025 to help map the Hurricane Helene destruction to give the Army Corp of Engineers the scope of destruction.

Woodie mentioned that some Counties have a signed Mutual Aid Agreement for disaster response. She gave an example to the board. Elise McLaughlin stated that this agreement strengthens the Soil & Water Network. It allows employees to help when asked by other Counties.

Denny Norris stated that it would be good to have one for Watauga County and asked Michelle Kasey to get signatures. He also stated that he appreciates all Mikey Woodie's hard work.

Bill Moretz made a motion for Watauga County Soil & Water to have a Mutual Aid Agreement. Jennie Hanifan 2nd the motion. Motion carried.

Mikey Wood stated that her last day is 2/14/25.

Bill Moretz thanked Ms. Woodie for doing a great job. Chris Hughes also stated that she has done a great job and said that we will miss her.

NRCS Report – David Tucker/by Samantha Dame

NRCS is collecting data for EQUIP sites. EQUIP has a 4/11/25 contract approval deadline. It is currently 50% stream restoration. January 10th was the application deadline.

EWP training is here tomorrow, January 24th in this conference room.

David Tucker is the point of contact for 6 Counties.

RC&D Report – Chris Hughes

Mr. Hughes introduced Jonathan Hartsell, Director of Blue Ridge RC&D along with Jake Myers, Project Engineer, who works for Eco System Planning & Restoration as the Technical lead. Regional Conservation Partnership Program was created with the 2014 Farm Bill. RCPP partnerships are not a funds match. RCPP is grant funded. Partners can do in-kind labor such as repairing. Grants pay for land management, fencing, stream bank restoration , riparian buffers, but not bridges. There is no out-of-pocket for landowners, no easements. It does need a signed agreement to allow work to be done. The contract is between Blue Ridge RC&D

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and the contractor. There is usually a 3-week reimbursement. Jonathon Hartsell stated that we have done a RCPP project – Vanderpool. Jake Myers wants Soil & Water to distribute applications and paperwork to landowners. These projects are ranked and batched throughout the year. The focus is on underserved cooperators first with 1000' or more of stream or river bank.

David Tucker asked if the project could include an adjoining tract? Yes, was the answer. Tucker asked if that could be one of the questions.

Chris Hughes asked Jonathan Hartsell to fill in the new technician when one is hired.

Jonathan Hartsell informed the Board that there will be a live-stake giveaway February 27th, 2025 in Watauga County.

Division Report – Elise McLaughlin

Elise McLaughlin stated that the Area 2 Spring Meeting is March 13th, 2025 at Cedar Rock Country club. She also stated that there will be a demo in Waynesville on BioChar which is used to rebuild soil fertility.

There is a new start-up in Wilkes County to present, Verenovo.

She stated that there will be a Cost Share update on 2/25/25 in Statesville.

McLaughlin stated that basic training for supervisors was coming up soon. Jennie Hanifan asked about advanced training. Ms. McLaughlin to ask Bryan Evans about dates for this.

Ms. McLaughlin mentioned that Steven Bishop spoke at the Fall Meeting but has a 1.5-hour presentation on Farm Succession and legacy planning and wanted to know if they Board would like to host him and have a public meeting for this. He has several dates planned including one in Yadkin County which will be 3 hours. Chris Hughes made a motion to have Michelle Kasey talk to Jim Hamilton about partnering together to bring Mr. Bishop to speak in Watauga County and do a 1.5-hour presentation. Jennie Hanifan 2nd. Motion carried.

Board discussed the logistics of having a meeting to review applications and potentially hire a new technician prior to Ms. Woodie leaving. Jennie Hanifan

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made a motion to meet February 6th, 2025 at 9:00am until noon and also on February 7th, 2025 from 9:00am until noon to review applications. She also made a motion that a meeting be set on February 10th from 9:00am until noon to interview potential candidates. Chris Hughes 2nd. Michelle Kasey to reserve a room or the Board can use Ms. Kasey's office. Kasey to post meeting notifications.

Chris Hughes made a motion to go into Closed Session in accordance with section 143-318.11 Item 6 Subsection C. to conduct an exit interview with Mikey Woodie.

Admin Report: Michelle Kasey

Michelle Kasey to be out on FMLA from 1/3/25 – 2/10/25.

Meeting was adjourned at am.

Next meeting will be February 26, 2025.

Minutes submitted by: Michelle Kasey; Closed minutes submitted by Jennie Hanifan.



Denny Norris, Chair

Signed 2-26-25 Dated




**WATAUGA
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MEETING MINUTES
January 22, 2025**

Supervisors Present	Staff / Others Present
Denny Norris, Chair	Mikey Woodie, Watauga SWCD
Bill Moretz	
Chris Hughes, Vice Chair	
Jennie Hanifan	
Nate Coppenbarger	

Meeting held at Watauga SWCD office; 971 West King St, Boone, NC.

- 1. Call back to Open Monthly Meeting:** Chair Norris called back to open monthly meeting after closed session.
- 2. Adjourn:** With no further business, Chair Norris declared the meeting adjourned at 11:09 a.m.



Denny Norris, Chair
Watauga SWCD



Jennie Hanifan, Interim Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved by the Watauga SWCD on February 27, 2025.

