

Garrett Soil Conservation District Supervisor's Meeting

April 18, 2023, 7:00 p.m.

Garrett Soil Conservation District Board Room

Participants

- Smokey Stanton, Board Chair
- Kristen Enlow, Board Vice Chair
- Katharine Dubansky, Board Treasurer
- William Buckel, Board Member
- Butch Helbig, Board Member
- Seth Metheny, District Manager (DM)
- Chad Bucklew, District Conservationist (DC)
- Jeannie Frazee, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Topics

- Certificate of Quorum
- Call to Order
- Introduction of Guests
- Approval/Correction of March 21, 2023 Minutes
- Treasurer's Report
- District Manager's Report
- Chairman's Report
- District Conservationist's Report
- New Business
- Old Business
- Public Comment

Call to Order

Smokey Stanton, Board Chair, certified a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:04 p.m. There were no guests and no one calling in to the meeting.

Seth Metheny introduced a new addition to the agenda which will be added to New Business regarding NASCD dues.

Approval/Correction of March 21, 2023 Minutes

Kristen Enlow requested a correction to something she said in the March 21 meeting. Under Deep Creek Foundation Update, it should be corrected to say "Kristen Enlow asked if they are a

special interest group and asked why they did not go to Lake Management.” The original minutes said “Forestry Board” instead of “Lake Management”.

Kristen Enlow made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Katharine Dubansky seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer’s Report

Financial Statement

Seth Metheny presented the Financial Reports. Smokey Stanton asked Seth Metheny to explain the new reports. Seth went over each section with the Board. It has been determined that the District money is in the Money Market account in First United. That account only allows for six transactions per month. To address this issue, Seth has created a new District (or local) account with \$3000 of funds from the Money Market account. That allows the bulk of the money to stay in an interest raising account. The new District account allows for as many transactions as needed per month. All of the State Funds are in Truist. There are two accounts, one for the State General Fund and one for the State CBTF. There is one additional account at First United for the Rental Equipment. Seth Metheny let the Board know that the Brinker Account made money this month which has not happened for a while. Smokey Stanton asked if this report replaces the reports we were getting from Boals & Associates. Seth answered that it does.

William Buckel stated that we should move the Money Market Account from First United to a higher interest generating account because we only received a little over 1% interest this past year. Additionally, it is limited to only six transactions. There are other types of accounts that would generate more interest. Butch Helbig suggested looking into a Short-Term Treasury, some of which are generating 4% interest with only a three month maturity.

Katharine Dubansky made a motion to accept the Financial Statement. Kristen Enlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

District Operations Spending Report

Spending was minimal the past month, with only the purchase of some office supplies. Katharine Dubansky made a motion to accept the District Operations Spending Report. William Buckel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Account Management and Reconciliation

During the past couple years while the District was without an Administrative Assistant, some checks were written out of the wrong accounts. Funds from the State and CBTF can only be written out for certain expenses, and the District is accountable to the State for reporting expenditures. Therefore, there needs to be a reconciliation of accounts so that it is clear to the District what totals reside in each fund account and so that the District can complete reports for the State. Seth Metheny completed a full reconciliation and provided the board with a report that listed funds written out of wrong accounts and where they should have been attributed. Once

complete, each account will contain the correct fund totals. Seth Metheny explained to the Board that there are 6 to 7 checks written out prior to his hiring that were not logged in the ledger, and it is unknown who these checks were made out to or for what purpose. The bank only posts the checks on their website for 90 days. Thereafter, the bank requires a \$40 per hour fee to look up checks and provide images. Seth Metheny explained that some of the checks were written out of the CBTF because it was believed to be the District Account. This fund has a high level of accountability through the State and the Federal Government, so it is important to move funds from the correct accounts for those line items back into this fund. CBTF can only be used to fund the salary of the Administrative Assistant and the E&S Employee. William Buckel suggested that Covid may have played into issues with financial tracking. Seth Metheny noted that Brian Boal was to have completed the reporting monthly, and that he had found documentation of the agreement with Brian Boal to complete this service along with others for the \$550 a month, but none of the reports were done by Boal's. Smokey Stanton stated that the problem was that the District did not send Boal's the paperwork or request the reports be done each month. Katharine Dubansky asked if the agreement had been signed. Seth Metheny said that the copy he had found had not been signed by either the District or Boal's.

