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722-B East Queen Street  
 Strasburg, VA 22657  
 (540) 465-2424, Ext. 5  
[www.lfswcd.org](http://www.lfswcd.org)

March 11, 2021

**MINUTES**

The March Board Meeting was held electronically using the WebEx Conference Service in accordance with Chapter 1283 of the 2020 Acts of Assembly and in compliance with the provisions of 2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia. A recording of the meeting is available at: <https://www.lfswcd.org>.

Those attending via the WebEx meeting platform were:

**LFSWCD Directors and Associate Directors**

Richard Hoover, Chairman  
 Joan Comanor, Vice Chairwoman  
 Mary Gessner  
 Kitty Hockman-Nicolas  
 Justin Mackay-Smith  
 James Martin  
 Paul Burkholder  
 Jim Fagan  
 Wayne Webb  
 HB Simpson  
 Kermit Gaither  
 James Martin  
 Ira Richards  
 Corey Childs

**LFSWCD Staff Members**

Dana Gochenour  
 Ali Sloop  
 Nick Livesay  
 Allyson Ponn  
 Sheryl Ferguson

**Absent Directors or Staff:**

Sam Truban (on leave)

**Cooperating Agency Representatives in Attendance:**

Debbie Cross, Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation  
 Brent Barriteau, USDA, Natural Conservation Service

**Motion is needed to conduct an electronic meeting due to the declaration of emergency related to COVID-19. Motion made by HB Simpson, seconded by Joan Comanor. Motion passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>		<b>Name</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Abstain</b>
Richard Hoover	X				Kermit Gaither	X		
Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb	X		



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Mr. Hoover called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.

**Motion made to approve the February 2021 minutes. Motion made by Joan Comanor, seconded by Wayne Webb. Motion passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>		<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Richard Hoover	X				Kermit Gaither	X		
Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb	X		

**Chairman’s Report:**

Chairman Dick Hoover thanked all Staff and welcomed Sarah Fleming as the new Administrative Specialist.

Mr. Hoover requested the Board’s endorsement of the Chairman’s approval of \$172.95 for the purchase, from Amazon, of a suitable desk chair for the work station of the Administrative Specialist.

**Motion made for the purchase approval by Joan Comanor, seconded by HB Simpson. Motion Passed.**

**Voting Ballot is as follows.**

<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>		<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Richard Hoover	X				Kermit Gaither	X		
Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb	X		

Chairman Hoover asked Debbie Cross for her thoughts on the Governor’s Budget Appropriations. She replied that it looked like we may have a very robust program for next year. However, the budget had not yet been signed.

Dana Gochenour & Allyson Ponn attended the Clarke County Budget review held the latter part of February.



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Joan Comanor will be attending the Shenandoah County Budget Request meeting 3/11/2021 @ 1:00pm.

Wayne Webb asked for an update on the shredder purchase that was approved in the February meeting. Dana replied that staff was in the process of researching options for a future purchase.

### **Treasurer's Report:**

As of the current meeting, February's Bank Statements had not been received/approved. Signature cards have been updated with First Bank. Dick Hoover, Joan Comanor, James Martin and Sarah Fleming were added to the signature cards whereas Amanda Campbell and Bernard "Bud" Nagelvoort have been removed.

Jim made note that the building had been sold in January. The lease remained the same.

Debbie Cross, DCR, requested January's Treasurer's Report be included with the March Report.

### **Technical Reports:**

**Senior Conservation Specialist, Dana Gochenour:** Nothing to add to written report.

Things are going well. Dana formally welcomed Sarah to her first Board Meeting.

Joan raised the question of training between Amanda and Sarah/Staff with the new distance guidelines being tightened within the offices. Brent elaborated on these restrictions saying they were direct orders from President Biden in occurrence with an early Executive Order. There is much pushback on these restrictions from USDA but no way to influence the order. Corey Childs expressed concerns of how this may hurt our programs, but understood the USDA/Brent had no control over it. Debbie Cross read an excerpt from an email giving some hope for future exemption. Use of the Community Center Room was discussed as an option for a training area if needed.

**Conservation Specialist, Sam Truban:** N/A

**Conservation Specialist, Ali Sloop:** Nothing to add to written report.



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**Conservation Specialist, Nick Livesay:** Nothing to add to written report. Mr. Hoover asked about the Community Garden activities. Nick added that Allyson Ponn has a student from the Smithsonian-School of Conservation helping with basic maintenance and handicap accessible areas.

A request was made by Wayne Webb to see an example of a Conservation Plan for one of the many Waste Storage projects. Nick was happy to get an example to him.

**Education and Program Support Specialist, Allyson Ponn:** Nothing to add to written report. When asked about the Clarke County Budget meeting she reported that it went well. She and Dana provided the latest newsletter as well as the annual report and an update on the many conservation and educational projects.

**Contractor for Conservation Services, Sheryl Ferguson:** Nothing to add to written report.

**Alliance for the Shenandoah Valley: Joan Comanor**

In addition to the Solar Grant in the written report they have been made aware of another Grant for Environmental Justice Activities.

**Conservation Easements Committee:**

Mr. Richards had nothing to add.

**Conservation Technical Committee:**

In addition to the written report, there was discussion of the need to add a variance or to adjust the cost-estimate list due to rising cost of materials within the construction of a project, or the time between the initial bids and project start dates.

Corey requested motion to approve the new projects and project increases outlined in the CTC's written report. Mary Gessner seconded the motion with the addition of Contract 13-20-0020, submitted by Nick Livesay, for a FR-3 project with a VCAS increase of \$857.00 and a Tax Credit of \$36.56 (Total project cost of \$5,628.56).

Wayne Webb requested the items be voted in separate motions. Corey withdrew his initial motion to grant Mr. Webb's request.



