



MINUTES

TENNESSEE FORESTRY COMMISSION MEETING MINUTES

4/4/2023

Tennessee Forestry Commission meeting was held in the Tennessee Department of Agriculture, Division of Forestry, Bruer Building Oak Training Room in Nashville, TN, April 04, 2023

Participants:

Forestry Commission Members: Tom Midyett, Chairman; John Charles Wilson, Vice Chairman; Dr. Sharon Jean-Philippe, Secretary; Alex Richman, Mike Witt, Bill Legg, Drew Getty.

Forestry Commission Ex-Officio Members:

Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA): Charlie Hatcher, Commissioner

Tennessee Department of Agriculture (TDA): Jeff Akin, Deputy Commissioner; Chris C. Eaton, Chief Financial Officer; Samantha Wilson, Budget Coordinator; Jay Miller, General Counsel; Liz Sneed, Assistant Commissioner/HR Business Partner; Corinne Gould, Assistant Commissioner

Tennessee Department of Agriculture – Division of Business Development: David Neumann, Forest Business Consultant

Tennessee Department of Agriculture - Division of Forestry (TDF): David Arnold, State Forester; Heather Slayton, Assistant State Forester; Wade Waters, Assistant State Forester; Rachel Greene, Forest Data & Analysis Unit Leader; Darren Bailey, East TN District Forester; Tim Phelps, Communications and Outreach Unit Leader, Robin Bible, Fire Management Specialist-Mitigation; Robert Elliott, Forest Health & Sustainability Unit Leader; Gina Sowders, Reforestation Unit Leader; Dyshea Brown, Executive Administrative Assistant.

Tennessee Forestry Association: Candace Dinwiddie, Executive Director

Sevier County Fire Services: David Puckett, Administrator; Michael Bloodworth, Wildfire Mitigation Specialist.



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Chairman Tom Midyett welcomed everyone to the meeting. The meeting began at 10:15 a.m. CDT

Approval of the Minutes of the January 10, 2023 meeting

Mike Witt motioned to approve minutes as presented. John Charles Wilson seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed.

Approval of the Minutes of the January 23, 2023 meeting

Bill Legg motioned to approve minutes as presented. John Charles Wilson seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed

Sevier County Wildfire Hazard Mitigation Programs

David Puckett/Michaele Bloodworth

- Educate and protect citizens of Sevier County through the advancement of fires service.
- Discussed code improvements made since the 2016 fires.
- Promoting Firewise construction; working with insurance companies to provide discounts.
- Ensuring new developments are more fire ready than in the past.
- Working with Sevier County to implement hazard mitigation strategies at county and community levels.

Appoint sub-committee to nominate new officers

Tom Midyett

- Chairman Midyett appointed Commissioners Bill Legg and Alex Richman as the nominating committee for Commission officers 2023-2024. The Committee will make its report at the June Commission meeting.

Budget Update

Samantha Wilson

- \$3 Million dollars has made it to the Governor's amendment.
- Commissioner Hatcher informed the Commission that the Governor's supplemental budget submitted to the General Assembly included approximately \$3 Million dollars for salary adjustments with the Division of Forestry.
- The Commission was thanked for pursuing this with the Governor and General Assembly.

Vacancy Report

Heather Slayton

- Full time employee percentage vacancy has been reduced from 12% to 9%.
- Overall, there is a 14% vacancy rate to include seasonal employees.

Seedling quantity and pricing recommendations

Gina Sowders

- Reforestation Unit Leader provided handouts for proposed seedling prices and seedling



production for 2023 – 2024.

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Motion for Approval for the Production of 5,134,540 seedlings

John Charles Wilson motioned to approve recommended seedling production. Mike Witt seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed

Motion for Approval for Proposed seedling prices for the 2023-2024 Season

Bill Legg motioned to approve recommended seedling pricing. John Charles Wilson seconded the motion. All Commission members voted yes to approve. The motion passed

Forest Health and Sustainability update

Robert Elliott

- Provided a unit update report for Forest Health and Sustainability unit.

Franklin State Forest OHV update

David Arnold/Heather Slayton

- An update was provided on the latest changes made on managing OHV use on Franklin State Forest.

Future Meeting Dates

- June 14, 2023 – Approval of Commission officers (second Wednesday in June).
- August 2, 2023 - Approve Division budget. (first Wednesday in August).
- January 9, 2024 – Discuss budget, timber sales (second Tuesday in January)
- April 9, 2024 – Approve Nursery seedling pricing/production and appoint sub-committee to nominate Commission officers (second Tuesday in April).

Tom Midyett made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Mike Witt seconded the motion. The Meeting was adjourned at 2:45PM CDT.