

# NORTH CAROLINA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BUSINESS SESSION COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES May 20, 2026

Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services  
Division of Soil & Water Conservation  
Rowan County Community Center  
1965 Jake Alexander Blvd. West  
Salisbury, NC 28147

| Commission Members        | Guests                | Online Guests                      |
|---------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| Barbara Bleiweis, Chair   | Steven Porsen         | Shelby Kaplan                      |
| Gail Hughes               | Matt Collogan         | Stephanie Y Alston                 |
| Porche Spence             | Josh Vetter           | Samantha Allbee                    |
| Matt Reynolds             | Bruce Rider           | Taryn Thompson                     |
| Patrick Baker             | Jessica Stilt         | Lorien R Deaton                    |
| James Lamb                | Chester Lowder        | Sam Edwards                        |
| Stephen Harris            | Levi Preston          | Lisa Fine                          |
| <b>Commission Counsel</b> | Rob Baldwin           | Lindsay R Edwards                  |
| Philip Reynolds           | Kelli Isenhour        | Rachel Smith                       |
| <b>Guests</b>             | Frankie Singleton     | Mikey Woodie                       |
| David Williams            | Max Ralston James Jr. | Vivien Zhong                       |
| Julie Henshaw             | Chris Sloop           | Paula Day                          |
| Michael Shepherd          | Darren Layton         | Brody W Brown                      |
| Bryan Evans               | Brad Moore            | Delmon Hardee                      |
| Matt Safford              | <b>Online Guests</b>  | Michelle M Raquet                  |
| Rick McSwain              | Aaron Franks          | Nora Deamer                        |
| Kristina Fischer          | Elise McLaughlin      | Jason Byrd                         |
| Allie Dinwiddie           | Nicholas Williams     | Teresa Furr                        |
| Tinesha McNeil            | Amanda Sand           | Kayla McCoy – Wilkes SWCD          |
| John Beck                 | Charles Bass, III     | Sullivan Barnes – FPAC-NCRS,<br>NC |
| Amber Rights              | Anne Coan             |                                    |
| Ken Parks                 | Mitch Peele           |                                    |

**I. CALL TO ORDER:** Chair Bleiweis called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m.

**II. PRELIMINARY:** Chair Bleiweis charged the Commission members to declare any conflict of interest, or appearance of conflict of interest, that may exist for agenda items under consideration, as mandated by the State Ethics Act.

James Lamb recuses himself from the Sampson County request for post approval (Item 12C), due to him being a Soil and Water Supervisor in that county.

Welcome – Cell phones set to silent

Rowan County Welcome – Mr. Bruce Rider gave the welcome and spoke of its history.

### III. BUSINESS:

1. **Approval of Agenda:** Chair Bleiweis asked for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Gail Hughes moved to approve the agenda, and Commissioner James Lamb seconded. Motion carried.
2. **Approval of Minutes:** Chair Bleiweis asked for a combined vote for minutes, unless a correction was needed. Commissioner Porche Spence moved to approve all minutes, and Commissioner James Lamb seconded. Motion carried.
  - A. March 10, 2026, Work Session Meeting Minutes
  - B. March 18, 2026, Business Meeting Minutes
  - C. April 14, 2026, Special Called – Business Meeting Minutes

### INFORMATION ITEMS

3. **Division Report:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Director David Williams to present. Director Williams expressed his thanks to Rowan County staff for their hospitality and enjoyment of the tours. Director Williams provided a division update that included current staffing levels and vacancies, and progress related to the USDA Block Grant. Application process and funding. The report also included upcoming training.

#### 2026 Commission Meetings

- June 16, Virtual Special Session for StRAP Allocation
- July 29, Raleigh (Virtual 7/21)
- Potential Commission Retreat afternoon of 7/28
- September 16, Orange Co. (Virtual WS 9/8)
- November 18, Location TBD (Virtual WS on 11/10)

Director Williams' Powerpoint presentation (Attachment 3) is included as an official part of the minutes.

4. **Association Report:** Chair Bleiweis recognized President Hughes to present. President Hughes shared the following: Several members attended the NCDA Fly In in Washington. Members have been participating in the NC Agricultural Water Strategic Planning initiatives. NC Association will be hosting the SE NACD meeting August 9 -12 in Cherokee. Registration information will go out shortly. Additionally, she thanked Bryan Evans for all his work on behalf of the association. The Association's written report (Attachment 4) is included as an official part of the minutes.

5. **NRCS Report:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Acting State Conservationist, Mr. Julius George to present. Mr. George's report (Attachment 5) will be included as an official part of the minutes.

## ACTION ITEMS

6. **Consent Agenda:** Chair Bleiweis noted that these items were previously discussed in the work session and could be voted on together with no changes. Commissioner Patrick Baker made a motion to approve them, which Commissioner Matthew Reynolds seconded. The motion passed.

