

NORTH CAROLINA SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION BUSINESS MEETING COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES November 19, 2025

Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services
Division of Soil & Water Conservation
Quest Center Latta Plantation Nature Preserve
6345 Sample Road
Huntersville, NC 28078

Commission Members	Guests	Guests Online
Barbara Bleiweis, Chair	Elise McLaughlin	Julia Hardy
Billy Kilpatrick	Bryan Evans	Wilkes SWCD
Porche Spence	Ken Parks	Lindsay Edwards
Brian Parker	Rick McSwain	Lisa Fine
Patrick Baker	Taryn Thompson	Robert Moore
James Lamb	Darren Layton	Lorien Deaton
Gail Hughes	Anganette Byrd	Hannah Bengé
Commission Counsel	Eliseo Pascual	Paula Day
Brian McGinn	Tim Beard	Jessica Wilson
Guests	Allison Channell	Vivien Zhong
David Williams	Daniel Austin	Sam Edwards
Julie Henshaw	Regina Kilpatrick	Anne Coan
Kristina Fischer	Levi Preston	Shelby Kaplan
Michael Shepherd	Demico Guy	Amber Rights
Matt Safford	Guest Online	Sam Just
Kristina Fischer	Stephanie Alston	Daniel McClellan
Josh Vetter	Taylor Fair	Keith Larick
Rachel Smith	Chuckie	Taryn Hendrickson
Tinesha McNeil	Tyler Cornett	Matthew Berens
John Beck	Chris Love	Sierra Digan
Brandy Myers	Dalton Buchanan	

I. CALL TO ORDER: Chair Bleiweis called the meeting to order at 10:00 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.

III. BUSINESS:

- 1. Approval of Agenda:** Chair Bleiweis asked for approval of the agenda. Commissioner Brian Parker moved to approve the agenda, and Commissioner Porche Spence seconded. Motion carried.

2. **Approval of Minutes:** Chair Bleiweis asked for approval of the minutes. Commissioner James Lamb moved to approve the minutes, and Commissioner Billy Kilpatrick seconded. Motion carried.
 - A. November 10, 2025, Work Session Meeting Minutes
 - B. November 19, 2025, Business Meeting Minutes

INFORMATION ITEMS

3. **Division Report:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Director David Williams to present. Director Williams provided a division update that included current staffing levels and vacancies, progress and delays related to the USDA Block Grant due to the federal shutdown, and the status of state and federal funding for disaster recovery, technical assistance, and infrastructure repair programs. The report also noted ongoing planning efforts for agricultural water resource initiatives.

Upcoming Commission Meetings

- January 4, Cherokee
 - March 18, TBD (Virtual WS 3/10)
 - May 20, Salisbury (Virtual WS 5/12)
 - July 29, Raleigh (Virtual WS 7/21)
 - September 16, Orange Co. (Virtual WS 9/8)
4. **Association Report:** Chair Bleiweis shared how much she enjoys being on the board and working with the team. She acknowledged and praised the consistently excellent work of each area.
 5. **NRCS Report:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Mr. Tim Beard to present. Mr. Beard provided an update on agency operations following the recent shutdown. He expressed appreciation for the warm reception from colleagues and noted that most staff, including those in critical positions, have returned. Two new engineers from neighboring states joined, bringing relevant experience. The agency's systems are back online, allowing payments, modifications, and application processing to resume. He highlighted upcoming training over the next few months and changes at both the national and state levels for program agreements. Additionally, there have been leadership changes at the national level, though these are not expected to significantly impact the agency. Overall, the focus remains on restoring normal operations and continuing program improvements.

ACTION ITEMS

6. **Consent Agenda:** Chair Bleiweis noted that these items were previously discussed in the work session and could be voted on together. Commissioner Patrick Baker made a motion to approve them, which Commissioner Billy Kilpatrick seconded. The motion passed.
 - A. **Supervisor Appointments:**
 - Forrest Chandler Howell, Beaufort SWCD, filling the resigned position of James Allen for 2022 through 2026.

- Terry Turbyfill, Lincoln SWCD, filling the resigned position of Sean Nesbit for 2022-2026
- David Tucker, Watauga SWCD, filling the appointed position of Chris Hughes for 2022-2026

B. Supervisor Contracts:

County	Contract Number	Supervisor Name	BMP	Contract Amount	Comments
Beaufort	07-2026-009	Archie Griffin	Cover Crop	\$3,000	Applicant: Griffin Ag.
Bladen	09-2026-002	Edward Hester	Cover Crop	\$5,450	
Cabarrus	13-2026-001	Carl Mitchell Haigler	Heavy Use Are Protection	\$2,402	Supplement to 13-2025-003
Cherokee	20-2026-001	Keaton Killian	Heavy Use Area Protection, Watering Tanks	\$6,215	
Chowan	21-2026-010	Matthew L Floyd	Cover Crop, Residue & Tillage Mgmt.	\$4,828	New & Beginning Farmer (90% cost share)
Greene	40-2026-010	Richard Harper	Cover Crop	\$9,738	
Hertford	46-2026-002	Pate Pierce	Cover Crop	\$12,500	Applicant: Pierce Leaf Co, LLC
Lee	53-2026-006	John H. Gross	Cover Crop	\$3000	
Martin	58-2025-003	Corris Jenkins III	Rooftop Runoff Mgmt.	\$715	
Montgomery	62-2026-003	Jonathan Sedberry	Cover Crop	\$5,550	
Perquimans	72-2026-001	H. Wayne Hurdle	Residue and Tillage Mgmt.	\$2,100	
Perquimans	72-2026-011	Thomas Roach	Cover Crop	\$2,100	
Person	73-2026-008	Hunter Thomas	Grassed Waterway	\$1,808	Applicant: thomas Family Farm
Scotland	83-2026-800	Thoman Gibson	Water Supply Well	\$7,500	

Total \$66,906**Total Number of Supervisor Contracts:14**

C. Technical Specialist Designation:

Mr. James Riley Pickett, Murphy Family Ventures, designated technical specialist for the Waste Utilization Planning/Nutrient Management (WUP/NM) category.

