

MINUTES OF GARRETT SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
SUPERVISORS' MEETING

July 20, 2021

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 p.m. by Chairman Smokey Stanton. Other supervisors present were Kris Enlow, Bill Buckel and Cameron Crawford; Katharine Dubansy was present for part of the meeting via telephone. Chad Bucklew and Roger Kitzmiller were also present.

Minutes for the June 15, 2021 Board Meeting were approved as submitted – Kris/Bill (motion/second), vote: unanimous.

The following report of state funds was presented and approved:

Balance – June 1, 2021	\$11,944.97
Receipts – June 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021.....	<u>0.00</u>
	\$ 11,944.97
Expenditures – June 1, 2021 – June 30, 2021	<u>4,764.62</u>
Balance – June 30, 2021	\$7,180.35

Due to FY 2021 ending June 30, two Treasurer Reports were distributed; reports included detailed Treasurers Reports of balances and expenditures for all accounts, for the periods of June 16 through June 30, 2021 and for July 1 through July 20, 2021. The Treasurers Reports were approved as distributed – Cameron/Kris (motion/second), vote: unanimous.

Information presented to the Board:

- Office Update: (COVID-19) MDA Employees and the District employee returned to regular office work on July 1 (with certain exceptions); Federal employees continue working a combination of teleworking and office visits. MDA is essentially open for business with a recommendation that anyone who has not been vaccinated wear a mask and maintain social distancing. NRCS is open by appointment only with a requirement that anyone who has not been vaccinated wear a mask and maintain social distancing. NRCS also restricts the number of office staff present to 50% of the total employees (6). The stricter of the guidelines are followed by all staff. Schedules are arranged to include field work and other outdoor activities in an attempt to keep the number of in-office employees at 50% or lower.
- Tree removal at the Dams will be re-visited after additional information is obtained.
- Roger is continuing to correspond with consultants, developers, engineers, MDE, the county permits office, etc. concerning the development of the E&S Control Plan for the Backbone Mountain solar site. A site visit/tour for the Board may be incorporated into a future meeting.
- Announced: Cover Crop Enrollment ended July 16th.
- Announced: Smokey, Bill, Carrie and Roger will be attending the MASCD Meeting in Cambridge, MD

- Roger is continuing to collect information from other counties and to develop a fee schedule to charge for Erosion and Sediment Control Plan review. The question was asked if the District has the authority to charge for the reviews. Roger will get an answer for the August meeting.
- In order to relieve some of the workload of reviewing and approving Erosion and Sediment Control Plans, Roger presented the option of the District hiring out-side help to assist in reviewing plans. The option did not receive support from the Board.
- The Board approved dispensing with/donating some excess chairs and other unused items that are presently stored in the storage building - Cameron/Kris (motion/second), vote: unanimous.
- Due to staffing complications (and recommendations by staff), the Board decided (without objection) not to enter the Rainfall Simulator as an exhibit in the Garrett County Fair this year.
- At the recommendation of staff, the Board decided (without objection) to forego planning a Cooperator Dinner this Fall and re-visit having a dinner in the spring.

Chad began by saying that Jacob Metcalf started as the NRCS Soil Conservationist on July 5th. Chad also noted that Dylan Kesner started as the NRCS Forester on the same date. Jacob will be working from the Garrett office. Dylan will be based in the Allegany office, but will have responsibility in Garrett, Allegany, and Washington Counties. Jacob and Dylan both have worked nearby in WV. Both have a forestry background and experience in working with Golden Winged Warbler and other projects. Slater Hafer, Jacob, Dylan, and Chad were on a site review on three Garrett County properties associated with habitat contracts to help give each of them a better idea of how programs are implemented in Maryland. Chad noted that the initial impression of both new employees has been favorable.

Chad reported that Ramon Ortiz is now the Acting State Conservationist as Rob McAfee is now on paternity leave.

Chad noted that recent communications from NRCS leadership regarding operations indicates that USDA plans to remain in a teleworking strategy through at least October 1st. Chad acknowledged that the USDA strategy is not compatible with the recent changes in MDA operations, which creates some challenges for him and Roger. The USDA strategy seems to be considering a consistent nationwide strategy. In fact, field offices may not have all employees back in person until early November as the return to the office is phased in over a few weeks. Overnight travel is also restricted for USDA employees, so Chad will not be attending MASCD.

Chad also brought to the Board's attention that an Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) accessibility check of the office was recently conducted by Jessica Aronhalt. Jessica is familiar with the process through Civil Rights reviews she has conducted on other offices in the state. Jessica, Farm Service Agency County Executive Director Connie Stemple, Roger and Chad met with Jason King of Garrett County Facilities and Maintenance on June 29th to discuss the building review, and what will be needed to be done to bring the building to full ADA compliance. Some additional signage for restrooms has already been posted in the entry hallway. Improvements such as a dedicated, secure room for the IT server, and improvements to the entry door have been discussed as well. Jason is in the process of preparing estimates for the more involved improvements. One of the reasons for this review is to be prepared for a potential lease renewal in 2022.

Chad discussed that thirteen Farm Bill contracts for Fiscal Year 2021 have now been approved. A few more applications are still in the works, including one AMA High Tunnel application that was funded in Round 2.

- The FY22 General Fund MOU (MDA Budget) and the FY22 CBTF Agreement (CBTF Budget) were approved by the Board and signed by Smokey - Bill/Kris (motion/second), vote: unanimous.
- The County provided verification that the FY22 County Agreement was approved as submitted; Roger has requested that the funds be submitted to the District.
- Buster Rinker (Buster's Tree and Stump Removal) submitted the only bid for mowing the dams. The bid of \$2025 was accepted by the Board and awarded to Buster.
- At the request of Cameron, Community Outreach will be added as an agenda item for the August Board Meeting.

A call for further business brought no response and the meeting adjourned at 8:58 p.m.