



# Pike County Conservation District

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## PIKE COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES Monday, January 27, 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, Kelly Stagen, Jay Morrow, 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, Marianna Quartararo, Nick Kremp, Brandon Twomey

**Cooperating Agency Representatives:** Janet Creegan-DEP, Deborah Basalyga-NRCS, Kurt Tereschak-PA Fish and Boat Commission

**Guests:** Robert Katz-Pike County Dispatch

**Directors/Associate Directors Absent:** Carole Linkiewicz

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS / QUESTIONS AGENDA ITEMS:** None

**Oath of Office District Directors administered by Commissioner Ron Schmalzle:** Commissioner Ron Schmalzle administered the oath of office to Scott Savini as a District Farmer Director for another four-year and Kelly Stagen as a District Public Director for another four-year term for each position.

**Report on Nominating Committee Chair Kelly Stagen:** Kelly Stagen provided the following report of the Nominating Committee:

**Election of Officers:** Chairman Scott Savini; Vice-Chair Kelly Stagen; Treasurer Jay Morrow; Secretary Lisa Dolci

**Open Floor for additional nominations:** None

**Associate Directors:** Carole Linkiewicz, Paul Ranello

### **2025 Standing Committees and Chairpersons:**

**Executive Committee:** Scott Savini, Kelly Stagen, Jay Morrow

**Nominating Committee:** Kelly Stagen

**Finance/Planning:** Scott Savini, Jay Morrow

**Operations:** Kelly Stagen

**2025 Appointees/Representatives:**

**Dirt & Gravel Road Quality Assurance Board:** Paul Ranello, District Voting member; Kelly Stagen, Non-voting member

**Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program Local Advisory Committee:** Kelly Stagen, District Voting member; Ellen Enslin, Non-voting Chair

**PA Association of Conservation Districts Executive Council:** Kelly Stagen, Voting Member/Designee; Tara Burnham or Ellen Enslin, Alternates

**Lake Wallenpaupack Watershed Management District:** Rachael Marques, Representative; Commissioner Ron Schmalzle, Alternate

**PCCD Inclusion Committee (on hold until 2025 Strategic Plan is complete):** Kelly Stagen, Committee Chair; Tara Burnham, District Manager; Lisa Dolci, Administrative Manager

**Strategic Planning Committee:** Kelly Stagen, Vice-Chair; Tara Burnham, District Manager; Lisa Dolci, Administrative Manager

**Pike County Agricultural Land Preservation Board Advisor from PCCD:** Ellen Enslin, Program Manager, Representative

**District Compliance and Enforcement Officer:** Tara Burnham, District Manager; Ellen Enslin, Program Manager; Nick Kremp, Head Resource Conservationist

Ken Coutts made an omnibus motion to approve the Slate of Officers and Associate Directors for 2025, Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

Kelly Stagen made an omnibus motion to approve the Standing Committee Chairs and Chairpersons, and Appointees/Representatives as presented. Ken Coutts seconded. Motion carried.

**ACTION ON MINUTES of November 25, 2024:** Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the November 25, 2024, Board Meeting minutes. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORT:** In November, we received half of our ACAP allocation for 2024/2025. The Panther Brook Road project through DGLVR was completed, and the final payment was issued. The December report includes the County appropriations for the 3rd and 4th quarters that are still waiting to be received, along with the reimbursement for the USGS Groundwater Monitoring that was completed for the year. The 4th Quarter reporting has been completed. Expenses included were for the Watershed Specialist Mini-grant test kits, biosecurity supplies for ACAP inspections, workstations, computer equipment, tree clean-up from storm damage, and bulk trash removal. Report filed, subject to audit.

**CORRESPONDENCE REPORT:** The District's annual summary page for PACD is included and has been distributed to legislators, senators, and throughout the state to show the work of the conservation districts. A letter from the solicitor with no objections to the policy changes regarding reimbursement of expenses for training. The State Conservation Commission sent a letter to the Chief Clerk, approving the next Director terms for Scott Savini and Kelly Stagen. Included is a letter to Matt Miller, with the District's intent to apply for the 2025 Leadership Development Grant. We were approved for the grant, and that letter is also included.

**DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT:** Rachael has been working on distributing the Source Water Protection brochures. In December, Rachael, Emily, and Ryan from PA Rural Water went to different water systems in the county to distribute more brochures and discuss Sourcewater Protection. The applications have been finalized for the Microplastics Study in Pike County Waters grant program, and samples will be collected at the end of this week. The Watershed Specialist Mini Grant, From Source to Sink, is underway. One program has taken place, and two more programs have been scheduled. Rachael was interviewed by WJFF Radio about her Microplastics grant program, and she completed her 2024 Surface Water Report. The report is on our website for viewing. Ellen has been working on the ACAP program. Our District was used as the pilot for the first trial ACAP QA/QC meeting, that occurred last week. There is a possibility of running a pilot program for Forest Management Plans. Ellen worked with Emily to send out a press release to let the public know we are now accepting applications for the ACAP program. The Brooks Cabin Road, DGLVR advance payment was processed. Ellen has provided comments on the program to SCC and the Center; she worked with DEP to encourage NERO/CD training of Ag. E&S. Nick started onboarding in December and working

with staff, going to inspections. Marianna has been working on transitioning projects and finalizing projects she is working on. Ally has been carrying a strong workload and did a great job helping us transfer data for our daily reports, saving staff a lot of time from having to complete it manually. Chris has been working a lot with the PAG-02 renewals for the end of the year, as well as other projects and reviews. Emily ran the winter Pike/Wayne Conservation partnership meeting in December, and we have started to get the committees back up and running. Following up on the two EE Grants that were distributed last year, one is almost complete, and the other project has not been started. Emily will follow up with them again for an update. Emily worked on purging old grants and education files. With the additional staff starting soon we needed additional workspaces, and Lisa coordinated purchasing the new office workstations and removal of the old ones. Lisa completed the end of year reporting and set up the financial files for 2025, including the allocation spreadsheets. Effective January 1, 2025, Lisa was promoted to Administrative Manager. For my report, I have been working on developing internal protocols for reporting and segregation of duties and continued to develop new training procedures and materials for onboarding new staff.

### **OLD BUSINESS/COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

Streamlining Permit for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) program updates – Tara Burnham, District Manager. There have not been many updates. We have been made aware that there is an SOP, Standard Operating Procedures guide in progress, but we have not received any drafts of the document. DEP has shared a draft FAQ document that I am working on reviewing.

2024-2025 Strategic Planning Grant for Conservation Districts update – Tara Burnham, District Manager. I worked with Kelly and Lisa on the startup for the Strategic Planning Grant. We met with an outside facilitator that could potentially help us work through the new Strategic Plan. We received the recommendation from Matt Miller for this facilitator to help us work on our internal and external goals and how to build better succession. The plan is to have the outside facilitator work with the staff and complete a survey over Zoom to ensure their answers remain anonymous. The board members will be interviewed by Kelly or JoAnn, and a survey will go out to the cooperating agencies for feedback, as well as a survey to the public. The facilitator will take all of the information to create an outline for us. We will be holding a work session in April that he will attend along with staff and board. After we hold our work session, we will be able to create the final plan. The estimate came in a little over our original budget, but we feel it would be beneficial to hire the facilitator to help us through this process.

### **NEW BUSINESS:**

Appoint Nominating Committee – Scott Savini, Board Chair. Kelly Stagen asked JoAnn Rose to serve on the committee for another year and she agreed. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve the Nominating Committee. Ken Coutts seconded. Motion carried.

Board Approval of Commissioner Appointment – Scott Savini, Board Chair spoke to Commissioner Ron Schmalzle about serving on our Board for another term, which he agreed to. Kelly Stagen made a motion to approve the Commissioner appointment. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

2025 Board Meeting Schedule (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. The proposed 2025 board meeting schedule was included in the packet. A new addition to the meeting list is the DGLVR QAB and ACAP LAC meetings that will be held at the District office before every regularly scheduled Board of Directors meetings. If either of those meetings are cancelled, the attendees will be notified. Kelly Stagen made a motion to approve the meeting schedule. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

2025 District Action Plan – 2024 Updates (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. A copy of the plan is included in the packet. The plan has been updated to include actionable steps and dates to begin and due dates for each step to measure how the goals are being met. Ken Coutts made a motion to approve District Action Plan updates. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

Unconventional Gas Well Fund (UGW) Transfer for Staff Retention (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. The budgeted amount for 2024 Staff Retention was \$17,500, but we paid \$27,500 to the County. There was confusion about how the policy worked and how the amounts were laid out, but we now have a clear understanding and directive moving forward. We will need to transfer \$27,500 from the UGW Fund to the Operating Account. Kelly Stagen made a motion to approve the transfer amount. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

Transfer of 2024 Net Revenue from Operating Account to Conservation Fund (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. The net revenue for 2024 is \$35,059.62. Staff recommend keeping \$18,324.54 in the Operating Account to reimburse costs for tree clearing needed after the November snowstorm (\$1,200), new electronic equipment for new staff/ new laptop for the District Manager (\$3,822.32), new office cubicles/ furniture (\$12,969.22), and new toilets purchased for the restrooms (\$333). These costs were previously discussed with the Executive Committee. Staff recommend a transfer of \$16,735.08 from the Operating Account to the Conservation Fund for the remaining balance. The District Fund Analysis completed this past fall stated any 2024 revenue will be transferred to the Conservation Fund at the end of the year. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve the transfer as stated. John Milliken seconded. Motion carried.

