



Greene County Conservation District

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GREENE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT REGULAR MEETING MINUTES September 22, 2020

Commissioner Belding led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTION OF GUESTS

Mr. Jim Cowell called the meeting to order at 10:04 a.m. at Greene County Fairgrounds 107 Fairgrounds Road, Waynesburg, PA Building #10 downstairs.

Those in attendance were as follows:

GREENE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS

Jim Cowell-Chairman; Commissioner Belding-Vice Chairman; Greg Hopkins-Treasurer; Bill Wentzel-Secretary; Glodenna Halstead; Melissa Adamson; and Dave Shipman. Associate Directors: George Scull; Dominic Barbetta; Raymond Stockdale; Becky Salosky and Keith Golden.

STAFF

Lisa Snider-District Manager; Lindsay Kozlowski-Assistant Manager/Environmental Program Specialist; Zack Basinger-Environmental Program Specialist; Ben Schweiger-Conservation Technician; Sara Hlatky-Conservation Technician; and April Morris-Fiscal Officer

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

A motion was made by Dave Shipman to approve the August 18, 2020 minutes. Bill Wentzel seconded. (Motion Passed)

TREASURER'S REPORT

A motion was made by Commissioner Belding to approve the treasurer's report. Bill Wentzel seconded. (Motion Passed)

CORRESPONDENCE AND UPCOMING EVENTS

2021 PA Farm Show Virtual event

Ms. Snider stated next year's PA Farm Show will be a virtual event. No specifics have been released, will continue to update as information becomes available.

PACD SWRO Directors Quarterly Meeting-October 5th-Virtually

Ms. Snider and Mr. Cowell are the district representatives that will attend this meeting via a virtual method.

Senate Bill 915 from Senator Yaw referring to fertilizer application noting individuals have proper certifications to apply fertilizer. The bill will not apply to agricultural production.

Farm Bureau Fall Meeting is September 26, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. \$15 per person to attend.

Ms. Snider received a thank you card from the **Greene County Junior Livestock Committee** thanking the district for the donation to help sponsor the event.

Ms. Snider announced the **2021 PA State Envirothon** will be a virtual event. Each county within PA can choose to do an in-person or virtual event. Ms. Kozlowski and Ms. Snider are working together on a plan to have Greene County's Envirothon next year. Lisa will meet with superintendents from the local school districts to see if an in-person event is feasible.

STAFF REPORTS

Written reports were included in the meeting packets.

Lindsay Kozlowski- Ms. Kozlowski had nothing additional to add.

Zack Basinger- Mr. Basinger received a few more permits last week and visiting pipeline sites. Zack is handling West Nile Virus with this being the last week and no positives.

Ms. Melissa Adamson asked if a complaint came in regarding Carmichael's sewage plant. Mr. Basinger stated he would be in the area today for WNV and will check out the area.

Ben Schweiger- Mr. Schweiger had nothing additional to add.

Sara Hlatky- Ms. Hlatky received the Nutrient Balance Sheet Completed for the Fairgrounds Nutrient Management Plan. The Fairgrounds is in compliance with Act 38. Sara also received a nutrient management plan from Allegheny County Conservation District for Washington County and will conduct the review.

Jared Zinn- Mr. Zinn was out of office.

Lisa Snider- Ms. Snider had nothing additional to add.

OLD BUSINESS

Fairgrounds Building

Commissioner Belding stated the plans are moving along for the building but it will be difficult to have completed by the end of 2020.

Dirt and Gravel Road Update Goodwin Hill

Ms. Snider and Mr. Wentzel visited the site along with Mr. Eric Davis, Fish and Boat Commission, on Friday, September 18, 2020. The project is complete and a final inspection was done. The project included five cross drains, headwalls, surface fill and a clean water diversion ditch. The township, contractor, engineer and Ms. Snider met a few weeks ago to discuss what needed completed for this project and all items have been finished. Quality Assurance Board (QAB) gave final approval for payment. Lisa will meet with the township to go over the bills before payment is issued.