- 7. Additional Items Submitted Since Work Session:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Kristina Fischer to present. Ms. Fischer presented the additional supervisor appointments. Commissioner Billy Kilpatrick made a motion to approve them, which Commissioner Porche Spence seconded. The motion passed.

A. Additional Supervisor Appointments

District	Name of Nominee	Replacing Name	Term	Willing to attend Basic Training	Willing to attend other meetings	Number of Guiding Principles met (out of 11)	Reason for Vacancy	Notes
Richmond	Jerry Mac Snead, II	Jim Chandler	Appointed (24-28)	Attended 2023	Yes (local, area)	7	Passed away in October 2025	Active chicken farmer. Current elected supervisor moving to appointed seat.
Wilkes	Michael Pardue	Dr. Bill Davis, Jr.	Appointed (22-26)	Yes	Yes (local, area, state)	9	Retiring	Former director of Wilkes SWCD (retired after 25 years) technical experience and education as well as landowner and partner connection. Former NC CDEA President

- 8. Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) Allocation Process:** 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. Mr. Safford presented several action items for voting as follows

A. Vote on which STRAP project types to accept in application

Commissioner Billy Kilpatrick motioned to approve, seconded by Patrick Baker. Motion carried.

B. Vote on how to divide counties into need categories – distribution of high need and low need counties

Commissioner Gail Hughes motioned to approve, seconded by Porche Spence. Motion carried.

C. Vote on county award caps – allocation options (% of funds going to High/Medium/Low need counties. 70/20/10

Commissioner Patrick Baker motioned to approve, seconded by Porche Spence. Motion carried.

D. Vote on percentage of funds withheld – 10%

Commissioner Patrick Baker motioned to approve, seconded by Billy Kilpatrick. Motion carried.

E. Vote on length of application window – 8 weeks application window

Commissioner James Lamb motioned to approve, seconded by Gail Hughes. Motion carried.

F. Vote on the degree Districts should be involved in application from non-district organizations. – as presented.

Commissioner Gail Hughes motioned to approve, seconded by Billy Kilpatrick. Motion carried.

- 9. Update on conditional supervisor reappointments from November 2024 meeting:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Kristina Fischer to present. Ms. Fischer shared the following. Chair Bleiweis asked for a motion. Commissioner Billy Kilpatrick motioned to extend all for the remainder of the term, seconded by Porche Spence. Motion carried.

On November 20, 2024, meeting the Commission made several conditional reappointments to local soil and water conservation district boards.

Four reappointments were made for nominees who had not attended two-thirds of the district's regularly scheduled board meetings during the previous term. These reappointments were made on the condition that the Commission monitor their attendance for the next 12 months and the Division provide a report in November 2025. Below is an update on progress:

District	Supervisor	Meetings Scheduled	Meetings Attended	Percentage	Area Meetings	Annual Meeting
Beaufort	Sid M. Cayton	8	7	87.5%	0	0
Forsyth	Jordan K. Jones	7	6	85.7%	0	0
Jones	Mike Haddock	4	2	50%	1	0
Scotland	Tracy Grice	7	7	100%	0	0

For those individuals where two-thirds attendance has been achieved, their full appointment is assumed for the remainder of the 2024-2028 term.

For Mike Haddock in Jones SWCD the Commission will need to take action to extend his appointment, if appropriate. Correspondence from Supervisor Haddock was received explaining the missed meetings.

- 10. Supervisor Failure to Attend – Vance:** Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Kristina Fischer to present. Ms. Fischer shared that George Pegram has missed three consecutive meetings since August

2025. The Division recommends sending Supervisor Pegram to the Inquiry Committee established under 02 NCAC 59A .0302 for consideration. Chair Bleiweis asked for a motion, Gail Hughes motioned to send him to the inquiry committee. Billy Kilpatrick seconded. Motion carried.

11. Division Engineering Report Chair Bleiweis recognized Ms. Rachel Smith to present. Ms. Smith reported continued progress in improving project management and service delivery despite ongoing staffing vacancies. The division has implemented enhanced project tracking and prioritization tools to increase transparency and coordination with local districts, resulting in improved timelines for assigning engineers to Technical Assistance requests, with a target of 14 days. While backlogs persist—primarily due to complex engineering projects, extended contract work, permitting requirements, and staffing shortages—the division is actively addressing these challenges through workflow improvements, training, and refined performance metrics aimed at increasing efficiency and reducing delays.

12. Special Requests – None.

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS: Commission thanked Racheal and your team for the update. And encouraged giving district staff time to learn and have patience with them.

V. ADJOURNMENT: The meeting adjourned at 7:53p.m.

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

Tinesha McNeil, Recording Secretary

These minutes were approved by the North Carolina Soil & Water Conservation Commission on January 15, 2026.