

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Baltimore County Soil Conservation District
May 20, 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

Staff

Jim Ensor, BCSCD
Sam Cox, NRCS
Jeff West, BCSCD
Essy Frey, BCSCD
Tamara Todd, MDA

Associates

Jesse Albright

Others

Jessica Armacost, OOA
Erika Crawl, UME (phone)

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

Treasurer's Report – Hadaway stated the April 2025 Treasurer's report and a revised March 2025 report were in the packet. Sediment control fees received in April were significantly lower than in March with only \$6,862.46 being collected. The County's Administrative Officer did submit our notice to the County Council on April 15, 2025 and the County did indicate to the Council that they are supportive of our increase. Fee increases are scheduled to take effect July 1, 2025. The County has gone on record saying our FY'26 County Grant amount will be \$240,427.00. We are still treading water and will be looking at the budget again in January 2026 for the FY'27 budget.

Motion - Hadaway moved to accept the revised March and April 2025 Treasurer's reports and pay the bills. The motion was seconded and passed.

District Conservationist 's Report – Cox reported that \$524,534.00 in applications were approved in Baltimore County for 13 contracts. An additional two contracts for \$85,000.00 were approved for forestry. These contracts included irrigation, high tunnels, pipelines and troughs, stabilized HUAs for horses, low tunnels and grass waterways. Two (2) additional forestry contracts are under state office review for approval for \$84,527.00. These include brush management, tree planting and forest stand improvement practices. The new CREP re-enrollment period is now open with offers being made by June 6th, only 1.2 million acres are available. Staff are attending a plant identification course at the Plant Materials Center today. We've had six (6) new requests for technical assistance since the last meeting, these included a high tunnel, small farm, new property owners and agland preservation. The Federal Reorganization Plan (FRP) should be released on 5/27/2025. then the Deferred Resignation Plan 3.0 should come out on June 3, 2025. It's hard to plan for FY2026 without knowing funding and staffing levels.

District Manager's Report – Ensor stated his report was in the packet and asked if there were any questions. He informed the Board that changes were expected in the way supervisors are appointed. The State Soil Conservation Committee will now have a closed session to discuss all applications received for the position of District Supervisor. Applicants will be instructed to mail their application directly to SSCC. The District received a 7.62% increase in health insurance from CareFirst for 2025.

Motion - Hadaway moved to accept the 7.62% increase in District employee health insurance effective August 1, 2025. The motion was seconded and passed.

Staff – Todd introduced herself to the Board. She reported that many people have reported their cover-crop kill down for 2024-2025 program. The 2025-2026 program will run June 23/2025 through July 17, 2025. Ag. planning staff remains busy working on conservation plans. Technical staff has been working on many various projects which include 7 grassed waterways, 1 livestock pipeline, and plenty of design work. These designs include small equine HUAs, roof runoff and irrigation projects. In addition, we've been working on a few buildings in various stages of construction. All MDA staff and Ensor attended an all-employee meeting on May 14, 2025 at Sandy Point State Park. Staff will assist UME with a career day for Sparrows Point High School scheduled for sometime in June.

Extension – Crowl reported that she's been busy interviewing candidates for Nutrient Management positions for both Washington and Wicomico counties. A couple thousand folks attended the Pimlico sunrise tours this year including over 500 kids from Arlington Elementary School. The new Extension Advisory Council officers are Jesse Albright – President; Sindhu Moon – Vice President; Mike McGinnis – Treasurer; Renee Bookoff – Secretary. The University (UME) has a 3.5% budget reduction for FY'26. The new dean of the University of Maryland College of Ag. and Natural Resources is Wendy Powers. Ms. Powers will begin her new role July 1, 2025. The Maryland Ag. Agent Group will tour the county (Old Line, Roseda, Richardson and Starbright) on June 11, 2025.

MDA Area Coordinator – In Alles' absence, Ensor distributed copies of Alles' report. A Notice of Recordation is now required for MACS projects over \$10,000.00 and must be submitted with the application. At-large District Supervisor appointments must be widely advertised for at least 30 days prior to the State Soil Conservation Committee (Committee) review of applications. The Committee needs two applications and any supporting letters at least one week before the Committee's monthly meeting for review. We will begin advertising for Mays' at large position in August as his term expires in October.

Baltimore County Office of Agriculture – Armacost stated that BCOOA has hired two additional positions. Tracey Brooks will be the new Agriculture Business Development Specialist and Hunter Martin will fill the Agriculture Fellow position. These employees will begin their new roles June 2, 2025. Baltimore County Council's proposed Equine Legacy Act jurisdictions have been changed. Armacost is in the process of reviewing and updating MOUs and Leases of the Ag. Center tenant agencies. Still no clarity on the District's conference room. Individuals applying for and receiving an ag. verification from Baltimore County will need an inspection done prior to their permit being closed out.

This will ensure the activity that was applied for was the activity that was done. Also working on the current definition of a roadside stand, a farm market and a farm stand. The next Ag. Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for July 2, 2025.

Committee Reports

Urban – West reported that the average time until review for April was 13 working days with no priority request. Dulaney High School project is currently in the office, this is an example of a large project that we're spending a large amount of time on with no compensation.

Personnel – No report.

Agriculture – Cox informed the group that Baltimore County met the criteria for drought. Pasture and forage producers can now apply for assistance through the Disaster Relief Program for drought and storm damage. NRCS Emergency Waterway Protection Program is working with Allegany County producers after the major flood damage incurred recently. That program is also available for Baltimore County should localized flooding or natural disaster occur.

Finance – Hadaway will reach out to Brady Locher regarding the District's fee increase currently under review by the County Council to ensure that the Council has not objected to the increase within the 45 days notice. Once confirmation is received that the County Council does not plan to oppose the increase, the fee increase notice, and manual updates will be sent out to the engineering community.

Old Business

MASCD Auction Item – Two beautiful cutting boards (donated by Duvall), two bottles of wine from Boordy Vineyards and a jar of local honey from Mingodale Farm will be donated this year.

Fee Increase Notifications – Discussed previously during this meeting.

New Business

Lease With Baltimore County – The District lease has expired. There's no guarantee that a new lease may include use of the District conference room and or exempt the District from paying rent. We will look at the old lease and tweak it to include the District's concerns and suggestions such as the conference room use, parking spaces, soil pit, etc..

Employee Raises & IRAs –

Motion - Hadaway moved to approve the FY'25 IRAs & SLBB at a cost of \$25,128.62. The motion was seconded and passed.

Motion - Duvall moved to approve a 4% COLA increase for each District Employee for FY'26. The motion was seconded and passed.

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Discussion of the competitive wage adjustments will be tabled until June until we know the actual amount of the County grant awarded for FY26.

Being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 10:25am.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther L. Frey
Administrative Assistant