

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Baltimore County Soil Conservation District
July 15, 2025

The regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the Baltimore County Soil Conservation District was called to order by Chairman McGinnis at 8:00 am with the following present:

Supervisors

Mark Duvall
Eric Hadaway
Toby Mays
Mike McGinnis
Steve Smith

Staff

Jim Ensor, BCSCD
Sally Barnes, NRCS
Sara Dulina, BCSCD
Essy Frey, BCSCD

Associates

Jesse Albright (Late)

Others

Loretta Collins, SSCC
Erika Crawl, UME

Loretta Collins, Executive Secretary for the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) informed the Board that the July SSCC meeting is scheduled for Thursday, July 17, 2025 at 9:30am at the Salisbury Animal Health Lab. A Google Meet option is also available for this meeting. One of the major topics discussed will be avian influenza. There will be no SSCC meeting in August due to MASCD. Collins asked the Board how many will be attending MASCD, and all supervisors responded that they plan to attend. She emailed a survey to supervisors and asked this be completed and returned as soon as possible. She wants to use the results of the survey to encourage supervisors to meet at MASCD to discuss issues that are affecting their individual Districts. Collins stated that supervisor training and onboarding need to get better. She reminded the Board that Mays' term as supervisor expires in October and that the at-large position will need to be advertised. Applicants should mail applications directly to SSCC. There was a brief discussion on how many District Managers are state employees and whether this is an option for our County once Ensor retires. The majority of District Managers across the state are either District or County employees. Each District is funded differently, but it's not out of the question that MDA may be willing to fully fund the Baltimore County District Manager's position if the Board requests it.

Motion - Smith moved to approve the minutes of the July Board meeting. The motion was seconded and passed.

Treasurer's Report – Hadaway stated that revised Treasurer's reports for March, April and May were included in the Board packet in addition to a June report. The reason for these revisions was due to minor changes in State Funds expenses. The County made good on their promise to provide an second \$40K in grant funding making the total FY'25 County funds \$280,427.00. Fees rec'd in June were \$23,720.88. We ended the year in the black with a 12.2% undesignated reserve. Our target undesignated reserve is 15%. The County has agreed to give us the FY'26 grant funds (\$220,427.00) in one lump sum as opposed to quarterly. The audit is with the CPA and the County has requested a Statement of Receipts and Disbursements for FY'25. Our fee projection for FY'26 is roughly \$275,000.00. Taking the fee increase and state budget cuts into consideration, we believe we'll end the year with a 6.9% undesignated reserve.

Hadaway reminded the Board that we must continue to evaluate urban costs vs. fee income and do a better job making these numbers match. State law requires us to review our budget annually regardless of whether or not we're asking for more money. We will begin the budget process again in December.

Motion - Hadaway moved to accept the March, April, May & June Treasurer's reports and pay the bills. The motion was seconded and passed.

District Conservationist 's Report – In Cox' absence, Barnes gave the following report:

Financial Assistance:

- \$636,379.00 in Farm Bill programs for FY2025 for 17 contracts
- 1 additional preapproval for CSP cropland practices
- 33 Active Contracts being managed for \$1,785,800.00
- FSA is accepting new CREP offers for a 2nd round until July 18th.

Local Updates:

- All CREP re-enrollment acres for the June 6th deadline were accepted in MD.
- Pollinator training for field staff in Carroll today

Future Planning

- Programs – planning for FY2026
- Ranking questions for programs for FY2026 being developed- what types of questions would you like to see if we were given the opportunity for a Teams allocation
- Local Workgroup Meeting- August 27th at 7:00pm in the large conference room.
 - Discussion of NRCS programs and historical contract type and funding to the county ag producers
 - Discussion on what are the priority resource concerns the ag community would like to see addressed through NRCS program opportunities
 - Discussion of future program opportunities for implementation

The management of the Urban Agriculture Program for Baltimore City is being done by Prince George's County (PG), however, since PG has no technical staff, Barnes is still doing the technical work.

District Manager's Report – Ensor stated his report was in the packet and asked if there were any questions. MDA evaluations were conducted. Maryland is offering state employees a buyout offer of \$20,000.00 plus \$300.00 for every year of service. Ensor reminded the Board that we will begin advertising for the at-large supervisor position in August. Advertising will be done through Extension and Farm Bureau's newsletters as well as the District's website. Applications will also be available in the District office. Due to cuts in our FY'26 State budget, we may be unable to continue using state funds to pay for Jared Wagner's cover crop cell phone. Ensor asked if the Board wanted to pay for this expense with District funds if necessary. Mays and Duvall commended Wagner on his diligence in contacting farmers about the cover crop program.

Motion - Smith moved to pay for Jared Wagner's Cover Crop cell phone with District funds if necessary. The motion was seconded and passed.

Ensor explained several issues with the MACS program where an applicant will sign an application and then the promised amount is decreased by MACS for one reason or another. He suggested applications go to MACS for approval before the farmer sees and signs it.

Ensor had McGinnis sign the MOUs for the General Fund and Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund monies. We had a \$19,040.00 cut in the FY'26 state funds, \$4,843.00 in operating funds and \$14,197.00 in salaries.

Motion - Smith moved to accept the District Manager's and District Conservationist's reports. The motion was seconded and passed.

Motion - Hadaway moved to approve and sign both State MOUs. The motion was seconded and passed.

Staff – No report, staff are attending pollinator training.

Extension – Crawl reported that Drone School is scheduled for August 21, 2025 in Harford County and August 26, 2025 in Charles County. There is a potential ban on DJI drones in circulation as of December 23, 2025 in the United States. Andrew Lazur is conducting a PFAS (per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances) study and is looking for wells in Harford, Baltimore and Carroll Counties. The Baltimore County 4-H livestock sale is Saturday, July 19, 2025. We've begun advertising for the vacant Weed Control Coordinator Position. Crawl hopes to do an Ag. 201 Program in the future when funding becomes available.

Ensor reminded the Board that the MASCD Central Area meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 10:00am.

MDA Area Coordinator – In Alles' absence, Ensor distributed copies of Alles' report. Elizabeth Hoffman reminded District Managers that Progress Year 2025 has ended and requested all updated plans and installed BMPs be entered in to Conservation Tracker. The 2025-2026 Cover Crop Program signup will run through July 17, 2025. The nutrient management certification exam is August 1, 2025 at MDA headquarters, Western MD Research & Education Center and Talbot Ag. Center. Ensor passed around copies of Alles' written report.

Committee Reports

Urban – Dulina reported that the average time until review for June was 9 working days with no new priority requests.

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Personnel – No report.

Agriculture – No report.

Finance – No report.

Immediately after the September Board meeting on September 16, 2025, the Board, Ensor and Frey will go through the employee handbook. On the same day at noon, the Board will host the first “Get To Know The Staff” luncheon.

Old Business

MOU With Baltimore County - No new information.

Baltimore County Department of Agriculture – The Board, Ensor and Frey are scheduled to meet with Councilman David Marks on Wednesday, July 16, 2025 at 2:00pm to discuss this.

Supervisor Advertisement – Covered previously during this meeting.

New Business

Meeting With Councilman Marks – Discussed previously during this meeting.

Being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 9:45 am. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, August 19, 2025 at 8:00 am.

Motion – Duvall moved to reconvene the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors at 9:47am. The motion was seconded and passed.

The group determined what items of importance would be discussed at the upcoming meeting with Councilman Marks.

Being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 10:23 am

Respectfully submitted,

Esther L. Frey
Administrative Assistant