FY24 Garrett SCD Budget Draft

Seth Metheny presented the Board with a FY24 Budget Draft for the District. Smokey Stanton explained to the Board that this is a suggested FY24 budget for the Board. The Board will complete an official FY24 budget in the next 60-90 days. Seth Metheny explained that he obtained his totals by looking at FY23 budgeted amounts. If all the money was used during the year, he bumped the total up 10-12 % to account for inflation. If not all of the money was spent, he looked at each item and made a calculated prediction based on known facts. Since so little money was spent on repair of the rental equipment compared to the budget, he put a lower budget amount in the draft for FY24 than FY23. Katharine asked about dam maintenance. Seth Metheny replied that the costs of all dam maintenance are the responsibility of the County and the City. William Buckel noted that the amount for the Cooperator's Dinner had been increased which is necessary because of increased costs in food preparation and facilities.

District Manager's Report

SCD Scholarship Applicants Update

Seth Metheny told the Board that there were three scholarship applicants so far but two of them do not meet the criteria. One has too low of a gpa, and the other is not majoring in one of the stated fields. In order to qualify, applicants must have attended school in Garrett County in public, private, or homeschool; have a gpa of 3.0 or higher; and be majoring in Agriculture, Natural Resources, or a related field. There have been 43 people that have looked at the scholarship page of the website in the past month, so there may be more applicants. Smokey Stanton reiterated that in order to qualify everything must be postmarked by May 1, 2023. Kristen Enlow added that if they are hand-delivered Jeannie needs to mark them with the date received.

MDA Furniture and Equipment Request

MDA has asked Seth Metheny to send in a request for furniture and equipment at the end of the fiscal year. Carryover funds from the State are available to each District to purchase furniture and equipment. Seth Metheny recommended that the District wait until the lease is resolved to buy any furniture or equipment if that is allowed. If not, it will need to be purchased within the allowed time frame so that the funds are not lost. Smokey Stanton asked the Board if there were any thoughts on getting rid of broken-down equipment. Chad Bucklew explained that any USDA equipment cannot be moved because it may contain personal information. Chad has submitted a request for IT to come and take it. Seth Metheny explained that much of the equipment that can be removed is beyond use. Chad suggested that some equipment that could be sold could possibly be sold as antiques even if it is of no use for its constructed purpose. There were no additional comments on furniture and office equipment.

MDA Technician Job Announcement

Seth Metheny told the Board that MDA already has a job announcement ready because there are other SCD's in the state needing the same position filled. Therefore, the announcement should be out soon. Kristen Enlow asked for an update about how the newer employees are doing in their positions. Seth Metheny said that they are doing very well and detailed some of their accomplishments.

WIP Progress Meeting

WIP is MDA's goals for water quality. Seth Metheny let the Board know that MDA will be having a virtual meeting on WIP goals. They would like for Chad, Seth, Keith, and any Board Supervisors that want to come to be in attendance. The Board can request either May 23 or 26th. This meeting will discuss where Garrett County is in its goals that are to be achieved by 2025. This meeting was originally to be held five or six months ago, but it was not. Smokey Stanton stated that it is important to the Board that the issue of some Garrett County residents being in the Chesapeake Bay watershed and some not, and some funding being only for those individuals in the Chesapeake Bay watershed, be discussed.

Little Yough Dam Assessment – 4/27

Seth Metheny told the Board that there will be a virtual meeting on April 27 to coordinate the spring assessment for six dams. At that time, it will be coordinated for the Supervisors to spend a day walking each dam for observation.

MACS and Cover Crop District Representative

The District needs to update its representatives for the MACS and MDA Cover Crop programs. Contracts for these programs must be signed by the District Representative or the Alternate District Representative. Seth Metheny proposed the following: For Cover Crop, District

Representative – Seth Metheny, Alternate Representative – Miranda Rounds. For MACS – Signatory – Seth Metheny, Alternate – Chris Herbert. The Board approved the designations as proposed. All Board members signed the required paperwork.

FY22 MDA General Fund Monthly Statement

Seth Metheny explained to the Board that MDA requires a monthly statement each month for the General Fund. The last monthly statement sent in by the Garrett SCD was October 2022. MDA is requiring us to catch up those statements. For FY 22, they are only requiring the final statement. Seth Metheny presented a copy of it to the Board for a signature. Katharine Dubansky volunteered to sign. Seth explained that he had also signed this statement because he had prepared it, but that moving forward, Jeannie Frazee would be preparing the reports.

