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## MINUTES

The February 12, 2026, LFSWCD Board of Director’s Meeting was held, in person, at the Strasburg Community Center, 726 East Queen Street, Strasburg, VA 22657.

Those attending were:

### LFSWCD Directors

Joan Comanor  
Mary Gessner  
James Fagan  
Justin Mackay-Smith  
Robert “Bobby” Clark  
Paul Burkholder  
Jack Owens

### Associate Directors

Ed Pendelton

### Cooperating Agency Representatives & Guests in Attendance:

Debbie Cross, CDC/DCR  
Brent Barriteau, NRCS  
Cynthia Fairbanks, VCE

### LFSWCD Staff Members

Ben Loyd  
Nick Livesay  
Sarah Fleming  
Dana Gochenour  
Madison Coffey  
Lisa Parks  
Brett Ramer  
Olivia Donachie

### Absent Directors or Staff:

Kermit Gaither  
Emma Bricker  
Mark Huddleston  
Randy Buckley  
Reid Hoak  
Stephanie Shillingburg  
Jason Bushong  
Allyson Ponn

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*LFSWCD Board Chair Joan Comanor called the meeting to order at 10:00 am.*

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- Introduction of guest, Cynthia Fairbanks VCE Extension Agent



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**MOTION:** Board approval of the January 8, 2026, Board of Director meeting minutes as presented in the Board Packet. Motion made by Paul Burkholder, seconded by Reid Hoak. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows. \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Chairwoman’s Report: Joan Comanor**

- Joan welcomed Cynthia Fairbanks, the new agricultural extension agent based in Warren County and the Board and staff introduced themselves to her.
- Reviewed written report.
- Congrats to Ben on his upgraded Water System EJAA.
- Gave an update on phone meeting with Kyndall Tyree re: State Budget and Legislative items
  - Hot Topics: VCAP Funding, Solar Permits, Data Centers, PFAS, Bio-Solids
- Area I Spring meeting will be held March 24, 2026 in Lexington, VA.
- Local Envirothon March 25, 2026, Winchester, Va.
- Jim Fagan will be joining the Shenandoah County Planning Committee.
- Bobby Clark shared PFAS information from his extension perspective.

**Treasurer & Finance Report: Stephanie Shillingburg**

- In Stephanie’s absence Sarah reviewed the written report. Reminded Committee Chairs to send Budget requests to Sarah.

**MOTION:** to Accept and file for audit the Treasurer’s Report/Documents for January 2026 (as presented in the Board Packet). Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Justin Mackay-Smith. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows. \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**MOTION:** to Accept the 1/8/2026 Finance Committee meeting minutes (as presented in the Board Packet). Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Jack Owens. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows. \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		



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**MOTION:** to approve the Lease Agreement with Virginia Business Systems for a Xerox 8235 Copier (as presented in the 2/12/2026 Board Packet). Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by James Fagan. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows. \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**MOTION:** to Accept the Credit Card Policy (as presented in the Board Packet) with one minor edit as discussed during the Board meeting. Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Justin Mackay-Smith. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows. \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Board Secretary/Administrative Specialist: Sarah Fleming**

- Reviewed her written report.

**Technical Staff Reports:**

**Supervising Conservation Specialist, Dana Gochenour:**

- On leave

**Senior Conservation Specialist, Nick Livesay:**

- Reviewed written report.
- Cover Crop initial checks

**Conservation Specialist, Madison Coffey:**

- Reviewed written report.
- Conservation Planner re-certification has been approved.
- Commented on Forage and Grassland Training participation at BRCC – Cons plan credit were earned.

**Conservation Specialist, Ben Loyd**

- Reviewed written report.
- Commented on Forage and Grassland Training participation at BRCC – very interesting presentation by a speaker from Missouri on Warm Season Grasses in rotational grazing.

**Conservation Specialist – Brett Ramer**

- Reviewed written report.
- Now has access to the ARC map software.



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**Conservation Specialist – Olivia Donachie**

- Reviewed written report.
- Now has access to the ARC map software. Still no access to Ag-Learn exams.

**Program Support Specialist, Lisa Parks:**

- Reviewed written report.
- Cover Crop site checks.
- VCAP still remains popular – 1 of our submitted projects was approved last month at state level.
- Researched CAD software and sent staff a demo link for review.

**Education and Conservation Specialist, Allyson Ponn:**

- In Allyson’s absence Nick reminded those in attendance of:
  - the Local Envirothon to be held March 25, 2026, at the Museum of the Shenandoah Valley.
  - Conservation Field Day, Caroline Furnace – March 26, 2026.

**Committee Updates:**

**Conservation Technical - Mary Gessner**

- Mary reviewed the CTC Report. Motions are as follows:

**Motion 1:** Motion to recommend the board approve cost share increase and tax credit for 13-25-0015 WP-4LL

	13-25-0015	601195	Shen./Loafing Lot Management	WP-4LL					\$	26,664.94
CP-13-25-0013	13-25-0015	601195	Shen./Loafing Lot Management	WP-4LL	\$	21,323.75				

**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 2:** Motion to recommend the board approve cost share increase for 13-26-0016 SL-1

CP-13-26-0014	13-26-0016	713301	Frederick	Long Term Veg. Cover on Cropl	SL-1					\$	1,429.38
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**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Robert Clark. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		



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<b>Motion 3:</b> Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost share for 13-26-0010 FR-1											
CP-13-26-0007	13-26-0010	735318	Shenandoah	Afforestation of Crop, Hay and FR-1	High	109	31.36	N	\$		9,975.00

