

**Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board
Electronic Meeting
Thursday, May 20, 2021**

TIME AND PLACE

The meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board convened at 10:00 a.m. on Thursday, May 20, 2021 via GoToMeeting.

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Charles A. Arnason, Chair
Adam D. Wilson, Vice-Chair
Kristen Saacke-Blunk
Jay C. Ford
Pamela Mason
Kat Maybury
Charles Newton
Dr. Dahlia O'Brien
Clyde E. Cristman, DCR Director, Ex Officio
David Kriz for Dr. Edwin M. Martinez, NRCS, Ex Officio
Daniel Goerlich, Virginia Cooperative Extension, Invitee

VIRGINIA SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION BOARD MEMBERS NOT PRESENT

Mario Albritton

DCR STAFF PRESENT

Rochelle Altholz, Deputy Director for Administration and Finance
Russell W. Baxter, Deputy Director for Soil and Water Conservation and Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
Darryl Glover, Director, Division of Soil and Water Conservation
Wendy Howard Cooper, Director, Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management
Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and Regulatory Coordinator
Nathan Burrell, Deputy Director, Government and Community Relations
Angela Ball, Conservation District Coordinator
Denny Collins, Conservation District Coordinator
Debbie Cross, Conservation District Coordinator
Jim Echols, Western Area Manager
Kimberly Freiberger, Policy Analyst
Jaclyn Friedman, Conservation District Coordinator
Blair Gordon, SWCD Liaison
Mark Hollberg, Conservation District Coordinator
Stacy Horton, Conservation District Coordinator
Nicole Keller, Program Technician
Lisa McGee, Policy Director

Sharon Partee, Director of Finance
Marissa Roland, Conservation District Coordinator
Carl Thiel-Goin, Conservation Planning and Training Coordinator
Amy Walker, Eastern Area Manager
Aaron Wendt, Shoreline Engineer
Jerald Hess, Office of the Attorney General
Daniel Ingersoll, Office of the Attorney General

OTHER PRESENT

Michelle Ashworth, Aqualaw
LaVerne Calhoun, Tidewater SWCD
Freeda Cathcart, Blue Ridge SWCD
Tracy Culbertson, Tri-County SWCD
Steve Hill, Culpeper SWCD
Adrienne Kotula, Chesapeake Bay Commission
Sam Markwith, Tidewater SWCD
Sue Morris, Chowan Basin SWCD
Martha Moore, Virginia Farm Bureau
Norman Pitt, Accomack County
Jason Powell, Senate Finance Committee
Carmie Savage, Eastern Shore SWCD
Kyle Shreve, Virginia Agribusiness Council
Mary Sketch, Virginia Tech
Dr. Kendall Tyree, Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts
Greg Wichelns, Culpeper SWCD

ESTABLISHMENT OF A QUORUM

With eight (8) members of the Board present, a quorum was established.

CALL TO ORDER AND CERTIFICATION OF ELECTRONIC MEETING

Chairman Arnason called the meeting to order and gave the following remarks.

Good morning, I would like to call this virtual meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board to order.

Generally, public bodies are prohibited from meeting electronically under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). However, language approved by the Governor and General Assembly in Chapter 552 of the 2021 Special Session 1 Acts of Assembly allows us to move forward with certain restrictions that I will outline below.

Before I review those provisions, please let me take a moment to review how this meeting will work. We want to allow for participation by Board members, staff, and members of the public

who wish to comment. However, it is essential that we are able to manage the conversation effectively.

I am chairing this meeting today from the DCR offices in downtown Richmond. I have with me Christine Watlington Jones, Blair Gordon, and Lisa McGee. They will assist with presentations, responding to comments, and the overall coordination of the meeting.

Please be patient with all of us as we work through this. We understand and appreciate the challenges.

Chapter 552 of the 2021 Special Session 1 Acts of Assembly, also known as the "Budget Bill," includes language addressing the ability of public bodies to conduct electronic meetings without the need for a quorum being present in a single physical location ("Electronic Meeting").

The Budget Bill allows public bodies to hold Electronic Meetings when the Governor has declared a state of emergency pursuant to §44-146.17 if:

"(i) the nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body or governing board to assemble in a single location;

(ii) the purpose of the meeting is to discuss or transact the business statutorily required or necessary to continue operations of the public body...and the discharge of its lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities..." §4-0.01(g).