FY23 MDA General Fund Monthly Statements

Seth Metheny also presented the catch-up FY23 monthly statements to the Board. MDA is requiring that the District submit all of the missing months of reports for FY23. Seth explained to the Board that part of the agreement with Brian Boal was for him to complete these statements, which he had not. Because there was not enough money requested for FY23 from the General Fund to pay for Boal's, it is necessary to take his fees out of the Carry Over Funds from the General Fund because he has to be considered as a service, since Boal's is an Accounting Firm, rather than an Administrative Assistant replacement. Seth let the Board know that more than half of the carry over funds have gone to pay for Boal's even though many of the services were not completed. As the Board Treasurer, Katharine Debansky volunteered to sign the FY23 monthly statements.

FY24 MDA General Fund Budget Request

Seth Metheny explained to the Board that the budget request for FY24 had to be sent in the first of April. He did send it to the MDA but with the understanding that it had not yet been approved by the Board of Supervisors and that adjustments could be made by the Board of Supervisors post-submission. The FY23 budget request was for \$20,368. The request for FY24 is \$26,296. Katharine Dubnasky asked about the \$6000 difference between the two years. Seth Metheny explained that it is because there have not been any adjustments made over the last couple years for increasing costs, and that the former budget requests were very "barebones", with some categories that should have had funds requested, not having been addressed previously.

Katharine made a motion to approve the MACS Cover Crop Representatives, FY22 MDA General Fund Monthly Statement, FY23 MDA General Fund Statements, and FY24 MDA General Fund Budget Request. William Buckel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FY23 CTBF Quarterly Report and FY24 CBTF Budget Request

Seth Metheny explained to the Board that CBTF moneys have to be reported to the DNR, who have to report them to the Federal Government. All money used from this fund has to be traceable. MDA has asked that the District put in missing quarterly reports first, and then monthly ones. Seth Metheny asked the Board to familiarize themselves with the report. Approval will be requested at next month's meeting. There were no additional questions about the reports.

Garrett County Budget Request FY 23 & 24

As commissioned in the March 2023 Board meeting, Seth Metheny prepared letters to the County requesting last year's funds and making a request for funds for FY23, which were presented to the Board for discussion. The amount already allotted for FY23 was \$19706.00. Seth recommended that the Board also request \$6500.00 for operations and maintenance of the dams. This amount is based on an agreement between the SCD and the County and the town of Oakland prepared in 1968 that states that the County will be responsible for paying for half of the operations and maintenance and the Town of Oakland the other half. Seth Metheny provided a copy of that agreement. The agreement says that the amount is to be based on cost rate for the year in question. Seth based the \$6500.00 as being one half of the amount of \$13000.00 that would be equivalent to the amount paid in 1968 plus inflation.

Seth Metheny also prepared a second letter to the County requesting \$23,393.00 for FY24. This represents an increase for the Administrative Assistant's salary. Originally, the County was to pay half of the Administrative Assistant salary and the CBTF the other half. As the CBTF amount has gone up, no adjustments have been made to the County funds. If the amount of funds provided by the County do not increase, the District will have to make up the difference. The amount of \$6500.00 is also being requested for Dam Operations and Maintenance for FY24.

William Buckel reminded the Board that the County is also giving the District in-kind support for the Administrative Assistant position by providing free office space. That is achieved by a deduction in rent.

Katharine Dubansky asked if we can prove how much we have been paying for dam operations and maintenance. Seth Metheny responded that there is a paper trail, and it will be easy to prove. Butch Helbig suggested that the District include a list of expenses with the letter.

William Buckel asked Seth Metheny if there is any County money in the Brinker Account. Chad Buckel responded that the money in the Brinker Account is from projects that the District did to reclaim mine sites before 1977.

The Board agreed that there should be 3 letters sent to the County. #1 – Request the already allocated \$19706.00 for FY23. #2 – Request \$6500.00 for Dam Maintenance and Operation. #3 Request FY24 support in the amount of \$23,393.00 for the Administrative Assistant plus a reminder of in-kind office support and request the \$6500.00 for Dam Maintenance and Operation. Attached to Letter #3 is to be the 1968 document and a detail as to why the District is requesting \$6500.00 for the Dam Maintenance and Operation.

