

VENANGO CONSERVATION DISTRICT
PRISM PILOT PROGRAM ADVISORY COMMITTEE MEETING

April 11, 2024

PRESENT

Committee Members: Bailey Kozalla, VCD Dale Kriner, USDA Natural Resources
Lisette Lane, VCD

Staff: Abigail Zerbe

I. Welcome/ Introductions

Lisette called the meeting to order at 6:02 pm.

II. Public Comment

There were no members of the public present.

III. Approval of Minutes of Previous Meeting

a. February 2024 Meeting

Lisette asked for comments, changes, or corrections to the previous month's meeting minutes.

Bailey made a motion to accept the February 2024 PRISM Pilot Program Committee meeting minutes. Dale seconded the motion. The motion carried.

IV. Old Business

a. Review Program Documents

i. Program Policies

Lisette drew the group's attention to a document in their packets. She noted that the edits made in blue were from the January meeting and the edits made in green were from the February meeting. Neither Bailey nor Dale had any changes to make to the previous edits.

In the last sentence of the "VCD PRISM Pilot Program Equal Access to Funds Policy" section, Lisette pointed out there was an issue with the term "annually" because the program may not exist for more than one year. Bailey suggested that the wording "as funding is available" be added as a substitute for "annually."

Under the "Applications for Funding Section" in the first sentence of the third paragraph, the wording of "The PRISM Pilot Program Advisory Board will have an annual sign-up period..." needed to be changed to exclude the word "annual." It was suggested to change it to "The PRISM Pilot Program Advisory Board will have a sign-up period as funds are available in which land owners can conduct pre-application site visits..."

Under the "Funding Procedures" section, Dale recommended the sentence allowing the applicant to request an extension be dropped. Lisette agreed because there is a deadline the funds need to be spent

by. Dale suggested adding a starting date so there was no confusion when the year-long deadline began. The verbiage was changed to “The eligible applicant has one year from the contract execution date to complete the approved contract.”

Lisette asked for action to recommend the program policy documents to the VCD Board of Directors for approval.

Bailey made a motion to approve the policy for recommendation to the Venango Conservation District Board of Directors. Dale seconded the motion. The motion carried.

ii. Program Application & Ranking

Lisette said there had been no major changes to the ranking sheet since the last meeting. Dale asked about a tiebreaker in case two applications ranked with the same score. He thought that, in the event of a tie, it would be fair to award funding to the application that was received first. The group seemed to agree that was an acceptable tiebreaker. Bailey and Lisette suggested listing the tiebreaker disclaimer at the top or bottom of the ranking sheet.

Dale made a motion to approve the ranking sheet for recommendation to the Venango Conservation District Board of Directors. Bailey seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Lisette asked if the application from PACD had all the questions from our ranking sheet. The PACD application did not include any questions about the location of the project or if the project was part of a conservation plan. Bailey and Lisette discussed putting the application on VCD letterhead or customizing the form to indicate it was for the Venango PRISM Program. Bailey wondered if the application should include photos. Lisette said it could, and she suggested a separate checklist to keep the application one page long. Bailey said she would be willing to put the checklist together. The group decided the checklist should include details of the project including photos, site preparation, treatment, materials, the PNDI receipt, and the landowner access agreement.

b. Finalize Project Timeline to Recommend to VCD Board

i. Open Application Round

Lisette asked the group when they would like to open the first round of applications. Dale suggested moving the first round up a little bit so there would be more time to work any issues out. Lisette suggested the group have all of the program documents ready to go by June. The group planned to meet again in May to finish up the edits on the application.

ii. Accept Applications Until – no discussion

iii. Schedule a Ranking Meeting – no discussion

V. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 6:39 pm.