The Budget Bill also has language regarding recordings and transcriptions of Electronic Meetings. Please be advised that this meeting is being recorded. This recording will be available to the public through the DCR website. The comments in the chat room will also be preserved as a public record. Official minutes of this meeting will be drafted and posted in accordance with regular procedures.

The Budget Bill does not allow the Board to hold an Electronic Meeting to discuss or transact business for *any purpose*. Rather, they may do so as long as the agenda items that the public body plans to take up are: (a) statutorily required or (b) necessary to continue operations and discharge lawful purposes, duties and responsibilities.

It is the Board's responsibility to determine whether "the nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the public body or governing board to assemble in a single location."

At the conclusion of my remarks, I will ask for a motion for the board to make this determination. If that motion fails, this electronic meeting will end at that point.

The Budget Bill requires compliance with the provisions of § 2.2-3708.2. Therefore, in accordance with § 2.2-3708.2.D.2, public bodies must include a telephone number that may be used to notify the public body of any interruption in the telephonic or video broadcast of the meeting.

In the event that a disruption occurs, participants should contact Ms. McGee by phone or text at 804-512-1758.

Additionally, if there is an interruption in the broadcast, the meeting must be suspended until public access is restored.

Those provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act not addressed by the Budget Bill remain in effect.

Before we continue with the business portion of the meeting, I will ask Ms. McGee to call the roll for Board members and anticipated staff. Other participants will be recorded through the chat window. If you are participating by phone and your name is not called, please call or text Ms. McGee at 804-512-1758.

In addition, if at any time you lose connection and are unable to reconnect, please contact Ms. McGee at the same number.

I will now turn to Ms. McGee for the calling of the roll:

ROLL CALL

PRESENT: Charles A. Arnason, Chair
Adam D. Wilson, Vice-Chair
Kristen Saacke-Blunk
Jay C. Ford
Pamela Mason
Kat Maybury
Charles Newton
Dr. Dahlia O'Brien

ABSENT: Mario Albritton

A quorum was declared present.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved the following:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board certifies that the nature of the declared COVID-19 emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe for the Board to assemble in a single location and further that the agenda items to be taken up at this meeting are necessary to continue operations and discharge lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities of the Board.

Ms. Maybury seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Chairman Arnason continued.

I want to explain further how we will handle participation by board members, staff, and the public. Everyone, except the individual presenting materials for an agenda item, will be muted. Once the presentation is completed, the board members, and only board members, will be unmuted for discussion. Lisa, Christine, and Blair will assist me with ensuring board members are recognized when they have questions or comments. As needed, staff will be unmuted to address questions or concerns. Members of the public will be able to ask questions and provide input by utilizing the chat box function only. As time allows, we will respond to those questions and comments.

We will now proceed with the business of the Board as outlined in the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES FROM APRIL 21, 2021

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the minutes from the April 21, 2021 meeting of the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board be approved as submitted by staff. Mr. Newton seconded and roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried and the minutes were approved.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT – *Clyde E. Cristman, DCR Director*

Director Cristman noted the following:

The Budget Bill became effective and has been entered as Chapter 552 of the Acts of the Assembly. This will be reflected in Board financial policies.

Director Cristman announced that Mr. Baxter will be retiring on September 1, 2021. He expressed appreciation for Mr. Baxter's years of service to the Commonwealth, particularly in his time as Deputy Director for Soil and Water Conservation, Dam Safety, and Floodplain Management.

Director Cristman noted that the process to recruit for a replacement Deputy Director has been approved. The hope is to have a new Deputy Director named prior to Mr. Baxter's departure.

Mr. Baxter commented that he appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the important work that he has seen done in and around state government. He expressed thanks to the Board, as well as the management and staff at DCR.

DAM SAFETY AND FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT DIVISION

Approval of Projects Funded by the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund - Wendy Howard Cooper, Director, Division of Dam Safety and Floodplain Management

Ms. Howard Cooper presented the recommended projects for approval. She noted that the grant round was open from November 21, 2020 until February 6, 2021. Of the 77 applications received:

- 73 applications were for dam safety projects;
- 4 projects were for flood protection and assistance; and
- Staff recommends approval of 55 dam safety projects and 2 flood prevention projects.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved the following:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the fifty-seven (57) grant applications, with an approval amount of \$726,039.35, as recommended by the Department. Approval of these grants is conditioned on the following:

1. All grants are made on a reimbursement basis and will be governed by a Grant Agreement developed in consultation with the Virginia Resources Authority. All applicants will be given a period of 90 days to enter into a Grant Agreement following the Agreement being sent. The Department of Conservation and Recreation (Department) is authorized to further extend this date in its discretion and following consultation with VRA.