### A. Supervisor Appointments:

1. Eugene White, Alexander SWCD, filling the appointed position of Myles Payne for remaining 2024 -2028.
2. (JD) Scott Sink, Alexander SWCD, filling the elected position of Eugene White who moved to vacant appointed seat, for the remaining 2022-2026.
3. William F. Brown, IV, Burke SWCD, filling the elected position of Evan Crawly for remaining 2024-2028
4. Arnold Weatherman, Davie SWCD, filling the appointed position of Kevin Marion for the remaining 2024-2028
5. Noah Greenway, Vance District, filling the appointed position of George Pegram, Jr., for the remaining 2022-2026.

### B. Supervisor Contracts:

| County     | Contract Number | Supervisor Name | BMP                                    | Contract Amount | Comments                                         |
|------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------------------------|
| Bladen     | 09-2026-111     | Edward Hester   | Water Supply Well                      | 6,646           |                                                  |
| Clay       | 22-2026-003     | Glen Cheeks     | Agricultural Road Repair/Stabilization | \$18,883        | Applicant: Herbert Cheeks                        |
| Henderson  | 45-2026-001     | Wayne Carland   | Non-Field Farm Road Repair             | \$5,152         | DBA: Carland Farms INC Supplement to 45-2025-008 |
| Pasquotank | 70-2026-007     | Glenn Harris    | Residue and Tillage Management         | \$2,253         |                                                  |
| Scotland   | 83-2026-003     | Tracy Grice     | Cropland Conversion to Trees           | \$2,602         |                                                  |
| Wayne      | 96-2026-009     | Thomas Uzzell   | Cropland Conversion to Grass           | \$5,741         | Applicant: Thomas Uzzell Farms Inc               |

Total \$41,277

**C. Job Approval Authority Applicants for Consideration:**

| APPLICANT NAME     | EMPLOYER      | TYPE OF JAA REQUESTED                                      | JAA RECOMMENDED FOR APPROVAL   |
|--------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Justin Bledsoe     | Yadkin SWCD   | Submission of comparable NRCS JAA                          | Livestock Exclusion Fence      |
|                    |               |                                                            | Trough or Tank                 |
| Gabriela Castaneda | Davidson SWCD | Submission of comparable NRCS JAA                          | Conservation Cover             |
|                    |               |                                                            | Cover Crops                    |
|                    |               |                                                            | Critical Area Planting         |
|                    |               |                                                            | Cropland Conversion - Grass    |
|                    |               |                                                            | Cropland Conversion - Trees    |
|                    |               |                                                            | Field Border                   |
|                    |               |                                                            | Filter Strip                   |
|                    |               |                                                            | Heavy Use Area Protection      |
|                    |               |                                                            | Livestock Exclusion Fencing    |
|                    |               |                                                            | Pasture Renovation             |
|                    |               |                                                            | Prescribed Grazing             |
|                    |               |                                                            | Residue and Tillage Management |
|                    |               |                                                            | Riparian Buffer                |
|                    |               |                                                            | Sod-based Rotation             |
|                    |               |                                                            | Stripcropping                  |
|                    |               |                                                            | Trough or Tank                 |
| David Latta        | Orange SWCD   | Submission of completed designs, certifications and skills | Critical Area Planting         |
|                    |               |                                                            | Field Border                   |

|               |                    |                                                            |                                                                              |
|---------------|--------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Caleb Lippard | Orange SWCD        | Submission of completed designs, certifications and skills | Field Border                                                                 |
| Chelsea Ricks | Fishing Creek SWCD | Submission of comparable NRCS JAA                          | Cover Crops<br>Livestock Exclusion Fencing<br>Residue and Tillage Management |
| Lauren White  | Pitt SWCD          | Submission of completed designs, certifications and skills | Cover Crops                                                                  |

#### D. Technical Specialist Designations

Mr. Adam Hilton, Davidson Soil and Water Conservation District, Waste Utilization Planning/Nutrient Management (WUP/NM) category.

Mr. Jonathan Miller, Agriment Services Inc, Waste Utilization Planning/Nutrient Management (WUP/NM) category.

- 7. Additional Items Submitted Since Work Session:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Kristina Fischer to present nominations for supervisor appointments submitted after the May 12 work session. Ms. Fischer presented the additional supervisor appointments.

##### A. Supervisor Appointments:

- Julia Elmore, Catawba SWCD, filling the appointed position of Steve Killian who passed away, for remaining 2022 -2026.
- Brett Little, Catawba SWCD, filling the elected position of Julia Elmore who moved to vacant appointed seat, for the remaining 2022-2026.

Commissioner James Lamb made a motion to approve the appointments, which Commissioner Gail Hughes seconded. The motion passed.

There were no additional supervisor contracts for discussion.

- 8. Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) Round 2 and 3 Allocations:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Mr. Matt Safford to present. A revised copy of the report (Attachment 8A) is included as an official part of the minutes. Round 3 is still under review. Mr. Safford presented two action items for voting as follows:

The Division requests that the Commission approve the following awards:

- \$9,831,325 in funding to selected applications in Round 2 counties.

