Cost Share Committee Meeting Minutes: October 19, 2026

Participants: Patrick Baker (Chair), Blake Henley, Jason Byrd, Rodney Taylor, Lee Holcomb, Rick McSwain, and Julie Henshaw. Other attendees included: John Beck (DSWC), Anne Coan (NCFB), Lorien Deaton (DSWC), Kristina Fischer (DSWC), and Darren Layton (Alamance SWCD).

I. Welcome & Purpose

Chairman Patrick Baker opened the meeting, welcomed attendees, and confirmed quorum. Several participants joined slightly after the start due to overlapping commitments. Julie reminded the group that meeting recordings are available in ShareFile for review.

Patrick reminded the Committee of its purpose:

- Review and evaluate policies across cost share programs.
- Ensure consistency, clarity, and alignment across programs.
- Develop and recommend revisions to program rules.
- BMP-specific decisions remain under each program's technical review committee.

II. Review of Draft September Meeting Minutes

Motion to approve: Rick McSwain

Second: Rodney Taylor

Motion passed unanimously.

III. Policy Review Items

1. Supervisor Attendance & Participation Requirements

Committee members agreed that allowing virtual or in-person attendance reduces burdens on supervisors and improves flexibility. Discussion emphasized efficiency and maintaining transparency while reducing unnecessary travel.

Revised language was approved as follows:

> To fulfill this requirement, a supervisor must participate in either the Commission work session or business meeting virtually or in-person. If the district supervisor presents at the work session, attendance is not required during the Business Meeting unless the Commission has outstanding questions or requests additional clarification following the work session presentation.

2. Cost Share Contracts on Government-Owned Property

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Committee reaffirmed statutory authority allowing projects on government-owned land when agricultural benefit is demonstrated. Examples included livestock exclusion fencing on school and municipal properties.

No revisions recommended.

3. Post-Approval of Contracts Policy (Vegetative Exception)

The committee discussed updating the outdated $3,500 vegetative threshold and clarifying what constitutes 'starting work.' Examples included material purchases, preliminary site preparation, and permit acquisition.

Members discussed limited district discretion versus statewide consistency. Concerns were raised about the use of the word 'fraud'—alternative wording should be used in a revised draft.

Staff will draft updated language for consideration at the November Committee Meeting based on the discussion during the meeting.

4. Special Request Policy

The 30-day notice requirement was deemed impractical. Committee recommended flexible language such as 'adequate notice' and including a recommended but non-mandatory timeframe.

Staff will draft updated language for consideration at the November Committee Meeting based on the discussion during the meeting.

5. New and Expanded Operations Policy

Feedback was overall positive. Updated definitions improved clarity around operational expansion. Committee noted that while the opportunity to comment was included in the October and November Monthly Reports, these should also be distributed through area listservs.

IV. Rules Review Process

The committee reviewed the required rulemaking steps and timelines. All Commission rules must be readopted by November 2028. Early review may begin immediately.

Priority rule areas requested: Technical Assistance Allocation Formula and Job Approval Authority criteria. Staff will draft a proposed timeline and engagement plan for consideration at the November Committee Meeting based on the discussion during the meeting.

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V. Communication & Outreach

The committee will continue distributing post-meeting summaries in regional coordinator monthly reports and on the committee website. The Committee discussed consolidating listserv communications to improve information access for partners.

VI. Additional Items

Eligibility clarification guidance will be brought forward soon. Districts may request policy reviews to members of this committee at any time. If the policy is tied to a specific best management practice, the request should be submitted to the chair or any member of the appropriate programmatic technical committee (ACSP, AgWRAP, CCAP).

VII. Next Steps

Items for the November Commission Meeting:

- Supervisor attendance language clarification
- Previously approved policy revisions: repairs and contract extensions

Items for the November 16, 2026 Committee Meeting:

- Post-Approval of Contracts Policy
- Special Request Policy,
- New and Expanded Operations Policy,
- Technical Assistance and Job Approval Authority rule review
- Develop a proposed rulemaking plan.

Regular Meeting Reminder: Third Monday of each month at 9:00 AM via Microsoft Teams.

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