PMNRCD Board Meeting Agenda
August 13, 2025 – **3:30 PM**
PMNRCD Zoom Number (https://zoom.us/j/9041299305)
Call to order: 3:35PM
Present: Don Markie, Darryl Kuehne, Katy Crumley, Hilary Solomon, Sadie Brown, Whitney Burgess, Jaden Groff, Vicki Pattison-Willits, Jennifer Alexander, Katie Stiles, Olivia Carlson

Approve July meeting minutes: Don motioned and Darryl seconded. Minutes were approved unanimously.

Financial Summary

Quarterly financial report: Update from Hilary. Account reconciliation is going well, and she is pleased with progress. There is approx. two months left to do on some items but close to being finalized. Some of the work for the financial report will likely be done in conjunction with Sage from Structural Integrity, which may shift the completion timeline slightly.

Hilary noted that the P and L numbers might shift. The account currently shows a significant surplus $ amount, this is an anomaly and does not reflect true cash flow – this has happened because of outstanding invoices at year end. Cash flow has proven more challenging (due to various reasons including higher wages and more employees). The year-end financial picture will be clearer by the next meeting. Discussion regarding potential implications should there be a surplus at year end were started. Motion: to approve the year-end financial report at the next meeting which was approved by Don and Katy.

Guest Speaker
N/A

Partner Reports

Olivia Carlson (NRCS)- Olivia discussed her day out with Whitney yesterday (12/08/2025) and how lovely it was. Olivia shared high praise for Whitney and how great a job she did explaining practices to producers and her natural ability to build relationships. She looks forward to seeing Whitney's plans for future work and mentioned she has a great specialty that not everyone has.

Fiscal Year General EQIP Signup date is August 22, 2025. They have already had a lot of producers sign up. PMNRCD staff have been joining NRCS staff for farm visits related to LFP sign ups and that has been going well. NRCS staff meeting is tomorrow (8/14/25) – one of the key points for discussion will be energy practices. The meeting is onsite at Greg Cox's farm. July Wetland trainings were cancelled – new dates to be determined. The Farm Bureau annual meeting is scheduled for September 25th.
Olivia would like to know ahead of time when the in person board meeting will be held as she would like to join us in the office. Tentatively September. Katie would also like to join in person.

Olivia Butterman (FSA)- Not present (out in field)

Angie Allen (DEC) – Not present

Katie Stiles – In exciting news Katie is preparing the process of hiring a new F/T employee who will have a dual role as a Conservation Planner/Project Manager. She reports that projects are on track, finances are being brought up to date and overall operations are going well.
There was a retirement lunch with Nanci last month where RNRCD board members celbrated her role with the District and which provided closure.

Brief Staff Reports
Hilary invited staff present at the meeting to share one positive development from the last month that they are excited about and one "thorny" issue.

Positive: Hilary is excited to be working with Sage Ruth and Dave Dore of Structural Integrity: particularly on opportunities to identify ways in which we can strengthen team communications and improve how we work together. Hilary has been working on identifying potential projects through the clean water service provider. Most gully projects have been deemed ineligible, which has been frustrating. Permission has been granted from Angie and Chris to move forward with a gully in Fair Haven – however the timeline for work may be too slow to contain the gully to the property. The gully is quickly migrating beyond the property boundary.

Major progress to report for the Fairhaven (FHV-06) storm water project: the steel pipes for directional drilling will be delivered to the site next week, and the R-Tanks are currently in production, ready for installation next month. The town has granted permission for storage of materials on-site. Directional drilling to install the pipework is scheduled for September 9th and all are welcome to come and observe.

Jennifer- highlighted the strong sign-up for the local funding pool. She noted a new update that carbon soil amendments and lime can now be applied in the same field during the same management cycle, which has been well-received by participants in the soil amendment classes. There appears to be some missing data in Go-Crop, and Jennifer is hoping Lindsey Ruhl can help locate it. She is also very pleased with the changes Averie has made to the timesheets, which have streamlined her work. No thorns to report!

Whitney- reported that the soil amendment and brush management practices of LFP are proving especially popular. She has enjoyed the opportunity to connect with local producers at the local funding pool sign-ups (one day w NRCS/Olivia), where she has met a few new producers. Soil sampling is progressing well. No thorns to report!

Sadie- has been assisting Hilary with wrapping up spring invoicing. Next week, a new sprinkler system (funded by an LCBP grant) is being installed at the nursery. The new system will improve summer watering efficiency, addressing the challenge of keeping the plants watered during the summer heatwaves. Sadie and Vicki have been working on finalizing the workplan for the latest LCBP Nursery grant (Bareroot Bed Expansion and Equipment Purchase), which will be submitted later today. Finally, she is really excited at the opportunity to purchase a new tractor for the nursery. Hilary mentioned she has found a tractor for sale locally which might be of interest. Don also mentioned that he is planning on selling his tractor that might meet the needs of the nursery. No thorns to report!

