

Minutes – Regular Meeting
Baltimore County Soil Conservation District
March 18, 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
Sam Cox, NRCS
Sara Dulina, BCSCD
Essy Frey, BCSCD

Associates

Jesse Albright

Others

Jessica Armacost, OOA

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

Treasurer's Report – Hadaway stated the February 2025 Treasurer's report was in the packet. He noted that sediment control fees received in February were low and that we're on track to receive under \$150,000.00 in fees for FY'25. Once our proposed rate increases are approved by the County Council, a memo will be sent to the engineering community at least 30 days in advance notifying them of these increases. We hope to continue our talks with the County and finalize our FY'26 budget soon.

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

District Conservationist 's Report – Five or six contracts have been obligated through regular Farm Bill monies. Things are constantly changing hour by hour, day by day and week by week with the Federal Government. Everything is being reviewed by the Secretary as per Executive Order. We've been told to expect changes for FY'26, we can no longer administer financial assistance to someone based on their personal classification into a certain class, specifically historically underserved groups. Kemp is working on ranking the Conservation Stewardship Program applications, this ranking is to be done by March 21, 2025. The state put in for an additional 5 million dollars for EQIP funding and an additional 1.9 million additional for CSP funding. Terminated employees are reinstated for a 45 day stay, but as of right now, they are not reporting back to the office. No other information is available currently. Staff have been attending soil loss training. An engineering training is scheduled for the end of March. Kemp is going out with staff on site visits to provide technical guidance and assistance. We've been receiving many requests for assistance from MDA's Small Farm Program.

District Manager's Report – Ensor stated his report was in the packet and asked if there were any questions. He attended an MASCD meeting regarding the State budget. Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund monies may now go to DNR's operating budget, this may affect the cover crop program. Fifty-five PINS (Position Identification Numbers) are going to the Atlantic Coastal Fund. If this program is cut, these pins may be affected. At an inter-agency ag workgroup meeting held March 3, 2025, Ensor learned that shipping containers are not allowed on farms. The County considers the use of shipping containers a trucking facility activity. The workgroup is still working on grading for new practices. The Citizens Guide To Zoning has been done away with as it was very confusing. Forest to farming – still confusion as to who will supervise this. Ensor passed around an ag. report as requested by Albright showing plans written from January 1, 2025 through March 17, 2025.

Motion - **Smith moved to accept the District Conservationist's and District Manager's reports.**

Staff – No report.

Extension – No report.

Baltimore County Office of Agriculture – Armacost has accepted the Chief of Agriculture position. Her previous position and the ag. fellow position will be advertised on the County's website. Baltimore County OOA is taking part in the Maryland Leaders in Environmentally Engaged Farming (LEEF) program stakeholders sessions. The OOA newsletter will go out March 18, 2025 and include a meat processing survey. A bird flu webinar for backyard flock owners is scheduled for April 2, 2025. A Rural Roads meeting will be held in April. The next Ag. Advisory Board meeting is scheduled for April 2, 2025.

Committee Reports

Urban – Dulina reported that the average time until review for February was 13 working days with no new priority requests.

Personnel – No report.

Agriculture – Ensor informed the Board that the FFA work donation monies from the District and Farm Bureau are being used for travel expenses to the FFA National Convention.

Finance – No report.

Old Business

FY '26 County Budget - Discussed previously during this meeting.

New Business

Solar on Farms – Ensor distributed a PowerPoint handout from Mike Mason of Lightstar on agrivoltaics. The consensus of the Board was to invite Mr. Mason to attend a future Board meeting.

Forest to Farm Conversion – Discussed previously during this meeting.

2025 MASCD Auction Item – Ensor asked the Board to think about what they'd like to donate. Some suggestions included a cutting or charcuterie board, wine, cheese, and beef jerky. Items are due by June 30, 2025.

MDA Area Coordinator – Copies of Darren Alles' report were handed out. He outfitted the District with biosecurity supplies to use when visiting dairies and operations with poultry or mixed animals.

Service Award – The Board thanked Ensor for 35 years of dedicated service and presented him with his respective service award.

Being no further business, the regular meeting adjourned at 9:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

Esther L. Frey
Administrative Assistant