**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

<b>Motion 4:</b> Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost share for both instances of 13-26-0101 SL-6Ws											
CP-13-26-0024	13-26-0101	734975	Shenandoah	Stream Exclusion with Wide W SL-6W	High	106	12.10	Y	\$		176,160.50
CP-13-26-0024	13-26-0101	734974	Shenandoah	Stream Exclusion with Wide W SL-6W	High	99	7.41	Y	\$		56,475.50

**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

<b>Motion 5:</b> Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost-share for 13-26-0010 SL-7											
CP-13-26-0007	13-26-0010	668755	Shenandoah	Extension of Watering Systems SL-7	High	100	31.49	N	\$		64,757.00

**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		



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**Motion 6:** Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost share for 13-26-0106 SL-6W

CP-13-26-0028	13-26-0106	735800	Shenandoah	Stream Exclusion with Wide W	SL-6W	High	93	25.62	Y	\$	119,696.50
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**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 7:** Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost share for 13-26-0103 SL-6W

CP-13-26-0026	13-26-0103	735193	Frederick	Stream Exclusion with Wide W	SL-6W	High	83	21.60	Y	\$	68,197.50
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**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Robert Clark. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 8:** Motion to recommend the board cost share for 13-26-0100 SL-8B and SL-8H

N/A	13-26-0100	734408	Frederick	Small Grain and Mixed Cover C	SL-8B	Medium	98	14.20	Y	\$	7,660.00
N/A	13-26-0100	734409	Frederick	Harvestable Cover Crop	SL-8H	Medium	93	40.06	N	\$	1,922.00

**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by James Fagan. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		



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**Motion 9:** Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost share for 13-26-0104 FR-1

CP-13-26-0027	13-26-0104	735334	Clarke	Afforestation of Crop, Hay and FR-1	Medium	91	37.86	N	\$	1,312.50
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**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 10:** Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost share for 13-26-0086 FR-1

CP-NRCS	13-26-0086	732102	Clarke	Afforestation of Crop, Hay and FR-1	Low	98	48.72	N	\$	23,343.75
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**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Robert Clark. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 11:** Motion to recommend the board approve conservation plan and cost share for 13-26-0102 FR-1

CP-13-26-0025	13-26-0102	735084	Frederick	Afforestation of Crop, Hay and FR-1	Low	55	43.55	N	\$	8,508.50
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**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Robert Clark. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		



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**Motion 12:** Motion to recommend the board approve sending contract 13-26-003 RWH to the VCAP steering committee.

	13-26-003	Frederick	RWH	\$	6,352.00
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**Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 13:** to recommend the board approve CP-13-26-0023 for easement. **Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Paul Burkholder. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 14:** to recommend the board approve transfer of responsibility for VCAP contract 13-19-001. **Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Robert Clark. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		

**Motion 15:** to recommend the board delegate authority to the Board Chair to sign letters of support, upon recommendation of CTC Chair, once templates are received and reviewed. **Motion made by Mary Gessner, seconded by Robert Clark. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows.** \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

Name	Yes	No	Abstain	Name	Yes	No	Abstain
Joan Comanor	X			*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X			Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X			Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker				*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston				*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X			Jack Owens	X		



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**Personnel – Joan Comanor**

**MOTION:** to Accept the 1/14/2026 Personnel Committee meeting minutes, edits to the Personnel policy and the Associate Director Policy and Job Description documents (as presented in the Board Packet). Motion made by Paul Burkholder, seconded by Mary Gessner. Motion Passed. Voting Ballot is as follows. \*Randy Buckley, Reid Hoak, Kermit Gaither, Emma Bricker, and Mark Huddleston were absent at the time of vote.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>		<i>Name</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Abstain</i>
Joan Comanor	X				*Randy Buckley			
Mary Gessner	X				Justin Mackay-Smith	X		
James Fagan	X				Paul Burkholder	X		
*Emma Bricker					*Reid Hoak			
*Mark Huddleston					*Kermit Gaither			
Robert Clark	X				Jack Owens	X		

Robert Clark departed from the meeting at 10:55am. Quorum was lost.

**Dam Safety & Conservation Easements - Jim Fagan**

- Tabletop Exercise April 8, 2026, w/ the Town of Woodstock regarding to the Woodstock Dam – Emergency Action Plan.
  - If you are interested in being included on the informational emails contact Jill Jefferson at the Town of Woodstock.

**Education & Information – Joan Comanor**

- No new items.

**Legislative – Paul Burkholder**

- Speaking points covered in the Chair report.

**Operations – Justin Mackay-Smith**

- Committee Chairs be looking ahead to the review of the Annual Plan of Work and Strategic Plan which will take place in the upcoming months.

**Local Agency Updates:**

**Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission – Mary Gessner**

- No new items to report.

**Shenandoah County Water Resources Advisory Committee – Joan Comanor**

- No new items to report. – There are no meetings taking place currently.

**Shenandoah Pure Water Forum – Jack Owens**

- No new items to report.

**Cooperating Agency Reports:**

**Natural Resources Conservation Service: Brent Barriteau**

- Brent gave an update on NRCS happenings.

**Virginia Department of Conservation & Recreation: Debbie Cross**

- Debbie was absent from the meeting.
- Sarah reminded Board members of needed FOIA training.



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**Virginia Cooperative Extension: Robert “Bobby” Clark**

- Bobby left the meeting early.
- Cynthia Fairbanks, VC extension agent shared more information on PFAS.

**Virginia Department of Forestry: Matt Wolanski**

- Not in attendance.

**Chesapeake Bay Foundation: Matt Kowalski**

- Not in attendance.

**Department of Environmental Quality: Sara Jordan**

- Not in attendance.

**Other:**

**Adjournment:**

**The meeting adjourned at approximately 11:30am.**

- There was no quorum present at the time of adjournment.

*Respectfully submitted,*  
*Sarah R. Fleming,*

Board Secretary

Approved by the Board through motion on: March 12, 2026