

Suggested protocol for district technician to present cost share items to the board (March 2021):

In advance of the meeting:

1. Post meeting in accordance with Open Meetings Law
2. Send packet of materials for supervisors to review in advance of the meeting – packet may contain cost share details for supervisors that may be otherwise protected by NC General Statute 139-8.2 and Section 1619. Items including maps, photos, and conservation plans may be made available for district supervisors prior to the meeting. Consider including district spreadsheet with contract details as summary. Request CC: to be included to Division Regional Coordinator. Packet may be sent by hard-copy, encrypted email, marked “confidential” in email systems, or other means that will protect the information from public record
3. NC General Statute 143-318.13(c) prohibits voting by reference; members of the public must be able to understand what is being deliberated, voted, or acted upon during the meeting. At a minimum, meeting agenda should be available to be shared with public participants. Districts may also choose to prepare redacted copies of district spreadsheet to share

At the meeting:

1. Share updates re: outreach / program marketing that has been done since last meeting
2. Share training / staff development since last meeting
3. Review CS² / district spreadsheets that show active cost share program contracts; provide updates where work is not yet completed and anticipated timeline for these contracts (review 1/3 rule dates); general updates re: total funds available, total funds spent, etc.
4. Present applications for approval – *consider batching periods for applications or only moving to contract with applications that receive set ranking*. Be mindful of sharing protected information as handouts and in discussion including:
 - Farm, tract, field, and federal contract numbers;
 - Geospatial information;
 - Resource data;
 - Designs;
 - Assistance notes;
 - Acreage amounts;
 - Information concerning agricultural operation, farming, or conservation practices
 - a. disclose any conflicts of interest that may exist (staff or supervisors)
 - b. consider rank
 - c. share BMP policies from ACSP manual
 - d. discuss JAA or support needs
 - e. generic discussion of resource concern
 - If appropriate or warranted, enter closed session for:*
 - f. *in-depth discussion of resource concern or practice designs*
 - g. *review of maps illustrating geospatial boundaries or farm, tract, or field numbers*
 - h. *sharing photographs*

**Some boards make decisions without details regarding participant names; in these cases, names should be brought forward after decisions are made so that supervisors are aware of program participants*

***If districts seek to share site photographs a release should be obtained*

5. Present contracts for approval;
 - a. provide generic description of resource concern, practice, participant information, contract amounts
 - b. disclose any conflicts of interest that may exist (staff or supervisors)
 - c. discuss JAA or support needs
 - d. cross-check local / state caps or policies that may be in place
 - e. have all required contract paperwork completed for review / signature – board signature should be the last item needed to move forward to division
 - f. potential questions from the district board:
 - i. Question from board: is the practice needed and feasible to address the resource concern?
 - ii. Question from board: how did this individual find out about our program?
 - iii. Question from board: is this project in line with our strategy plan for this program year?
 - iv. Question from board: do you have JAA for this practice?
 - If appropriate or warranted, enter closed session for:*
 - g. *in-depth discussion of resource concern and practice; review of maps illustrating geospatial boundaries or farm, tract, or field numbers*
 - h. *review of conservation plan*
 - i. *sharing photographs*
 - j. *discussion of all field notes and communications with participant in file*
6. Present RFPs for approval;
 - a. Documentation of division approval may be reviewed in open session
 - b. Receipts may be reviewed in open session (dates should follow division approval of contract)
 - If appropriate or warranted, enter closed session for:*
 - c. *in-depth discussion of outcome*
 - d. *sharing photographs*
 - e. *reviewing file documentation including assistance notes / measurements from field checks*
 - f. *all field notes and communications with participant should be in file and readily available for district board review*
7. All decisions related to applications, contracts and RFPs for state cost share programs should be made in open sessions
8. Recommend closed session to review conservation plans (appropriate signatures / dates should be in place)
9. For conservation easement projects, participants are encouraged to provide voluntary release of program information. Discussions may be handled similarly; general discussion of project and participant is appropriate for open session; conservation plan, maps, photographs, etc., should be saved for closed session