

Garrett Soil Conservation District Supervisor's Meeting

May 16, 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
- Butch Helbig, Board Member
- Seth Metheny, District Manager (DM)
- Chad Bucklew, District Conservationist (DC)
- Jeannie Frazee, Administrative Assistant
- Jacob Metcalf, NRCS Soil Conservationist

Meeting Topics

- Certificate of Quorum
- Call to Order
- Introduction of Guests
- Approval/Correction of April 18, 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 7:10 pm. Board Member William Buckel was not present.

Introduction of Guests – District Tree Sale, Jacob Metcalf

Jacob Metcalf, NRCS Soil Conservationist, and member of the District, had requested to be put on the agenda to discuss the possibility of a tree sale as a fund-raiser for the District. Jacob passed out samples of order forms from other Conservation Districts' Tree Sales. Many other Soil Conservation Districts have tree sales yearly to raise funds. Jacob has researched some of those, including Potomac Valley and Allegany County. Jacob stated that Allegany County sold 1000 fruit trees but 600 of them went to Trout Unlimited, so 400 would be in other sales.

Potomac Valley sold 400 fruit and 5500 hardwood seedlings. Jacob has been in touch with a couple nurseries, which have a long list of tree types that could be sales options. The higher the quantity that we order, the better the pricing. Tree tubes are also an option. Jacob stated that in his research the trees should keep at least 7 to 10 days in a cool, dark place. Jacob estimates that it would take 4 people for transportation (2 to each nursery) to get the trees and 8-10 people for sorting. Buyers will pick up over one to two days. Miranda Rounds, Dylan Kesner, Connie Stemple, and Annetta Enlow have agreed to help. Seth Metheny suggested that we also sell at the Native Plant Festival next year, where we could have a booth for outreach and education as well. The sale would be spring of next year. Chad Bucklew suggested that the sale should take place after frost. He also suggested that we have a pre-sale in the fall to determine interest. The Board gave a Concept Approval to move forward.

Approval/Correction of April 18, 2023 Minutes

Kristen Enlow made a motion to accept the April 18, 2023 minutes. Katharine Dubansky seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Monthly Financial Report

Seth Metheny went over the Monthly Financial Report for the Board. The Brinker Account has had an increase for two months now. This month there was a \$542.92 increase. The Money Market account also made \$5.51 for the month. We have received the MDA 4th Quarter Payment for the CBTF and the payment from the Garrett County Commissioners for FY23 in the amount of \$19,706.00 toward the Administrative Assistant's salary and fringe. The Rental Equipment account is showing a higher income because there were a number of checks found in a file cabinet drawer from 2021 that were not deposited. The District asked those producers to re-issue their checks. Some of them were received this past month. Also, there was a \$150.11 cost of repair of a tire on the No-Till Drill and a Hub repair for the Lime Spreader for \$496.03. The first quarter payroll taxes have been sent out to the US Treasury and MD Treasury. Smokey Stanton asked if there were any producers that rented the equipment and did not pay in 2022. Seth Metheny answered that there was one individual that did not pay promptly and that the District needed to ask him for payment numerous times, but his account is now paid.

District Operations Spending

Seth Metheny explained the District spending for the month. There is a Laser Level that is not working. Seth is checking to see if it can be repaired. If not, there will be a need to purchase a new one.

Katharine Dubansky made a motion to approve the Monthly Financial Report and the District Operations Spending Report. Butch Helbig seconded the motion. Motion passed unanimously.

FY24 General Fund MOU

Seth Metheny presented the FY24 State General Fund MOU to the Board. There is a stipulation that the General Fund from the State will only pay for certain expenses of the Board of Supervisors. Those include: \$25 per month per board member for per diem to attend one board meeting, mileage to one board meeting per month for each board member, mileage to the winter and summer MASCD meetings, and funding to the winter and summer MASCD meetings to pay for lodging, food, and parking. There are specified caps on the amount paid for each meal. The State issues the District 4 quarterly payments according to a Pay Schedule. Seth Metheny is working to get those payments directly deposited but it is a slow process. The Board requested that Seth let them know when it goes through.

Smokey Stanton asked about the State meeting regarding WIP goals. Seth Metheny answered that the meeting would be on May 26 at 3:00 pm virtually. Any Board member is encouraged to participate. All District staff will be in attendance. The meeting will go over where the county stands with its WIP goals, new goals, and the State will be giving guidance to each county regarding an increase in numbers. This only includes two watersheds which are found in only a small area in the NE portion of the county.