Averie- Not present.

Jaden- Water chestnut removal work is progressing well, and as of today all sites have been visited at least once. A highlight from today's fieldwork was following beaver tracks through the lily pads and Paul

finding a mussel species at the site which he has not seen since the 1990s in Vermont! Jaden is now beginning outreach efforts as part of the Lake Wise work for Sunset/Sunrise Lakes and Perch Pond. No thorns to report!

Vicki - has been settling back into the swing of work after a great trip to Australia – it is good to be back. She has been helping draft the nursery grant work plan and is really excited to see how it is going to positively increase resources and impact operations / project work. She is also working on drafting the press release and helping with the final report for the Flower Brook SGA/FFI project. She will be focusing work on expanding outreach over the next few months - goal is to attend at least three town council and/or conservation commission meetings for networking. She has been in contact with Clara at Middletown Springs and plans to attend the next meeting.

Old Business

Workshop August 21st – PMNRCD will be co-hosting a double-header workshop, *Different Grazing Strategies for Small Ruminants*, at Ken and Laura's farms in partnership with UVM Extension and Bennington County Conservation District. Preparations are going well, with approximately 20 attendees expected. Mailings went out today, and emails have already been sent. All are welcome to attend. For more info, contact Whitney.

CWSP Update – Hilary attended the recent year-end annual review for the South Lake CWSP with Chris Rottler and Angie Allen. There is an increasing workload due to more projects and added bureaucracy, but it is hoped this will ease overtime. Hilary will bring more details regarding new CWSP policy at September board meeting.

An opportunity has emerged through discussions with Chris regarding UVM senior students potentially assisting build local capacity with the Lake Bomoseen Environmental Alliance as part of their service/Capstone project, (as well as potentially supporting other outreach work). The project will be introduced to students at a campus meeting on August 28th, with Vicki planning to attend.

Chris is pushing for the PMNRCD audit. This will be discussed with Sage and the option to do a dry run so we can understand better how it works and what is required.

Changes to Clean Water Funding Policy include the introduction of more complex decision trees, potentially making applications more onerous, e.g. by making it harder for applicants to choose funding sources or for folks to determine project placement. These changes are a concern because they may deter contractors (especially smaller companies) from pursuing work on low-tech projects (e.g., strategic woody addition). As an example, Red Start have already indicated they may no longer submit contract proposals for such work.

NRCD legislative update: Hilary represented PMNRCD at an all-day advocacy training event held in Thetford on July 28th. The date for Districts Day in Montpelier is scheduled for February. This will involve testifying and normal advocacy work. Districts will be asking for funds again (although a reduced amount).

PMNRCD is supposed to host a legislative event– time is short as a busy month – maybe we could invite legislators to the upcoming workshop?

HR work: Hilary has introduced SI and Sage to all staff via email. Sage has also sent out an email to all staff inviting them to schedule an interview with her.

Staff / Board Discussion on Updated Staff Standards:

Katy shared the updated staff standards document which was recently emailed to all staff. Since the initial draft two new sections (IRA Contributions and Expense Reporting) have been added. Katy thanked the team for taking the time to read the document and welcomed all input, reflections and thoughts. Goal is to finalize this document within the next three months.

Katy thanked all staff for keeping time sheets up to date, following and dealing with coding changes quickly.

Ag Soil Sampling: Katy thanked Ag staff for entering last year's soil sampling data into the report and Whitney for sending monthly reports. Jennifer suggested storing USDA maps physically in a shared folder in the office – she is not comfortable sharing them on the Google Drive (which in the past was restricted). Katy agreed this was a good option: ensuring files are available and shared is the key.

Soil sampling spreadsheets will now include columns for tracks, field numbers and maps– with the aim to have all information ready within a two-week period. Whitney asked for clarification for farmers who do not have track and field numbers. It was agreed other information including acreage, the number of samples and farm name will suffice.

New Business

Regina Benko update: Infinity Designs (our web/tech support contractor) are closing the business so we will be losing tech services and website support. Hilary managed to pay for the PMNRCD web domain name as a non-registrant (was due to expire Sept 9th) meaning we will not lose it. Whitney has unresolved email issues. Staff will explore solutions and potential new tech partners over the next couple of months (this might be something SI can help us with).

Darryl mentioned the annual Rutland County Farmer's meeting on Sept 25th in Castleton. Email and Flyer invites are to be sent out – all are welcome.

Adjourned at 4:35 pm by Don and seconded by Darryl.