



Cecil Soil Conservation District

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Board of Supervisor's Meeting January 15, 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 8:32 AM by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, William Ewing, 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. Visitor – John Gonzalez

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the December 18, 2024 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. Jonathan Quinn made a motion to accept the treasurer's report and pay bills. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried. Tracey Rach shared an update regarding closing bank account at Aberdeen Proving Ground Federal Credit Union.

Old Business

- Tracey Rach and Chris Brown shared a Cooperator Banquet update. The banquet will start at 5:30pm on Friday, January 17th, 2025. Adam Jacano is finishing the video. A District staff meeting is scheduled for January 15th at 1pm to discuss staff responsibilities and coordinating door prize and centerpiece pick-up. A total of 165 attendees is anticipated. One additional table will be set for latecomers. A short video will be played showcasing the 7th Grade Ag Education Day. Door prizes will be on tables outside in hall way. District calendars will be given out at the end of the night. Colored stickers will be on the programs for calendars, door prizes, and centerpiece giveaways. Introductions and conservation highlights are planned to be condensed this year to help with time.
- MASCD Winter Meeting is set for February 3rd and 4th. Chris Brown provided a legislative update as he met with some legislators at the Cecil County Young Farmers Legislative Breakfast. Chris brought up House Bill 140 which proposes to allow MDA to use conservation plans for enforcement actions. This Bill was introduced as an Agency Bill and therefore has not been discussed with Districts prior to being introduced. It is expected to be a hot topic at the MASCD meeting.
- Chris Brown provided an NACD Meeting reminder with dates and registration information. February 8th – 12th. The NACD Meeting will be held in Salt Lake City, UT. Bruce Yerkes will be attending as the NACD Northeast Region Representative. Van Funk, Chris Brown, and Andrew Sipe will also attend.

- Van Funk shared a State Soil Conservation Committee update. State Committee meeting is January 16th at 9:30am at MDA Headquarters in Annapolis but will also offer a virtual option. The committee will review and approve work plan for the year at the meeting. Hans Schmidt will attend the meeting to highlight items in Governor's budget. Mike Mason has no answers on why MDA is pushing House Bill 140 and the language for reading through conservation plans for enforcement issues. State Committee has a lot of the same challenges as we do locally with appointments, attendance and agendas. SSCC plans to move meeting locations around the state to different counties that have meeting space available. SSCC is also putting together policy for guidance for the roles of the committee members in order to have something to hand to new members for expectations. Van shared SSCC's determination that "in person" meetings are more effective than virtual as they encourage deeper discussions. SSCC plans to adopt policy recommend 5 "in person" meetings while others can be virtual. Van Funk shared details of the role of SSCC for the board, associates, and visitors. The committee gains information, questions, and issues from Districts and other partnering agencies. The goal is to provide guidance and suggestions to the Secretary of Agriculture.
- Chris Brown provided an Education Update. The University of Maryland Extension Winter Agronomy Meeting planned for February 6th where farmers can obtain nutrient management credits and pesticide credits.
- Chris Brown shared that he was approached at a recent meeting regarding the District's 20-acre grading unit policy. Chris shared that he explained the history of the District policy and County Ordinance to Dan Schneckenberger (CC Director of Administration). Chris highlighted that there are variances in place for commercial sites but the intent for grading units is primarily for residential sites.
- Chris Brown shared that Avian Influenza has had another outbreak in Delaware and the Eastern Shore. Andrew Sipe is assisting with depopulation but is not working within the houses. He is primarily taking temperatures and logging data. MDA is looking for additional staff to help out at sites. Our staff (other than Andrew) may need to assist with data entry here within the office.

New Business

- Rob Weaver presented the District Activities Report. Staff visited five farms for Inventory & Evaluations' including grassed waterways, horse manure storage, roof runoff, heavy use area protection, grade stabilization and a new farmer grazing operation start up. A diversion, grassed waterway, existing pond, and lined waterway or outlet was reviewed in-house. Seven projects are in progress. One as-built design was reviewed "in-house". One as-built design was approved "in-house". The central region flat rate updates were completed. One claim for best management practices was submitted to MDA/MACS. Patty Pierce and Chris Brown shared a cover crop fall certification and status review update. A tax subtraction certification was sent to MDA and certification for the tax subtraction was received back from MDA. 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. No new update for district project tracking and planning. With new administration coming in, NRCS staff are trying to lock down all preapproved and approved status' as the administration may cancel Inflation Reduction Act funds. NRCS is currently on a hiring freeze so Rob will not be able to replace Bill Metcalf at this time. The existing Farm Bill has been continued. The continuation re-starts farm caps over again at \$450,000.00.
- The Chesapeake & Atlantic Bays Trust Fund – MDA -1821-G-FY25 Agreement was reapproved by the board, signed and will be sent to MDA for renewal.
- Next years “Cooperator of the Year” for 2025 was discussed. The board asked for a staff recommendation. Staff will make their recommendation at the afternoon staff meeting and will bring these suggestions to February Board Meeting.

The next meeting will be held on February 26, 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. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 9:28 AM.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia A Pierce
Administrative Assistant