

**Frederick County SCD Board Meeting- Session Two**  
**Tuesday, February 6, 2024**  
**Soil Conservation District Office**

**In attendance:** D. Flickinger, R. Black, J. Falkenstein, B. Sowers, M. Shafer. District Manager, H. Hutchinson. Soil Conservation Coordinator, K. McAfee.

Meeting called to order by Chairman, B. Sowers at 9:27am.

**Minutes approved as presented from February Session One by motion:** J. Falkenstein, second by R. Myers. All in agreement.

**Catoctin December minutes approved by motion:** J. Falkenstein, second by M. Shafer. All in agreement.

**December Joint minutes approved as presented by motion:** J. Falkenstein, second by R. Myers. All in agreement.

**Catoctin December Closed minutes approved by motion:** J. Falkenstein, second by M. Shafer. All in agreement.

**Catoctin December Treasurers Report approved by motion:** J. Falkenstein, second by M. Shafer. All in agreement.

**Reconciliation Report approved by motion:** J. Falkenstein, second by M. Shafer. All in agreement.

**Expenses for the month approved by motion:** J. Falkenstein, second by M. Shafer. All in agreement.

**Old Business:**

1. H. Hutchinson reported on the board merger. B. Sowers, S. Hipkins, and H. Hutchinson attended the January 26 Frederick County Delegation meeting to speak on the bill to remove Catoctin and Frederick from the annotated code and add Frederick County SCD. The delegation requested a letter of support from Farm Bureau which was provided the following week. Another hearing was held on February 2 where the request was accepted.
  - a. The bill was dropped on Feb 5, 2024 as HB1017. H. Hutchinson will go to Annapolis to testify when the hearing is scheduled.
2. H. Hutchinson reported that she attended the Quarterly Ag meeting with the county on January 24, 2024. The main discussion revolved around ultra lites flying over ag fields and disturbing cattle and corn in tassel. They also discussed fee increases and should submit them to the county council in April. Stacy Rosenberger is the new ombudsman at the county for ag permits. The MOU with the county needs to be updated as well.
3. H. Hutchinson reported that the SSCC meeting was held on January 18<sup>th</sup>.
  - a. Martin Proulx is the new value-added ag specialist for MDA.
  - b. A resilient food systems infrastructure grant is available to help cover the cost of equipment and shipping.

- c. Hans Schmidt, Assistant Secretary of Resource Conservation, gave an update on a bill to change the fine structure for AIR's. Previously there was a tiered system. Now farmers will receive three warnings before they are fined. The fine will be \$1000.
    - d. Potential change in focus for the WIP program looking at watersheds and critical areas closer to the bay.
  4. H. Hutchinson reported that the MASCD Winter Meeting was held in Annapolis, MD on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. S. Hipkins, R. Myers, D. Flickinger, M. Shafer, J. Falkenstein and H. Hutchinson attended.
    - a. Jen Nelson reported that they are working on the final details of the Bay Friendly Farming program.
    - b. MASCD has a resource library available to help districts establish policy, bylaws, and long-range plans. They are looking to provide webinar training on this.
    - c. Jen Nelson reported that they are still working on the Cooperative Agreement-employee incentives are off the table.
    - d. Mike Mason gave a legislative update. Revenues from property tax and income tax are down which is a major funding source. There are bills that could affect the SCD:
      - i. HB0003 deals with affordable housing and may require expedited E&S review by SCDs
      - ii. SB0196 would allow SCDs to establish a fee structure for small pond review.
    - e. Hans Schmidt said that MDA was fully funded.
      - i. The Cover Crop Program is being audited again which is to be expected due to the \$25.5 million fund allocation.
      - ii. NM Advisory Committee is set to meet again on February 12<sup>th</sup>. One training coordinator and two field specialist positions were funded.
      - iii. NM Oversight Committee report is available of the MDA website.
      - iv. Phase 3 WIP- changes to incorporate new science, increase monitoring, leverage co-benefits, and strategic focus on high priority watersheds.
      - v. There will be a Cover Crop TAC meeting in the coming months. They would like to start a farmer task force to make sure the program works for farmers.
    - f. Byron Petrauskas, Resource Conservation District Operations, Program Manager, said that the Trust Fund is flat funded this year. The general budget request will be sent out in February and needs to be returned in March. The MOU will be presented in April and must be returned by May. HPAI recruitment went out and staff can sign up to work on this.
  5. H. Hutchinson reported that the Cover Crop TAC meeting will be in the next two months. They would like to start a farmer task force to make sure the program works for farmers.
    - a. B. Sowers mentions that Matt Morris has reached out to Hans Schmidt to be on the task force, but has not had a response. H. Hutchinson to follow up.

#### **New Business:**

1. H. Hutchinson reported that Legislative Day will be held on February 10, 2024 starting at 9:00AM at the New Midway Volunteer Fire Company.
2. H. Hutchinson reported that Rob Schnabel has requested a letter of support for a grazing grant to provide an in-kind match (staff time) of \$10,000/yr for three years.

- a. D. Flickinger motioned, second by M. Shafer, to approve a letter of support for Rob Schnabel.
3. H. Hutchinson reported that MACS needs new authorized signatures for applications and claims.
  - a. R. Black motioned, second by J. Falkenstein, to authorize H. Hutchinson for signature authority for MACS applications and claims.
4. H. Hutchinson reported that MACS needs new authorized signatures for Cover Crop.
  - a. J. Falkenstein motioned, second by R. Black, to authorize H. Hutchinson and K. McAfee for signature authority on MACS Cover Crop applications.
5. H. Hutchinson reported that due to the board merger she needs new signature authority all operating accounts including Catoctin and Frederick.
  - a. J. Falkenstein motioned, second by R. Black, to grant H. Hutchinson signature authority on Catoctin District Operating Account and Frederick District Operating Account for expenditures not to exceed \$1000.00. All in agreement.
6. H. Hutchinson reported that the board needs to determine Per Diem rates. Currently the max a supervisor may earn in Per Diem, per day, is \$200.00.
  - a. J. Falkenstein motioned, second by R. Black, to have Supervisor Per Diem rate at \$200 for monthly meetings, \$100 for telephone meetings, and \$100 for Associate Supervisors. All in agreement.
  - b. Policy will be developed on what meetings are approved for the next meeting.
7. H. Hutchinson brought forth the Bylaws that are attached in the board packets. She asked Supervisors to review the Bylaws for the next meeting and come with changes and concerns.
  - a. Need to add Associate Supervisors.
8. H. Hutchinson brought forth a request from Monocacy Middle School to participate in the STEAM night.
  - a. Discussion to continue at next meeting.

**Communications:** H. Hutchinson reported that she received 'Thank You' letters from the Brethren Church for the donation in honor of Jenifer Hipkins as well as from Maryland Ag Education Foundation for the donation made by Frederick SCD.

**Next Meeting:** scheduled for February 20, 2024 at 9:00AM at the Soil Conservation District Office.

**Adjournment:** J. Falkenstein motioned, second by R. Black, to adjourn the regular meeting at 11:05AM. All in agreement.