Clean Water Fund Transfer to Operating Account - Tara Burnham, District Manager. The Clean Water Fund Account consists of permit application fees collected from the administration of the delegated programs, Chapter 102 and Chapter 105. Expenditures from this fund are to be used to support the delegated programs. Each December funds in excess of \$2,500 are transferred from the Clean Water Fund to the Operating Account to cover expenditures that support the delegated programs including administrative expenses, travel for site inspections, etc. This year the amount to be transferred is \$14,977.40. Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the transfer as stated. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried. No formal action is needed per our financial policy, this is our standard operating procedure at the end of the year.

Draft 2025 Budget (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. In the draft budget for 2025, you will see a separate column on the right. The numbers in this column do not include the income and expenses for DGLVR and ACAP and give a more accurate description of the budget numbers. To help with county budget cuts in 2025, we have included a one-time decrease for 2025 from our usual request of \$30k for County Appropriations we receive each year to \$15k for 2025. We have included the Conservation Fund transfer expenses for 2024 and 2025. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve the 2025 budget. Kelly Stagen seconded. Motion carried.

Transfer from UGW Fund (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. As discussed at the November Board meeting, this transfer would be made for performance bonuses for the staff for outstanding work performance in the last year. In 2024, two new staff members were onboarded while general office workload increased due to the addition of new programs, increased education/ outreach efforts, increased compliance/ enforcement, etc. At this time, I recommend a bonus for each staff member at PCCD that is equal to 3% of their respective salaries for 2024. The total transfer needed for this is \$12,861.41. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve the transfer. John Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

Employee Credit Card Policy Updates (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. Two updates are highlighted in the document attached to the Board packet. One is the addition of wording to require new staff to pass their probationary period before being assigned an employee card, and the other is to remove the set amount for employee cards and replace it with wording that states credit limits will be determined by the District Manager by needs of the individual staff position. Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the updates. Kelly Stagen seconded. Motion carried.

Fee Waiver Request from Shohola Township (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. We received a request from Shohola Township to waive the E&S plan review for the T-440 structure replacement project over Balliard Creek. The staff recommend

supporting the fee waiver. Jay Morrow made a motion to approve the fee waiver request. Ken Coutts seconded. Motion carried.

Fee Waiver Request from Greene Township (vote) - Tara Burnham, District Manager. Greene Township has requested a waiver of fees for the E&S plan review for the T-366 superstructure replacement project over Taylor Creek. The staff recommend supporting the fee waiver. Ken Coutts made a motion to approve the fee waiver request. Kelly Stagen seconded. Motion carried.

Water Quality Contract with Mike Bilger for 2025 (vote) - Rachael Marques, Watershed Specialist. We received the 2025 contract from Mike Bilger for sampling and identifications for 11 sites. The price has increased from \$345 to \$362.25 per Macroinvertebrate site and the price for each fish sampling site went from \$450 to \$472.50 per site. Kelly Stagen made a motion to approve the contract. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

PACD Nonpoint Source Pollution Mini Grant Rain Barrels (vote) - Emily Mansfield, Communications Coordinator. In July of 2024, we held a Barrels and Breakfast program with a grant we received, where we were able to give out 18 rain barrels to the public. The program went really well, and we had a great turn out. Shannon at PACD reached out to me to let me know there was some additional money left over to hold another program. Since our original grant has been closed, we will need to apply for a new grant to hold an additional Barrels and Breakfast program. The grant amount will be \$1000, and we would be able to give out 10 rain barrels. Kelly Stagen made a motion to approve applying for the additional grant. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried.

**Cooperating Agency and Other Organization Reports:**

PACD – The PACD meeting is being held this week with the Executive Council; Kelly will report on the meeting at our next Board of Directors meeting in February.

DEP – On February 20, there will be a seminar held on Employment Law for Conservation Districts. It is highly recommended that District Directors, Associate Directors, management, and staff attend. The presentation will include updates on a number of recent employment law developments. Matt Miller will be sending out links for a video series to help boards with different issues they may face.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None

**PUBLIC/PRESS QUESTIONS:** None

**ADJOURN:** Ken Coutts made a motion to adjourn the Board of Directors Meeting. Jay Morrow seconded. Motion carried. The meeting adjourned at 9:53 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Lisa Dolci, Board Secretary