Caledonia County
Natural Resources Conservation District

**Caledonia County NRCD**
**Board Meeting Minutes**
**August 24, 2026**

Present: Emily Finnegan, John Drew, Willie Nickerson, Curt Busto, Matt Langlais, Dave Dore, Ian Balcom

Voting: John Drew, Willie Nickerson, Curt Busto, Ian Balcom (joined at 11:47)

Open meeting: Willie called the meeting to order at 11:36.

Approve June & July meeting minutes – Emily did a quick review of what the June and July meetings covered. John made a motion to approve the minutes from the June meeting and the July executive session meeting. Matt suggested that in the future, in addition to indicating who is present at the meeting, we should also indicate who is a voting board member. Emily will do that going forward.

Willie pointed out that the July meeting minutes documented that the board went into an executive session but did not document the outcome of that executive session. Matt clarified that in an executive session, the discussion is out of public view, but any decisions made in the executive session should be public in the minutes.

Emily added to the July board meeting minutes that the DM performance review was approved with notes and uploaded the updated minutes to this board meeting folder as well as the next board meeting folder.

Curt seconded John's motion to approve the June minutes; motion passed.

Willie made a motion to approve the July 7 minutes with the addition discussed; John seconded; motion passed.

FY26 Budget Reconciliation & Memo – Emily went through the FY26 budget reconciliation memo. Emily explained that this year was a transition year in Quickbooks, and moving forward the board can expect more information and clarity from the new system. Emily will not be providing a project-by-project budget to actual document, as that document can't be produced by Quickbooks and in the past Emily has spent a lot of time creating that document in Excel. Moving forward, the board will see an overall organizational budget to actual document, and project by project budget to actual information as requested.

Several board members agreed that the overall financial health of the organization was more important to them than the profit and loss by project, although all agreed that information was important for Emily. Dave chimed in and corroborated Emily's comments on the FY26 budget reconciliation and memo. The board had no additional questions about the FY26 budget.

FY27 Budget – Emily pointed out a few notable things in the FY27 budget document shared with the board. The FY27 budget was created with a step-wise increase for each staff member according to the VT salary chart for FY27. Emily has not changed those hourly salary amounts in Quickbooks yet because

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she was awaiting board approval of the FY27 budget. In future years, Emily hopes to present the board with a budget for the upcoming fiscal year in June so that the salary step-wise increases can happen on July 1. For this year, Emily will provide an additional payroll with retroactive pay for each employee.

Emily also pointed out CCNRCD's new approach to professional development opportunities for staff. Emily reviewed some grants that were included in the FY27 budget but were not secured yet.

John made a motion to approve the CCNRCD FY27 Budget as presented; Willie seconded; motion passed.

NEK Union Capacity Building Project – Dave Dore of Structural Integrity was hired on behalf of the NEK Union to work with the three NEK NRCD's on a road map for potentially sharing services and/or information in a more structured way than in the past. Guiding questions for the conversation included:

- From your perspective as a supervisor, what does the Supervisory Union mean to you right now - is it something you feel in your work with the District, or does it feel more theoretical?
- What kinds of decisions do you feel should always stay at the District level, no matter what a shared structure looks like?
- From where you sit as a supervisor, what are areas where you hope to see the District's finance and administrative systems strengthened?

Project updates - Emily

- Americorps position application – Taylor mostly developed this proposal, and Taylor and Emily both worked with John prior to submission
- Jackson Dam – Emily signed contract with SLR for 30% design; Emily mentioned that the agreement they signed with SLR does not represent the full proposed budget for the 30% design because CCNRCD does not have that full amount secured; it represents the amount they have secured and must be used before December 31 2026
- Sleepers Weir – construction scheduled for early/mid-September

Review next meeting schedule – Emily

- Weir 4 removal – will begin September 7th or 8th; or September 15th
- Thursday September 17th from 10:30 to 3:30 – NEK Tri-District Meeting (Orleans County NRCD); Willie and Matt can attend; Curt and Ian could potentially attend if there was a remote option; Emily will follow up
- Tuesday October 13th from 11:30 to 1:30 (SWA field trip scheduled in Orange for 12:30 – if there is interest we can reschedule the board meeting)
- Board interest in SWA field day; regular board meeting rescheduled for Monday October 26; Emily will correct calendar invites
- Tuesday November 17th – VACD Annual Meeting
- Monday December 14th from 11:30 to 1:30 – regular board meeting

John closed the meeting at 1:40, Willie seconded; motion passed.

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