

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Baltimore County Soil Conservation District
February 17, 2026

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
Mike McGinnis

Staff

Jim Ensor, BCSCD
Sam Cox, NRCS (Late)
Eric Hines, NRCS
Jen Kemp, NRCS
Jared Wagner, MDA
Essy Frey, BCSCD

Others

Jess Armacost, BCDOA
Darren Alles, MDA

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

Treasurer's Report – Hadaway stated the Treasurer's report for January was in the Board packet and asked if there were any questions. \$10,332.00 in State funds was received in January. Fees received in January were \$28,381.54. The FY'27 grant request has been submitted to the County. Hadaway, Smith, Duvall, Ensor and Frey met with Horacio Tablada and Brady Locher regarding the FY'27 grant.

Motion - Hadaway moved to approve the January Treasurer's report and pay the bills. The motion was seconded and passed.

Duvall noted that the County really wants to see us adjusting our fees on a more regular basis and see the ratio of Baltimore County grant amount decreasing and our fee income increasing. They also encouraged us to continue tracking the hours of review spent on each plan vs. the cost of each plan. The Baltimore County Engineering Association is looking to host a luncheon sometime in June to discuss what's going well and what the Urban staff is seeing regularly enough to be a concern with plan review.

District Conservationist's Report – In Cox' absence, Kemp distributed copies of the following NRCS Update for January:

Local Updates

Staff continued to work on designs and conservation plans.
Construction has been on hold with snow cover and freezing temperatures.

Programmatic Updates

1/16 was the 1st round cutoff batching period for applications but we continue to take applications. We currently have 32 applications, but no ranking dates yet.

Regenerative Ag Pilot Program (RPP)

Whole Farm Planning

5 year contract

By the end of the contract must meet the soil and water quality resource concerns

Implementing a main core practice- 328, 340, 590 etc.

Must complete Soil Health Testing in 1st and last year of the contract and report the results.

EQIP- Now using Nationwide payment rates.

CREP - Enrollment and re-enrollment period is open until March 20th for 1st round batching.

District Manager's Report – Ensor stated his written report was in the Board packet and asked if there were any questions. The Holiday Inn in Solomons Island flooded, therefore, the 2026 Summer MASCD meeting has been rescheduled for August 3 – 5, 2026 at the Hyatt Regency in Cambridge. MACS has announced that 100% cost share practices are expiring June 30, 2026. Applications approved by the Board of Public works by this date will be accepted, all others will only be funded up to 87.5%. The April 16, 2026 State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) meeting will be held at the Ag. Center. The District will provide coffee and refreshments for this SSCC meeting. The 2026 Maryland Envirothon dues have been paid and several staff members have volunteered to help with the Baltimore County competition. Addie McCaul will be taking a leave of absence from March until November to hike the Appalachian Trail.

Motion - Hadaway moved to accept the District Manager's report. The motion was seconded and passed.

Staff – Wagner informed the Board that the Technical Advisory Committee is looking for feedback on last year's Cover Crop Program to try and make this year's program better. Duvall would like to see a "multiple seeding method" option for next year's program.

Extension Agent – In Crowl's absence, Ensor informed the Board that 90 people attended the 10 week Beginning Farmers Program which started February 10, 2026. In addition, he mentioned the following upcoming events:

- Family Farm Finance Workshop February 17, 2026
- Online webinar - Selling Eggs and What You Need To Know February 18, 2026
- Hereford High School Mock Interviews (Public Speaking) February 19, 2026
- Eminent Domain Workshop with UME's Ag. Law department March 25, 2026

MDA Area Coordinator – Alles distributed copies of his report. (A copy of which is attached to these minutes.)

Baltimore County Division of Ag. – Armacost informed the Board that the Ag. Advisory Board finalized the 2025 recommendations at their February meeting. The Ag. Advisory Board is looking for a poultry representative as the current representative had to step down due to health issues. Dr. Ginny Merryman is a gynecologist with GBMC who grew up on a dairy farm in Baltimore County. She is interested in rural women's health and has offered to provide reduced or free exams and colon cancer screenings. She's trying to gauge if there is an interest in these exams that would be geared particularly toward farm women between the ages of 35 and 60. The next Women in Ag. Chat is scheduled for February 23, 2026 at 10:00 am with Andrea Haines who will be talking about Marketing Your Agriculture Business. Megan Todd from the Univ. of Maryland Baltimore Ag. Law Initiative is part of the Agriculture Speaker Series. She will speak on the legalities of marketing on March 16, 2026 at 10 am.

Committee Reports

Urban – West reported the time until review for January was 15 days with no new priorities. Hadaway asked West what he would think of implementing a mandatory meeting with the owner and engineer after three reviews. West is not in favor of meeting with owners as all they seem to want is their plan approved now no matter if they are right or not. Hadaway asked that West talk with the Urban Staff to see if they'd be amenable with implementing a mandatory meeting with the engineer and urban staff. Hadaway asked that, when we have the capability of doing so, that owners be copied on all plan review comments. West stated that in some cases, to get plans finished, the urban department basically helps with the design of the plan.

Personnel – No report.

Agriculture - Duvall reported that Brandon Troy had stepped down from the Farm Bureau Board. Farm Bureau is looking to fill this position if anyone is interested.

Finance – No report.

Old Business

MOU With Baltimore County – Armacost said this MOU along with many others is on hold until a new County Executive is elected.

State Funded District Manager Position – Ensor suggested the new District Manager (DM) spend a week with the Urban Department and a week with the ag. technicians and planners to learn what they do. In addition, the new DM should attend Farm Bureau and other meetings Ensor currently attends. If the new DM becomes an MDA funded position, this might affect the amount of office rent MDA pays the County for MDA employees at the Ag. Center.

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Approved 3/17/26
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Employee Handbook – Ensor distributed copies of the draft handbook to Supervisors. He asked the Board to specifically look over the Drug Testing, Dress Code and Comp./Overtime sections for clarification. He asked if the Board had no further changes, that the handbook be approved at the March Board meeting.

Proposed Organizational Structure for the BC Dept. of Ag. (DOA)- Ensor still has not rec'd any answer to two emails sent to Armacost regarding the flow chart included in the Proposed Organization Structure. When Ensor asked about this flow chart at the February Ag. Advisory Board meeting, JT Albright stated that nothing will be done until the Department of Agriculture is created. The Board will keep this on their radar as well as agenda.

SWM of Ag Buildings – This has been included in the Ag. Advisory Board's 2026 recommendations from the Rules and Recommendations Committee.

FY 27 Budget - This has been submitted.

Envirothon – Katie Dell's contact information has been shared

MASCD Winter Meeting – A delegate from Baltimore City was the only one who showed up for the legislative breakfast at the MASCD Winter meeting. Mike Mason is going to send a "Call To Action" email to District Managers regarding support for ag. funding and asks that Supervisors forward the email to their Representatives. MDA's new Assistant Attorney General is Dana Adipietro who has been assigned to Resource Conservation.

Being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 10:01 am. The next meeting is scheduled for Tuesday, March 17, 2026 at 8:00am.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther L. Frey
Administrative Assistant