



Pike County Conservation District

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PIKE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES Monday, February 24, 2025

The Board of Directors meeting was also held via Zoom Video Conference call.
Information regarding the conference call was posted on the District website.

ATTENDANCE:

Directors: Scott Savini, John Milliken, Ken Coutts, JoAnn Rose, Commissioner Ron Schmalzle

Associate Directors: Paul Ranello

Staff: Tara Burnham, Ellen Enslin, Lisa Dolci, Chris Meszler, Emily Mansfield, Ally McGee, Rachael Marques, Nick Kremp, Brandon Twomey

Cooperating Agency Representatives: Janet Creegan-DEP, Jen Matthews-NRCS, Austin Noguera-DCNR

Guests: Jeffrey DiFrancesco

Directors/Associate Directors Absent: Kelly Stagen, Jay Morrow, Carole Linkiewicz

Scott Savini called the meeting to order at 9:00 am

PUBLIC COMMENTS / QUESTIONS AGENDA ITEMS: None

ACTION ON MINUTES of January 27, 2024: Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the January 27, 2024, Board Meeting minutes. Commissioner Ron Schmalzle seconded. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT: Listed under the miscellaneous expenses are the staff performance bonuses for 2024. Report filed, subject to audit.

CORRESPONDENCE REPORT: Included in the correspondence report is a letter from the President's office regarding updates to the federal funding freeze. Bank of America sent a letter stating that our business account has been closed. The State Conservation Commission sent a memo with guidance regarding the Avian Influenza. We received an appreciation certificate from the Ocean Conservancy for our efforts with the road cleanup project we complete every year. Kathleen Banski from the Dept of Environmental Education at DEP sent Rachael an email commending her for her radio interview on her "Study of Microplastics in Pike County Waters" program.

DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT: Rachael attended the "Lake Management Workshop" and other training workshops throughout the month. She completed the midterm report for her EE Grant, "A Study of Microplastics in Pike County Waters," and obtained permissions and permits to collect the water samples. Rachael has concluded 2 out of the 3 programs for her mini grant, "From Source to Sink." Rachael attended the LWWMD Annual Strategic Plan meeting and continued to participate in the Open Space Plan update committee, as well as complete all reporting for the surface water program, including submitting Tier 3 data to DEP. Ellen has been working with a potential new applicant for an ACAP project, while continuing her work with Egypt Valley Farm to implement their project. Ellen received information from the SCC with a directive regarding bird flu and biosecurity measures and sharing with staff to ensure proper protocols are being followed. Ellen coordinated the pilot QA/QC for the ACAP Program. Our district was used as a pilot for the QA/QC process, and the meeting went well, and no formal

evaluation will follow because it was a pilot audit. Ellen attended the Pike County Road Task Force meeting and introduced Nick Kremp to the municipal representatives and other attendees at the meeting. LWWMD DGLVR GG Grant has been closed; Ellen was a great technical resource for the potential projects within the grant program. She has also been working on completing the quarterly and annual reporting, including working with CACAT/Penn State for correcting GIS errors and with SCC for other GIS errors. She has been working to help plan the structure of the technical programs' day-to-day management, setting meeting agendas, following up with project statuses, and onboarding new staff and discussing transition plans. Nick has started shadowing onsite inspections, tech assists and meeting with contractors and applicants while continuing his training on Clean Water Academy. Marianna has been reviewing her projects with staff and making sure everything is ready for the transition after her retirement. Ally assisted Lisa with developing the 2025 staff time logs and worked on her presentation for the Contractor's Workshop. Ally coordinated our first use of the updated penalty assessment matrix from DEP. Brandon started at the District on January 21st and began onboarding and training. Brandon assisted Rachael with her sampling for the microplastics program. Chris has been working on his presentation for the Contractor's Workshop, in addition to his regular workload, and assisted with training new staff. Emily has been working with the Pike/Wayne Partnership and participated in the first Education Committee meeting and scheduled a spring full partnership meeting. Due to left over funding through the PACD Mini Grant, Emily was able to submit a grant application to conduct a smaller Barrels & Breakfast program. Her application was approved, and the program is scheduled for the beginning of April. Emily assisted Rachael with her mini grant program, "From Source to Sink," and assisted with the public survey development and administration of the survey for our 2025 Strategic Planning Grant. Emily worked with Rachael to gather water samples for the microplastics grant, she went on a site inspection with Ally to learn more about the technical programs and ran a very productive Annual Education/Outreach Meeting. Lisa began working on coordinating an energy audit for the building to address the heating issues, completed end-of-year reporting and quarterly reports. She worked on setting up the financial files for 2025, including the allocation spreadsheets and attending the first Admin Roundtable at Monroe County held by DEP. For my report, I worked on organizing the Strategic Planning Committee; we had our first meeting with the facilitator to plan out the next steps. I will be conducting board interviews, that will take about 30 minutes each, either in person or through Zoom. The facilitator, Ryan, will be conducting the staff interviews, he will reach out to them directly to schedule their individual meetings. Ryan will compile all the responses, which will remain anonymous, and discuss them at our workgroup meeting, scheduled for April 21st. I have been researching the financial requirements for programs and looking into which accounts may need to be updated or changed based on the individual program policy. We reached out to the auditor to let him know of any changes before we start the audit process and to find out more information on how to better handle the segregation of duties.