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A motion was made, to approve the projects outlined in the written report submitted from the CTC, by Corey Childs. This motion was seconded by Mary Gessner. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.

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Richard Hoover	X				Kermit Gaither	X		
Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb		X	

Mary Gessner made motion for approval of the FR-3 project, Contract# 13-20-0020. This motion was seconded by Corey Childs. Motion passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>		<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Richard Hoover	X				Kermit Gaither	X		
Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb	X		

**Dam Safety Committee:**

All is quiet. Nothing to report.

**Education and Information Committee:**

**Motion:** The Board delegates authority to the Ed & Info Committee to select the District's scholarship nomination to the VASWCD by the end of March. Motion made by Joan Comanor and seconded by Kitty Hockman-Nicholas. Motion passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>		<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
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Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb	X		



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**Finance Committee:**

Motion was made to approve the Finance Meeting Minutes held on 1/17/2021. Motion was made by Wayne Webb and seconded by Joan Comanor. Motion passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.

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Richard Hoover	X				Kermit Gaither	X		
Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb	X		

**Legislative Committee:** Paul Burkholder

Paul will be sending out an email to Team Members to request contact information as to create a more broad/useful directory.

**Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Committee:** Wayne Webb

Nothing to add to written report.

**Operations Committee:**

Nothing to add to written report.

**Personnel Committee:**

Mr. Simpson gave an apology for the “COVID Statement” being missed at the start of the Personnel Committee meeting. Debbie Cross, DCR, reminded us all that this is a mandatory statement (General Assemblies Motion for an Electronic Meeting Statement) that must be presented and motion made for approval/vote at the beginning of all virtual meetings. She also reminded us that roll call votes for all motions must be logged and submitted with the meeting minutes. This is not a DCR rule but a FOIA necessity for compliance. Please make sure this process is completed for all future meetings.



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**Shenandoah County Water Resources Advisory Committee: Joan Comanor**

Joan reported that the March 10, 2021 meeting was met with lots of good discussion. The Shenandoah County Planner, Tyler Hinkle, is leading efforts to engage citizens and develop a plan, similar to one on the Elizabeth River of Virginia which has gained lots of Citizen Advocates, for protecting streams that run into the river. The Easement Committee is looking into sending out letters to property owners holding more than 50 acres of prime and unique soil, along the river, to see if they may be interested in obtaining conservation easements for said land.

**Shenandoah Pure Water Forum: Dick Hoover**

Nothing to report.

**Urban BMP Committee:**

N/A; Marietta not in Attendance

**Natural Resources Conservation Service: Brent Barriteau**

Brent met with the Town of Strasburg to discuss converting part of the River Walk to a Native Wildflower & Native Grasses area. This would be in an area along the river of approximately 3 acres. His point of contact with the Town is Michelle Bixler. However, she has taken a new Job in Staunton. He is looking forward to a beautiful wildflower meadow.

Brent also shared that they have been working on an Ag. Land Easement for a 400 acre farm in Clarke County, to which they were able to gain a 214 acre permanent easement. They have been working on this project since 2019. Previously, the land owners did a Farm & Ranch Plan with an approximate 40-50 acres of their property. This puts over half of this particular farm into NRCS programs.

NRCS took in approximately 35 applications for Environmental Quality Incentives. These had a December 2020 deadline and they hope to start the pre-approval process the 1<sup>st</sup> week of May 2021.

The NRCS is still receiving Conservation Stewardship Program Applications.

Mr. Webb asked for more information on the Water quality email that was include in the written report, to which Brent explained that a PHD Student with Virginia Tech wants to perform a water qualities study within the Shenandoah Valley area. The study would focus on water qualities downstream of pasture lands that have participated in BMP projects. NRSC was asked to help provide a list of land owners in specific areas so that the student could make contact to gain permission/access to properties for these water samples. Brent has asked for assistance on contacts from the LFSWCD Conservationist Team.



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Kitty Hockman-Nicholas welcomed the student to Hedgebrook Farms and was curious to know why Opequon Creek was not included in the study.

**Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation: Debbie Cross**

We are now in the Budget Prep Stage.

District Budgets are due June 30<sup>th</sup> 2021

Desktop Procedures will need to be updated.

Quarterlies are due April 15<sup>th</sup> 2021

FOIA & COIA training must be taken every 2 years by Board Members. COIA will come up in 2021 and FOIA in 2022.

Cost Share – Ag BMP’s Field Verifications Due by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup> 2021, there will also be Random BMP Checks (previously called Spot Checks)

New Attachment Process for Transfers of BMP

Lots of meetings/trainings available virtually (see report)

Area Spring Meeting April 27<sup>th</sup> (Virtual)

**Virginia Cooperative Extension: Corey Childs:**

Commercial Pesticide Applicator Recertification is Due – this is the online application renewal for Pesticide licensing for VEDEX. They had extended it a few times but there will be no further extension from VEDEX.

The Spotted Lantern Fly has now been found as far South as Mt. Jackson in Shenandoah County. At this time they are not sure of any agricultural impact other than to vineyards.

Ext. Offices are hoping to open up limited space classes moving forward based on County regulations Statewide.

**Virginia Department of Forestry: Matt Wolanski**

N/A





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**Chesapeake Bay Foundation:**

N/A

**Department of Environmental Quality:**

N/A

**Other Business:**

**Motion to Adjourn: Motion made by Wayne Webb, seconded by Kitty Hockman-Nicholas. Motion passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.**

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Richard Hoover	X				Kermit Gaither	X		
Joan Comanor	X				Kitty Hockman-Nicholas	X		
Ira Richards	X				HB Simpson	X		
Corey Childs	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
Mary Gessner	X				Justin MacKay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Wayne Webb	X		

The meeting adjourned at 12:05p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Sarah R. Fleming*