



Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District

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MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

November 25, 2024

ATTENDANCE:

Directors:

Ralph Child
Paul Lauzon
Dennis Egan
Justus Martin
Steve Gokey

Staff

Kristin Ballou
Devin Normandeau
Allisa Blanchard

- 1) **Meeting was called to order:** called meeting to order at 9:02 AM
- 2) **District technician interviews:** District technician interviews, conducted by Justus Martin, Kristin Ballou, Devin Normandeau, Ralph Child, and Ryan Cunningham were discussed.

Motion to hire Sarah Otis as District Technician, at a salary of \$42,000 per year, with 12 months probationary period: made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Steve Gokey, carried.
- 3) **Motion withdrew due to lack of clarity:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Steve Gokey, carried.
- 4) **Motion to hire Sarah Otis as District Technician, at the salary of \$42,000 per year, with reconsideration of salary after a 12 month probationary period:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Steve Gokey, carried.
- 5) **Hiring of a second district technician.** The board conducted a review of potential staffing expansion, focusing on the feasibility of adding a second district technician position. During the meeting, members engaged in a detailed discussion with Kristin regarding the financial viability of this proposed expansion, which centered on two primary considerations: grant funding opportunities and projected projects. Members recognized that an additional technician would enable expanded service capabilities, particularly in offering enhanced educational outreach including to town highway departments. The potential increase in hydroseeding project partnerships was highlighted as a key strategic benefit of this proposed staffing expansion.

Motion to hire Shayla Pfendler as District Technician, at the salary of \$42,000 per year, with reconsideration of salary after a 12 months probationary period: made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Ralph Child, carried.

6) Motion to close unused CWICNY Community Bank account: made by Steve Gokey, 2nd by Justus Martin.

7) Motion to open a Community Bank account for CRF 7 grant: made by Justus Martin, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, Abstained: Steve Gokey and Dennis Eagan, carried.

8) Resignation policy. The districts resignation policy and the need for the update in the resignation policy in the employee handbook was discussed. All members agreed the added clarity would be a benefit for all.

Motion to amend resignation policy in employee handbook: made by Justus Martin, 2nd by Steve Gokey.

9) Tax exemption. Kristin informed the board members that the district's New York State tax exemption letter does not have the correct address and is in need of an update.

Motion to update the district's address on NYS tax exemption certification: made by Justus Martin, 2nd by Paul Lauzon. Carried.

10) Leave roll over exemption. Kristin presented data highlighting the significant accumulated leave nearing year-end expiration for herself and Devin Normandeau, stemming from extensive project demands and limited staffing support this year. Given the year-end timing and critical staffing needs, taking the expiring leave was deemed impractical, particularly with two new hires scheduled to start in December. After careful consideration, the board made an exceptional decision to allow both employees to carry forward their unused PTO, mandating that these hours must be utilized by year end 2025.

Motion to allow a one-time exception to the year-end paid time off roll over policy for Kristin Ballou and Devin Normandeau, with rolled over balance to be used by year end 2025: made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Ralph Child. Carried.

11) At 9:44 AM Executive session began motion made by: Paul Lauzon, 2nd Steve Gokey, dismissing Devin Normandeau and Allisa Blanchard.

12) At 10:08 AM Executive session ended by : Justus Martin, 2nd by Steve Gokey.

13) Motion to adjourn meeting at 10:10 AM: made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Steve Gokey

Respectfully submitted,

Allisa Blanchard
Secretary to the Board