Potential District Associate Board Members 2021

Ms. Snider reminded the board members that if anyone has a name to include, on the list for possible associate board members, to send the name soon since the members are picked at the end of the year.

AG Assistance Program Legislation

Senate Bill 1272 sent on September 18, 2020 to the Senate. The meeting packet included the changes on the bill and what is being proposed. Ms. Snider also will send a copy of the actual bill via email to board members to see changes as the bill updates.

NEW BUSINESS

Request for Assistance

There were six requests for assistance to bring before the board.

Brian Miller-Carmichaels-283 Acres

Doug Cumpston-Carmichaels-125 Acres

Cantoni Farms LP-Clarksville-800 Acres

Erik Calvert-Waynesburg-23 Acres

James Cole-Waynesburg-262 Acres

June Spitznogle-Spraggs-21 Acres

Mr. Schweiger and Ms. Hlatky visited each participant's farm; all are GRACE participants.

***A motion was made by Melissa Adamson to approve the six requests for assistance.
Bill Wentzel seconded. (Motion Passed)***

Review Staff Evaluations

Mr. Cowell stated the board will do an executive session to go over staff evaluations. The executive session will happen later in the meeting.

2020 GRACE Applications

Mr. Schweiger started the conversation by requesting the board consider changing program planning requirements for all returning applicants. Second year GRACE applicants currently need a conservation plan that is approved by Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS). An Ag E&S plan is a similar tool to the NRCS Conservation Plan for farmers and could fulfill the requirement.

The Ag E&S plan can be completed online by the farmer and/or with assistance from Ag staff and will show the farmer calculated projected soil loss. Ben suggested training seminars or workshops for both

Ag E&S and Manure Management that could help farmers with plan development. Ms. Hlatky checked into the differences between the Ag E&S Plan and the Conservation Plans. The Conservation plan has additional evaluations (i.e.: Environmental, Wildlife, etc.) included compared to the Ag E&S plan. Mr. Schweiger suggested having both plans available as options to applicants for the planning requirement. The Conservation Plan will continue to be developed by NRCS. Ms. Snider stated the Ag E&S plan is easily manageable and becomes a working document for the farmer. Ms. Snider added the Ag E&S plan is compliant with state requirements. Reimbursement will be dependent on the status of plan development for returning GRACE applicants.

A motion was made by Greg Hopkins to require second year GRACE Applicants have either an Ag E&S Plan or Conservation Plan in place. Bill Wentzel seconded. (Motion Passed)

Mr. Dave Shipman opposed.

The second item discussed was GRACE applicant's breakdown of items requested and amounts. A handout was provided at the meeting showing a total for the 2020/2021 GRACE Program practices requested of \$173,176.31. The last two sheets of the handout included previous GRACE participants that were unable to complete approved practices to date, with a few individuals that called and are still in process of completion. 2019 has a total of \$103,052.83 in not completed practices and 2018 had a total of \$17,527.46 in not completed practices. Funding is issued after the practice is complete and receipts are turned in to the conservation office for reimbursement. Mr. Hopkins asked about capping the reimbursement amount the district is willing to spend towards GRACE, in order to keep the program running for the next several years. Ms. Snider stated the farms are ranked for this purpose in the case that funding is not available for all practices the ranking system will give a fair way to split up what funding is available to applicants.

A motion was made by Commissioner Belding to approve 2020/2021 GRACE Program Applications for \$173,176.31. Dave Shipman seconded. (Motion Passed)

A motion was made by Commissioner Belding to approve an extension for 2019/2020 GRACE Applicants to complete approved practices by July 31, 2021 and suspend any 2020/2021 contract signings for returning applicants with unfinished projects until the 2019/2020 projects are complete. Greg Hopkins seconded. (Motion Passed)

A motion was made by Commissioner Belding to approve 2018/2019 GRACE Applicants finish remaining projects or have a detailed plan, to be presented to the board, on completing the remaining projects by October 20, 2020. Dave Shipman seconded. (Motion Passed)

State Conservation Commission Draft Policy Statement

Ms. Snider included a draft copy of State Conservation Commission Policies that were received after the meeting packets had been sent. Ms. Snider received a letter from Karl Brown, Executive Secretary of State Conservation Commission, with the draft policies and a forty-five (45) day comment period. The PACD October 5, 2020 director meeting may discuss these policy changes and ask how to move forward at the state meeting on adopting the new policies.

