

District Meeting Minutes Bylaw Change Rollout Guide State Conservation Committee

Prepared by Ian Hanley, SCC Executive Director, 8/30/21

Objective

At the August 19th, 2021 State Conservation Committee (SCC) Quarterly Meeting the following bylaw change was approved. This document will provide guidance to the Conservation Districts about how to comply with this change.

New Bylaw

This rule will replace the previous rule on districts reporting minutes to the SCC, found on page III-3 of the SCC Supervisor's Handbook.

"Draft minutes as well as approved minutes of all Board of Supervisor's Meetings shall be distributed to each supervisor of the sending district and the State Conservation Committee Executive Director, within 5 business days of the meeting at which they were taken or approved. Approved meeting minutes shall be kept on file permanently. The SCC Executive Director will forward both the draft and approved minutes to the SCC Chair, NHACD President and NHACD Administrative Assistant, the NRCS State Conservationist and others as designated by the State Conservation Committee as well as to any member of the State Conservation Committee who has made such a request."

Specific Responsibilities of Conservation Districts and SCC Executive Director

Conservation Districts

- Send the draft minutes from a meeting and any newly approved minutes from previous meetings to the SCC Executive Director (Ian Hanley, ian.p.hanley@agr.nh.gov), and the district's supervisors within 5 business days.

SCC Executive Director

- Receive draft and approved minutes from each district.
- Store all approved district meeting minutes permanently.
- Send approved and draft minutes that have been received to the SCC Chair, NHACD President, NHACD Administrative Assistant, NRCS State Conservationist, any SCC member who has made a request to receive minutes, and any other recipient designated by the SCC.

Frequently Asked Questions

Why 5 business days?

State law specifies that documents related to public government function (e.g. district minutes) be available within 5 business days.

Will the SCC and Conservation Districts still need to handle Right to Know requests?

Any interest party outside those described above will need to file an appropriate Right to Know request. By ensuring that these minutes are available with 5 business days, the districts will remain in compliance with state law should a request be made.

What is required for draft minutes?

Draft minutes should contain the following information: district name and meeting type, date and place of meeting, attendance, time of call to order, topics of discussion, wording of any motion presented and voted on, results of any vote, time the meeting was adjourned. Please see example draft minutes at the end of this document (Appendix 1).

Districts may continue to use all formatting and minutes previously adopted as long as they include the required components listed above.

Can draft minutes be distributed by the listed people to others?

Yes. There is no law saying they can't. Our hope is that those receiving the draft minutes recognize the need for professional behavior by bringing issues or questions they have to the district in question and retaining consideration for the minute's draft status when discussing or sharing with others.

I get a lot of emails, and I'm worried this will flood my inbox.

Outside of those specifically listed in the bylaw (SCC Chair, NHACD President and Administrative Assistant, and State Conservationist), SCC members will need to specifically request being sent the minutes. District supervisors, staff, and other partners who are interested in receiving them will need to make request that must be approved by the SCC.

In consideration of this concern, minutes will be sent out from the Executive Director on the first Monday of each month (Tuesday if Monday is a holiday). This will limit emails to one a month.

Can districts approve draft minutes outside meetings, such as over the phone, email, or videoconference?

No. District minutes need to be approved through a vote of supervisors, which requires a meeting and in-person quorum.

Would any of these get posted to the SCC website?

The only minutes that would be posted are the approved minutes.

Appendix 1. Example Draft Minutes

Example County Conservation District Monthly Board of Supervisor's Meeting

Date: August 25, 2021

Location: Example, NH Town Hall

Attendance: Supervisor 1, Supervisor 2, Supervisor 3, Supervisor 4, Supervisor 5, District Manager, Associate Supervisor 1

Minutes

Called to order at 7:01 PM by Supervisor 1, Chair.

Discussion and Voting

- Voted to approve meeting minutes from July's Board meeting.
 - Supervisor 2 made motion, Supervisor 3 seconded motion. Unanimously passed.
- Discussed completed no-till demonstration workshop.
- Discussed upcoming booth at County Fair.
- Discussed Moose Plate grant application status.
- Voted to approved purchase of tractor for District rental program.
 - Supervisor 4 made motion. Supervisor 2 seconded motion. Unanimously passed.

Meeting Adjournment-

"Supervisor 1, hearing no further business, adjourned the meeting at 8:24 PM." Or "Supervisor 2 motioned to adjourn the meeting at 8:24 PM, Supervisor 3 seconded the motion, motion passed unanimously"