Scott Savini would like to thank Marianna Quartararo for her many years of service and all the good she has done for the District, and on behalf of the Board wish her the best of luck and a happy and safe retirement.

OLD BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Streamlining Permit for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) program updates – Tara Burnham, District Manager. DEP received 9 applicants to be bidders for the program. The SPEED program is moving forward, but there have not been any other updates.

NEW BUSINESS:

Bid Policy (vote) – Tara Burnham, District Manager. While updating our ACAP policy, we developed a separate Bid Policy, which includes ACAP requirements for bidding procedures. The Bid Policy is separated from the standard ACAP policy so that we can make updates as needed in one document. The thresholds will be updated annually as the Department of Labor releases the new amounts. The solicitor reviewed the draft of the Bid Policy and had no objections to the policy as written. Commissioner Ron Schmalzle made a motion to approve the Bid Policy. Ken Coutts seconded. Motion carried.

Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program Policy Updates (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. We are working on updating the ACAP policy to remove the bidding and any other updates that are needed. We are still waiting for feedback and to finalize the updates, and we will have it ready for the March meeting. No action was taken at this time.

2025 PCCD Annual Education and Outreach Plan – Tara Burnham, District Manager. I have included the completed 2025 Education and Outreach Plan. This is a guide for the year; things may change as the year progresses. This year we have developed an annual theme to base all our programming on. This year's theme is Hydrogeomorphology: we will be looking at the interactions of water and landforms in Pike County, breaking this into four quarters of geology, groundwater, surface waters, and atmosphere, building upwards.

Cooperating Agency and Other Organization Reports:

PACD – The Executive Director, Brenda Shambaugh is currently out on leave for three weeks. Amy Brown is handling things while Brenda is out. The legislative outreach is in progress to increase budget lines for conservation districts. There is an upcoming meeting between PACD and PennDOT to discuss challenges from Districts across the state regarding PennDOT projects. Tara and Lisa attended the “Employment Law Seminar,” with presenter Adam Long, a lawyer who specializes in employment law for Conservation Districts.

NRCS – Jen Matthews highlighted the accomplishments of NRCS in the fiscal year of 2024; 43,402 conservation practices and enhancements were applied on private land throughout PA to help improve soil, air, and water quality, and enhance wildlife habitats. We distributed an obligated \$84.3 million dollars in the programs of CSP, AMA, EQIP, RCPP. From 1996 to 2002, NRCS funded 456 easements on 50,987 acres in the Kittatinny Ridge Priority Area and from 2023 onwards; an additional 27 easements were funded to protect 3,477 acres. The Emergency Watershed Protection Program provides technical assistance and financial assistance to landowners who have severe streambank deterioration. There were two declarations made from severe storms that hit PA. There are nearly 100 projects resulting in the damage that may possibly be eligible for the program. NRCS continues to rebuild dams across rural PA, there are currently 10 projects in various stages of completion. The Watershed and Flood Prevention Operations currently have two projects they are working on. There will be a local workgroup meeting on March 25 at 10 am.

DEP – There was a seminar held on Employment Law for Conservation Districts. It is highly recommended that District Directors, Associate Directors, management, and staff attend to help boards with different issues they may face. The application for Growing Greener grants will be available in April. On April 4 there will be mentor training in North Hampton County for new hires.

DCNR – Austin Noguera let us know that the Spring Fire season is about to start at the end of March. DCNR has a spray map for this seasons Spongy Moth suppression. There will be over 19k acres of land sprayed in May/June; they are working with some HOA communities to access the properties and help with spray efforts. There are four active timber sales in Pike County. The district office is being built towards the end of route 402.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

PUBLIC/PRESS QUESTIONS: None

ADJOURN: Commissioner Ron Schmalzle made a motion to adjourn the Board of Directors Meeting. John Milliken seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:30 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Dolci, Board Secretary