2. All grant agreements will require that projects be completed within 12 months of the date of execution of the Agreement. Upon receipt of a written request for a project extension with a specified completion date by the Grantee to the Department with a copy to VRA, the Department is authorized to consider such request and may amend the terms of the Agreement and allow a specified extension upon the Department's and the Authority's written approval. Extension requests must be received by the Department not later than 90 days prior to the expiration of the original agreement or grant funds are subject to rescission at the Departments discretion. No extensions shall exceed an additional year without specific Board approval.
3. In the event that any of the above applicants fail to execute a Grant Agreement with VRA within 90 days of such an Agreement being sent to the applicant, the Department, in consultation with VRA, is authorized to rescind those grant funds and allocate in subsequent grant rounds.

The Department is authorized to communicate this approval to the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) so that VRA's review of applications may proceed. The Department is also authorized to take any action necessary to proceed with the closing and administration of grants subsequent to VRA's approval of the application.

Ms. Saacke Blunk seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DIVISION

Approval of Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2022 – Christine Watlington Jones, Policy and Regulatory Coordinator

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the final draft of the Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2021. She noted that the correct chapter number for the 2021 Appropriation Act was added on Page 1.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Newton moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operations Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2022. Ms. Mason seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approval of Administration and Operations Support Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2022 – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the final draft of the Administration and Operations Support Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2022. She noted the following edits:

- Page 4: A date reference of 01/10/22 was corrected to 01/01/22; and
- Page 10: The reference to the submission of the budget template was stricken to mirror the removal of the requirement on Page 6 (this was an error noted at a prior Board action).

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Saacke Blunk moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the Department of Conservation and Recreation and Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Administration and Operational Support Grant Agreement (Fiscal Year 2022).

Dr. O'Brien seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

Ms. Saacke Blunk seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approval of Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2022 – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the final draft of the Board Policy on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2022. She noted the following edits:

- Page 2: the correct chapter number for the 2021 Appropriations Act has been added.
- Page 25: language has been added to clarify that proportional technical assistance from the TA Addition to the FY21 TA Base shall be returned to the Department when a District does not obligate 90% of the cost-share allocation.
- Page 29: duplicative language has been removed; the existing reference is confusing and unnecessary. Referencing the end of year reports is the more correct reference and reflects the process used to determine the amount of funds to be returned to the Department. One sentence within the same paragraph has been relocated.

Mr. Newton asked if a District obligates 90 percent of the cost-share funding if the District was allowed to keep the remaining balance of technical assistance funding.

Ms. Watlington Jones responded that in that example, the District would retain 100 percent of the technical assistance funding.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the Policy and Procedures on Soil and Water Conservation District Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Funding Allocations for Fiscal Year 2022. Mr. Newton seconded.

Mr. Ford commented that in future documents and policies that staff consider adding language to address concerns related to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Justice.

The roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

*Approval of Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2022 –
Christine Watlington Jones*

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the final draft of the Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2022. She noted that no changes had been made since the April Board meeting.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Newton moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the Department of Conservation and Recreation and Virginia Soil and Water Conservation District Cost-Share and Technical Assistance Grant Agreement for Fiscal Year 2022. Dr. O'Brien seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Proposal to Address Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice in the Marketing and Delivery of the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones presented a recommendation to address Mr. Ford's concerns regarding Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Justice issues related to the marketing and delivery of the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share Program (VACS). The recommended motion was as follows:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board directs the Department, in collaboration with the Office of the Attorney General to examine possible methods and mechanisms this Board, the Department, and Soil and Water Conservation Districts could utilize to be more intentionally inclusive of underserved and disadvantaged communities in the marketing and delivery of the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share (VACS) Program. The Board directs the Department to provide recommendations and suggestions to the Board at the December 2021 meeting.

Ms. Maybury moved the motion as presented. Ms. Mason seconded.

Mr. Ford commented that this issue of whether these programs are representative of Virginia's population had been discussed among districts over the past two years. Questions still remain about how this program is meeting the DEI objectives of the Commonwealth?