The first draft policy is regarding drones. Stating the districts can operate drones but must have guidelines in place to follow and drones are not to be used for delegated programs unless authorizations and agreements have been obtained for the program.

The second draft policy involves appointing former conservation district employees to serve as directors or an associate director within a three (3) year period of leaving the position. Ms. Snider disagrees with the associate director part of the policy. The associate directors do not make decisions about employees or job functions but can provide valuable input towards programs within the district.

A motion was made by Commissioner Belding to approve Ms. Snider representing the board during discussion, of the draft policies, to change the ability of a former Conservation District employee to serve as an Associate Director on the Conservation District Board before a three (3) year period has passed. Melissa Adamson seconded. (Motion Passed)

2020 Annual Awards Banquet

Ms. Snider asked if the board would like to move forward with the Annual Awards Banquet for 2020 with the stipulation that a possible cancelation may be needed due to Covid-19. Awards can be presented without a banquet, if needed. The agriculture, dirt, gravel, low volume roads, and education/outreach/awards committees will be called together within the next few weeks to discuss moving forward with plans for the banquet. The committee members will need to come up with the following: 2020 Cooperator, Forester, Contractor, DGLVR Township of the Year and Special Recognition.

2021 Budget Committee

A budget committee meeting will be called together within a few weeks to begin the 2021 budget to present to the board at the November 2020 meeting.

CONSERVATION DISTRICT OUTREACH

Mr. Cowell received a call from Laurel Rush, Nutrient Management Program Regional Coordinator of State Conservation Commissions, regarding letters being sent to the state from Greene County farmers regarding programs offered in the county and not losing funding for those programs. Ms. Snider noted the Governor's Office, State Representative, Department of Environmental Protection, Department of Agriculture, and Conservation Commission have all received letters from the residents in Greene County. Ms. Snider received an email from Karl Brown, Executive Secretary of State Conservation Commission, and explained to Mr. Brown how funding is made available for programs such as GRACE for the farmers to utilize on the local farms in Greene County.

REPORTS FROM COOPERATING AGENCIES

There were no cooperating agencies in attendance.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. Cowell called an executive session to discuss staff evaluations with board members.

A motion was made by Bill Wentzel to break for an executive session to review staff evaluations at 11:34 a.m. Commissioner Belding seconded. (Motion Passed)

A motion was made by Dave Shipman to reconvene the meeting at 12:02 p.m. Bill Wentzel seconded. (Motion Passed)

Ms. Snider stated a meeting with Mr. Jeff Marshall, Chief Clerk, Commissioner Belding, Commissioner McClure, Commissioner Zimmerman, and District Executive Board Members to discuss staff salary adjustments.

A motion was made by Greg Hopkins to set up a meeting with Mr. Marshall, Commissioner Belding, Commissioner McClure, Commissioner Zimmerman, District Executive Board members and Ms. Lisa Snider to discuss staff salary adjustments. Dave Shipman seconded. (Motion Passed)

NEXT REGULAR MEETING

The Next Regular Meeting will be October 20, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.

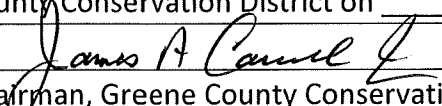
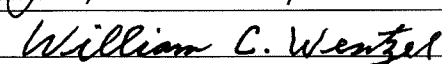
ADJOURNMENT

A motion was made by Commissioner Belding to adjourn the meeting at 12:04 p.m. Dave Shipman seconded. (Motion Passed)

Respectfully submitted,



April Morris
Fiscal Officer

| <u>MEETING MINUTES CERTIFICATION</u> | |
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| We, the undersigned, agree that the minutes taken above were approved in their entirety by the Greene County Conservation District on _____, 2020. | |
|  | |
| Chairman, Greene County Conservation District | |
|  | |
| Secretary, Greene County Conservation District | |