- \$774,459 in additional funding to selected applications in Round 1 Counties.

Commissioner Gail Hughes motioned to approve. Commissioner Porche Spence second. Motion carried.

**9. Request for Exception to Criteria For Extension of Previous Program Year Contracts Policy:**

Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Julie Henshaw to present.

Request approval of the following items:

1. Policy exception of the District Supervisor requirement to attend the first Commission meeting of the new fiscal year.
2. Delegation of extension authority to the Division Director. Contracts not approved by the Director may request extension to the Commission.

Commissioner Patrick Baker made a motion to approve them, which Commissioner Matthew Reynolds seconded. The motion passed.

**10. Inquiry Committee Findings:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Kristina Fischer to present. Ms. Fischer reported that at the March 2026 Commission meeting, two supervisors were sent to the Commission's Inquiry Committee for consideration.

Supervisor Robert Miller of Gates SWCD failed to attend five consecutive regularly schedule meetings beginning April 2025, however he did attend March 2026 board meeting. After deliberation, the Inquiry Committee voted that the matter be closed without further action.

Supervisor Shane Harris of Warren SWCD service began November 2024 and has not attended Basic Training. After deliberation, the Inquiry Committee determined that evidence of neglect of duty has occurred for Supervisor Harris, and he is referred to a hearing by the Commission. This hearing will take place in conjunction with the Business Session for July 29, 2026. The hearing will be held at 11:30am, and Supervisor Harris will be given the opportunity to appear either in-person or remotely. Correspondence will be sent to Supervisor Harris and his SWCD Board Chair by Certified Mail explaining the next steps.

**11. Managing Nutrients in NC: Watershed Rules, Achievements, & New Directions:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Allie Dinwiddie to present. Ms. Dinwiddie's presentation (Attachment 11) is included as an official part of the minutes.

**12. District Special Request** – John Beck gave a brief explanation and stated that there are three post approval actions needing consideration by the Commission. In each case, work began on the contract before receiving final approval. Letters from each district explaining their request were presented. Representatives for each district spoke on their behalf.

- A.** New Hannover SWCD Post-approval for contract 65-2025-501. Matt Collogan represented the county for the explanation.

Commissioner Patrick Baker motioned to approve. Commissioner Porche Spence second. Motion carried.

- B. Stanley SWCD Post-approval for Contract 84-2025-007,84-2026-003, 84-2026-007  
Chester Lowder represented the county for the explanation.

Commissioner Steve Harris motioned to approve. Commissioner Matt Reynolds second.  
Motion carried.

- C. Sampson SWCD Post – approval for Contract 82-2026-601. Henry Moore represented the county for the explanation.

Commissioner Patrick Baker motioned to approve. Commissioner Porche Spence second.  
Motion carried. Commissioner James Lamb recused himself from this vote.

The requests explaining the circumstances for each request are included (Attachments 12 A-C) as an official part of the minutes.

- 13. TRC Information Items: Chair Bleiweis recognized Mr. John Beck to present. These were information-only items presented during the work session. The follow-up will be covered in the TRC meeting.

- A. Grassed Waterways BMP Policy Update
- B. Maintenance Period Reduction Request

#### IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Anne Coan .(online) thanked Allie Dinwiddie for her presentation. Ms. Coan praised agriculture's progress in meeting nutrient reduction goals and recognized the contributions of the oversight committees, conservation districts, and staff. She acknowledged funding challenges for the cost-share program, especially with additional watershed needs, and suggested highlighting agriculture's successes to help secure additional funding from the General Assembly. She concluded by expressing pride in agriculture's accomplishments.

Chester Lowder thanked Allie for her presentation. He also thanked members for supporting Farmland Preservation Advocacy Day and encouraged continued outreach to legislators to secure additional funding for farmland preservation and conservation easement programs, citing strong demand and limited available funding. He also thanked members for supporting the Soil and Water Conservation Foundation and noted plans to expand fundraising efforts with district participation. Finally, he recognized agriculture's success in addressing water quality through a voluntary, collaborative approach, noting it has helped avoid mandatory regulatory programs while acknowledging that future challenges may require continued adaptation.

Brad Moore express concern regarding the Jordan Lake proposed rules. Allie D explained the rules and process.

Amanda Sand(online) thanked Allie for her work on the watershed project.

Darren Layton with Alamance – thank Josh and Brandy for training. Mr. Layton thinks the training can help with retention rate. He also discussed the partnership between the districts, commission and other agencies.

**VI. ADJOURNMENT:** The meeting adjourned at 11:47 a.m.

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David B. Williams, Director  
Division of Soil & Water Conservation, Raleigh, N.C.

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Tinesha McNeil, Recording Secretary

***These minutes were approved by the North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Commission on July 29, 2026.***