Ms. Mason noted that the issue of funding distribution is a concern regarding underserved communities. She asked if the motion could more directly address the VCAP program.

Ms. Watlington Jones responded that while the Department is the financial pass-through agency for the VCAP funds, the Department has no authority over the administration of the VCAP program.

Director Cristman advised that the Department has an internal DEI Committee to address how the agency can become a more inclusive employer. The Governor has also released the One Virginia Plan for the Commonwealth.

Mr. Glover noted that the Department is working with Virginia State University on the Small Farmer outreach program to specifically reach out to farmers of color. He noted that there had been significant progress in this area.

Mr. Arnason called for the vote and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approval of District Appointments and Resignations – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones presented the following recommendations.

Halifax

Resignation of Mr. Larry Layman, of Halifax County, effective 5/13/2021, elected director (term of office expires 1/1/2024).

Appointment of Mr. A. Scott Hudson, of Halifax County, effective 5/20/2021, to fill the vacant un-expired elected director position of Mr. Larry Layman (term of office expires 1/1/2024).

New River

Resignation of Mr. Don Philen, of Grayson County, effective 4/19/2021, elected director (term of office expires 1/1/2024).

Appointment of Mr. Kevin Kirk, of Grayson County, effective 5/20/2021, to fill the vacant un-expired elected director position of Mr. Don Philen (term of office expires 1/1/2024).

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Wilson moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the appointment of the individuals being recommended. Mr. Ford seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approval of Extension for Certain 2015 Livestock Stream Exclusion Practices – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that the Board took action on May 22, 2019 to approve “supplemental funding for backlog SL-6 practices.” She further noted:

- There are livestock stream exclusion (“backlog SL-6”) practices that are currently under construction but are unable to be finished due to a lack of materials. Fence posts, in particular, are in limited supply.
- These particular practices were to be fully installed no later than June 30, 2021.
- This action would provide an additional year for the installation of the SL-6 practices that are facing these delays.
- Any contract for a “backlog SL-6” practice that is not actively under construction by May 20, 2021 must be cancelled

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Newton moved the following:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves an extension until June 30, 2022 for livestock stream exclusion practices that are considered “backlog SL-6” practices to complete the installation of the practice. In order to be eligible for an extension, the practice must be:

- (i) Actively under construction as of May 20, 2021; and
- (ii) Funded either through the Supplemental FY 2019 Cost-share and Technical Assistance from the Commonwealth of Virginia for the Retirement of Pending FY15 SL-6 Practices or have completed a VACS Contract Part 1 for an SL-6 practice by June 30, 2015.

Any contract for a “backlog SL-6” practice that is not actively under construction by May 20, 2021 must be cancelled.

Dr. O’Brien seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O’Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approval of retention of Public Participation Guidelines, regulations (4VAC5-11) – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that the Board took action on December 12, 2020 to initiate the periodic review of these regulations. No public comments were received.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Maybury moved that the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approve the retention of the Public Participation Guidelines (4VAC50-11) as currently promulgated. The Board directs the Department to submit the decision to retain this regulation without change in accordance with the Administrative Process Act, Executive Order 14 (2018) (Amended), and all other applicable policies and procedures. Mr. Wilson seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Recommendations for Board Membership – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that nominations had been received from the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts for the two seats on the Board with terms expiring on June 30, 2021. She further noted:

- The Association has consulted with both the Virginia Farm Bureau and Virginia Agribusiness Council on these nominations;
- Nominations represent Area 2 and Area 5;
- Chapter 43 of the 2021 Acts of Assembly Special Session 1 requires each of the six geographic areas represented in the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts to be represented on this Board; and
- Area 2 is currently unrepresented.

The following individuals were recommended:

Area II Stephen R. Hill, Ph.D. (District Director/Farmer)
644 Oak Grove Road
Madison, VA 22727

Joseph W. Thompson (District Director/Farmer)

106 Burnet Way
Charlottesville, VA 22902

Area V Charles A. "Chuck" Arnason (District Director/Farmer)
895 Cellar Creek Road
Blackstone, VA 23834

Kevin Dunn (District Director/Farmer)
7398 Bell Road
Dillwyn, VA 23936-2946

Mr. Arnason asked Mr. Wilson to preside over this action as Vice Chair.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Newton moved that the Virginia Soil and Water conservation Board accept the nominations of the Virginia Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts and directs staff to forward these nominations to the Secretary of the Commonwealth for consideration for appointment. Ms. Saacke Blunk seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

ABSTAIN: Arnason

The motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS

There was no old business.