Seth Metheny explained to the Board that in 2012 there were letters sent out by attorneys to all involved parties spelling out the responsibilities of the County, the Town of Oakland, and the District. The District has a copy, and the County and Town of Oakland should as well. Seth also explained that there was an amendment that turned complete control of Dam #6, the Bradford Dam, over to the City.

Butch Helbig stated that the dams are aging. William Buckel asked if the District is only responsible for maintenance and operations of the dams for 50 years. Seth Metheny answered that he has been unable to find anything to confirm this. The NRCS says "yes", but Seth cannot find any documents to this effect. The dams were designed to have a 50-year sedimentation.

William Buckel made a motion that the letters be sent to the County as outlined above. Kristen Enlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

It was noted that a request also needs to be made to the Town of Oakland for their share of dam maintenance and operation, which will also be in the amount of \$6500.00 for FY23 and \$6500.00 for FY24. Smokey Stanton suggested that the District needs to let the Town know about it ahead of the request. The Board commissioned Seth Metheny to make an appointment with the Mayor and the Town Administrative Assistant to discuss the issue. Smokey Stanton stated that time is of the essence because the Town has to set their tax rate May 15.

Chairman's Report

Backbone Solar Commissioners Letter

Katharine Debansky made a motion that the District send the letter to the County as discussed in last month's meeting. William Buckel seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

GSCD Treasurer Vacancy

Katharine Debansky has given her resignation effective June 2023. That will leave the position of Board Treasurer vacant. Smokey Stanton asked if any of the Board members would want to volunteer. William Buckel stated that he is the Treasurer of another board and feels that it will be a conflict of interest if he is the Treasurer of the District board. Butch Helbig stated that he is not ready to take a position yet. Kristen Enlow volunteered to take over as Treasurer until she leaves for Florida in the fall.

Supervisors' Orientation

Smokey Stanton suggested that the Board wait until all positions are filled to conduct a Supervisors' Orientation.

MASCD Annual Meeting

Smokey Stanton said that at the MASCD Annual Meeting on August 27-29 there will be a Supervisors' Orientation. Smokey recommended that all new Board members attend that orientation. Registration is May 1 for the conference and July 31 for the hotel.

Annual Work Plan

The Board will address the Annual Work Plan at a later date.

District Conservationist's Report

District Activity Report

Chad Bucklew stated that Supervisors were supplied with an Activity Report in their Supervisor packets. The one going to the Supervisors directly will have names, but the one presented at the meeting will not have identifying information. Chad talked to Kendrick Flowers about options for this issue. The District was told that the Board meeting must go into Executive Session to discuss particulars on projects. Smokey Stanton asked that the copies going to the Supervisors with the names be marked "Confidential" and that packets go out early so that Supervisors will have time to review them before the meeting.

Chad Bucklew said that two contracts are pre-approved. Both are for Wildlife and Forestry, EQIP IRA funds. The Golden Winged Warbler projects are not yet pre-approved, but Chad thinks they will be in the next couple weeks. These projects address habitat. The District may know more about the other applications under Forestry in a week.

TEAMS application rankings are May 12th, and the District should know by May 19. Our office still has some work to do on engineering designs. Chad does not think there will be any trouble getting several applications funded. If they are not funded by TEAMS this time, it is looking favorable that there will be more funding coming. PISP is part of the New Inflationary Reduction Act to replace CARP. This program covers 26 practices, so it is larger than CARP. Half of our Farm Bill applications are eligible for PISP.

Envirothon training was April 12. There was one team from Northern and one team from Southern. The Competition will be held on April 26 at Camp Hickory.

New Business

Katharine Debansky is resigning. The Board will send a letter to the Commissioners for a new appointment.

Seth Metheny told the Board that NASCD sent the District a letter requesting dues for FY23. The Board approved sending NASCD the \$501.00 budgeted for NASCD dues for FY23. Smokey Stanton reminded everyone that it is not necessary to obtain Board approval for things that have already been budgeted.

Old Business

Chad Bucklew stated that he talked to the Project Coordinator about the office lease and the needs of the District. He stated that there was no new information.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm