



Cecil Soil Conservation District

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Board of Supervisor's Meeting February 26, 2025

The Cecil Soil Conservation District held a Board of Supervisors meeting with a Zoom call-in option. The meeting was called to order at 9:18 AM by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, Vic Priapi, and Jonathan Quinn. Associate Supervisor – Alice Crothers. Other attendees: District Conservationist – Rob Weaver, District Manager - Chris Brown, District Coordinator – Tracey Rach and Administrative Assistant – Patty Pierce.

- Jonathan Quinn made a motion to accept the January 15, 2025 Board meeting minutes. Vic Priapi seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Bruce Yerkes asked if the board had reviewed the treasurer's report, expenses, and supplementary emails. There were no questions. Vic Priapi made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and pay bills. Jonathan Quinn seconded the motion. Motion carried. Tracey Rach shared that the two CDs have been opened at Cecil Bank. The Districts financial relationships are now PNC Bank, Cecil Bank, and Farm Bureau Bank.

Old Business

- Chris Brown provided a recap of the NACD Annual Conference in Salt Lake City. Chris Brown, Van Funk, Bruce Yerkes, and Andrew Sipe attended. It is always interesting to see the various practices around the country and concerns with federal funding that everyone is dealing with. Chris attended a break out session regarding outreach and social media. There is an online portal for planning dairy farms. The uncertainty of federal funding was discussed. Bruce Yerkes shared that an attendee from Iowa spoke up in the directors meeting and shared that thirty-four NRCS employees were not terminated but they did not have funding to pay them. It was a productive meeting. Rob Weaver shared a federal contracts and Inflation Reduction Act funding update. Bruce Yerkes suggested the district submit information regarding the 7th Grade Ag Education Day to qualify for a national award.
- The MASCD Winter Meeting was February 3rd and 4th. Chris Brown, Bruce Yerkes, Van Funk and Vic Priapi attended this year's meeting. The general meeting was held on the 3rd where partners initiatives and legislative budget updates were discussed. The MACS program funding was the top topic of discussion. The budget for capital best management practices for 2025 is zero. MDA has indicated that there is carry over from years past to use the next 18 months. Legislators were engaging during meetings and at the legislative breakfast held at Providence Strategies. MDA has a departmental bill aimed at utilizing information taken from conservation plans for enforcement actions. A discussion was held that outline districts distaste for the bill and concerns about how farmers would view this as it uses voluntary conservation for enforcement actions. MASCD states the bill is still in the works.

- Van Funk shared a report on the State Soil Conservation Committee. SSCC held their monthly meeting on 2/20 and the forest clearing subcommittee meeting will be held on Thursday 2/27. The group discussed Open meetings act. Legislative updates. Ban of PFAS. Jonathan Quinn shared information regarding the PFAS bill and solar bill. Testimony of the committee appointed a delegate asked questions how EPA classifies the molecular structure of 1 and 2. Chair appointed the delegate to a work committee with Lindsay and another chemical committee. 15 other states have a similar bill. The compromise is to exempt all but 6 chemicals. After 2036 can not add more chemicals. The bill should pass with these amendments. The solar siting bill can be bad for agriculture. Van shared that the group discussed this and clean energy.
- Several staff members attended the University of Maryland Extension Winter Agronomy Meeting on February 6th at the Calvert Grange. Attendees received nutrient management credits and pesticide application credits. The Cecil County Agricultural Education Days Planning Association is getting everything together for the event on April 28th through May 1st at the Cecil County Fairgrounds. Chris Brown will be once again organizing the volunteers and all District Staff will be either presenting or volunteering those days. Tracey Rach has been elected Treasurer of the Association to monitor event expenses and sponsorships. Tracey Rach will once again be involved in site organization set up and marketing/t-shirts. Van Funk recommended we talk with Krista in Community Services regarding volunteer recruitment. Chris Brown shared we should also reach out to Susquehanna Workforce Center.
- Ag Day at the Dupont Farms has been approved and scheduled for April 9th from 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Tracey Rach has the agenda set up for the day with approval from Maryland Department of Agriculture to offer Nutrient Management Credits. The presentations by speakers will be held in the barn and the School of Tech students will be attending as well. Registration will be offered by calling the district or utilizing the Event Brite registration link. The lunch will be offered to those attending which will be sponsored by the district. The Cecil Land Trust will assist in distributing flyers to the Amish community.
- Chris Brown brought up discussions regarding the recommendation for the amount to sponsor MASCD Annual Meeting. This will be extended to next months meeting. Wait for sponsorship levels from MASCD.

New Business

- Rob Weaver presented the District Activities Report. Staff visited two farms for Inventory & Evaluations' including pipe drop damage, and erosion along driveway at an Environmental Center. Two projects were surveyed. Four designs were reviewed "in-house" and other projects are in progress. One application for best management practices was submitted to MDA/MACS for funding. Two manure transport claims and one manure injection claim were submitted to MDA/MACS. Nine annual best management practices were submitted to MDA/MACS. Rob Weaver shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities. Eight farm conservation plans were completed totaling over 2,000 acres. Over fifty conservation practices were applied in conservation tracker. Twenty-three urban E&S plans were reviewed and fourteen urban E&S plans were approved. Three 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed and approved. Two urban meetings were attended. Staff attended one Agricultural Erosion & Sediment Control/Stormwater Management meetings. Staff attended trainings and six-monthly meetings. Van Funk made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Vic Priapi seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Rob Weaver presented the District Project Tracking/Planning Report and NRCS Updates. A lot of "in-house" reviews. Most project reviews in-house. Conservation Planners are planning highest acre tracts first for WIP and then prioritizing based upon Ag Pres etc. IRA money and climate.

money has been freed up for existing contracts. Lucia Gonzalez got caught up in probationary employee firing. NRCS lost fifteen employees across the state. NRCS is on a federal hiring freeze. Eventually the positions will be filled. There will be an NRCS employee in Cecil every day.

- Jonathan Quinn made a motion to accept Durney Road Holdings, LLC and NorthBay as new cooperators. Vic Priapi seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Chris Brown reported to the Board that a digital (silent) poll was taken with staff and over 80% nominated Long Green Farms for the 2025 Cooperator of the Year. Long Green Farms graciously accepted.
- Tracey Rach wanted to confirm with Board Members to again proceed with District Scholarships. There will be three offered to qualified candidates with each providing a one payment award of \$3,500.00. The board confirmed same scholarship amounts as 2024.
- Chris Brown and Tracey Rach shared with the Board that the District will soon be receiving notice for the MASCD District awards. Tracey and Chris will work on the Outstanding Employee, Outstanding Cooperator, Outstanding Education Award and Outstanding District. The Outstanding Employee Award will be the same individual that was nominated last year and Outstanding Cooperator will be Meck Farms.
- Other: Bruce Yerkes shared that the Leopold Award is open for applicants.

The next meeting will be held on March 19, 2025 at 8:30 AM. The meeting will be held at the office with a teleconference option. The teleconference option will continue to be offered for those working in the field.

As there being no further general business, Bruce Yerkes called for a motion to adjourn the general meeting. Jonathan Quinn made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Vic Priapi seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 10:29 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia A Pierce
Administrative Assistant