NEW BUSINESS

Appointment of a Consulting Committee Pursuant to the Impounding Structure Regulations – Christine Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that the Virginia Administrative Code provides the option for the board to establish a consulting committee when there is a need to satisfy questions of safety regarding plans and specifications, construction, alteration, or operation and maintenance, or when requested by the owner to address questions regarding the safety of the impounding structure.

The Department requests the authority to establish a consulting committee to address concerns related to Lake Accotink Dam (inventory number 059006), owned by the Fairfax County Park Authority. The Fairfax County Park Authority has agreed to the establishment of a consulting committee.

Ms. Howard Cooper advised that the Department does not yet have an exact amount for the cost of the committee but expenses are not expected to exceed \$75,000, based on current projects being completed. by the Army Corps of Engineers. Any costs exceeding \$75,000 would again need to come before the Board.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Mason moved the following:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the appointment of a consulting committee to evaluate the hydrologic and hydraulic aspects of Lake Accotink Dam, inventory number 059006, to satisfy questions of safety related to the alteration and operation and maintenance of the impounding structure.

The Board authorizes all costs and expenses incurred by the consulting committee to be paid from the Dam Safety Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund in accordance with §10.1-603.19 item C. Such costs and expenses shall not exceed \$75,000.

The Board further authorizes the Department to communicate this approval to the Virginia Resources Authority (VRA) so that cost incurred may be reimbursed from the Fund.

Ms. Saacke Blunk seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Motion to Prioritize Wetlands and Buffer Restoration through Secondary Considerations – Ms. Watlington Jones

Ms. Watlington Jones advised that this issue had been brought to the Board by a member. The intent is to craft a policy statement that encourages Districts to prioritize practices that conserve, establish, and project wetlands and riparian buffers, especially in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act localities, where conservation issues may be found on agricultural lands.

Ms. Mason noted that the Commonwealth is striving to meet its riparian and habitat goals. She advised that one step that may help reach these goals would be to highlight those practices used to offset issues on agricultural lands in the Chesapeake Bay Preservation Act localities.

BOARD ACTION

Ms. Mason moved the following:

Whereas Virginia is striving to meet its wetland and riparian buffer restoration goals;

Whereas, the Virginia Agricultural Best Management Practices Cost-Share (VACS) Program provides financial incentives and technical assistance to producers to implement and install conservation practices that are highly effective for pollution load reduction, and

Whereas, practices that conserve, establish, or project wetlands and riparian buffers provide additional benefits including erosion control, terrestrial and aquatic fauna and flora habitat, contributions to healthy waters, carbon storage, and climate resiliency support.

Therefore, the Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board strongly encourages Soil and Water Conservation Districts to prioritize these practices for VACS secondary considerations, particularly in Chesapeake Bay Preservation Area localities where conservation may exist on agricultural lands.

Ms. Saacke Blunk seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

Approval of Additional Funding for the Dam Safety and Floodplain Management Local Government Pilot Project (Project) – Wendy Howard Cooper

Ms. Howard Cooper advised that staff was asking the Board to amend a previous motion regarding the a project with the Army Corps of Engineers Norfolk District. Previously \$300,000 for this project has been approved. The motion will provide an additional \$700,000 to the project budget, providing a total of \$1,000,000 in funding.

BOARD ACTION

Mr. Ford moved the following:

The Virginia Soil and Water Conservation Board approves the use of up to \$700,000 from the Dam Safety, Flood Prevention and Protection Assistance Fund (Fund) for the Dam Safety and Floodplain Management Local Government Pilot Project (Project). The Board grants the Department of Conservation and Recreation the authority to administer the Project and to enter any agreements, contracts and memorandums of agreements or understandings necessary to administer the Project.

Mr. Newton seconded and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYE: Arnason, Wilson, Saacke-Blunk, Ford, Mason, Maybury, Newton. O'Brien

NAY: None

The motion carried.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Director Cristman advised that he had received news from the University of Virginia Leadership Institute that Mr. Glover is the recipient of the McCarthy Award for his work on the Small Farm Outreach Program.

There was no additional public comment.

NEXT MEETINGS

The Board will meet in September 2021, and again in December 2021. Dates and times are to be determined.

ADJOURN

There was no further business and the meeting adjourned at 11:50 a.m.