Katharine Dubansky made a motion to approve the FY24 General Fund MOU. Kristen Enlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FY 24 Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund MOU

The Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund supports the Administrative Assistant position in our District. They look at other similar positions in the state to determine the amount an Administrative Assistant should be paid. Then, they send one half of that amount. It is possible to obtain an increase with the Board's recommendation. Currently their contribution is \$25,820.00. This includes monies for salary, taxes, and fringe. Smokey Stanton asked what they are expecting in return. Seth Metheny answered that the District is agreeing to enter information in Tracker. It is county-wide and not restricted to the Chesapeake Bay watershed.

Kristen Enlow made a motion to accept the CBTF MOU. Katharine Dubansky seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FY 24 Garrett SCD Budget Draft

Seth Metheny presented the Board with a Budget Proposal Draft, which he explained to the Board. Seth highlighted several line items which he would like the Board to review and provide insight as to whether they wish to continue with those projects. Board members are asked to look over the draft and provide feedback to Seth over the course of the next month. The final budget will be set in June. Seth has been commissioned to send an email as a reminder so that William Buckel can also be advised of the draft and upcoming budget finalization. Chad suggested that a line item be added for the tree sale. Seth Metheny told the Board that he would like to see the District hold a logo contest where high schoolers could design a logo for the District. The winner would receive a reward. This could possibly be done in place of the coloring contest.

District Credit Card Statements

The District received a bill for payment for the Board of Supervisor's Elon credit card. There was no statement attached, and the District is having difficulty obtaining information about charges because the account was taken out by a former employee. The District was unsure which accounts should be credited with the charges. This card had been paid off in November, and the District was not aware that there were new charges because the company did not send a statement. Bills on the account were not received until there was already interest charged. Smokey Stanton stated that he spent two hours on the phone trying to obtain information, and Seth Metheny also contacted the company for information. It has been determined that the charges were for a hotel and pay pal account in January, which could possibly be parking on January 19, 2023. Elon does not offer online accounts. Katharine Dubansky asked if it would be easier to have a debit card instead. Seth Metheny answered that there are two debit cards at this time.

Truist Check Research

In last month's Board meeting, it was discussed that there were a number of checks that were written before Seth Metheny and Jeannie Frazee were hired, which were not written down in the ledger. The bank was asking for a \$40 research fee to provide details. Smokey Stanton went to the bank and arranged for the District to obtain information free of charge. Seth Metheny presented a list of those checks with all of the details to the Board. Seth also explained that he is putting in place a new system that has redundancy so that this will not happen again. There is currently a physical ledger, online ledger, and photo-copies of all checks written and received. Additionally, we have downloaded all bank copies of cashed checks from the account, as the bank only keeps them up online for 90 days. Smokey Stanton reminded the Board that the District needs to remove Katharine Dubansky from the accounts and add Kristen Enlow. Seth and Kristen were commissioned to go to the bank together to do this.

District Manager's Report

FY23 General Fund March & April Statements

Seth Metheny went over the FY23 General Fund March and April statements with the Board. They needed to be re-sent because the \$30,000 S&E employee assistance and the \$2000 office support came from the General Fund instead of the CBTF. The Board will need to go over these reports and sign them each month for the State.

Smokey Stanton asked for clarification regarding funding of Boal's Accounting. The Board was of the assumption that funds could be taken from the Administrative Assistant's salary to pay for Boal's because they were handling the accounting portion of the Administrative Assistant's duties while there was no Administrative Assistant. Seth Metheny explained that the State will not allow funds from CBTF earmarked for Administrative Assistant salary and wages to be used for contractual services. However, those funds are going to remain at the District as carryover. The cost of Boal's will need to be taken from State General Funds.

Katharine Dubansky made a motion to approve the FY23 General Fund March and April 2023 Statements. Butch Helbig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

FY23 Chesapeake Bay Trust Fund 3rd Quarter Statement

Seth Metheny went over the CBTF 3rd Quarter Statement with the Board. Ours is simplistic because we only have one employee being funded.

District Newsletter

The newsletter has been prepared and is ready to send. Smokie Stanton advised that the newsletter does not need Board approval due to time constraints, so that the news can be sent out in a timely manner. However, if Board members have suggestions or comments they are advised to communicate them to Jeannie Frazee. Butch Helbig suggested that we use the Republican free sections to let individuals know about the newsletter. Jeannie Frazee stated that we have been sending out press releases to the Republican regularly regarding various District programs.

MDA Technician Job Posting Closed

The MDA Technician job acceptance of applications has closed. They are to start interviews in June.

Chairman's Report

Smokey Stanton explained to the Board that he wants to work on a set format for the financial reports that will be presented to the Board. He plans to meet with Seth Metheny and Jeannie Frazee to go over it. Any other Board members that want to be included in that meeting should come as well. The Board wants to be able to move away from paying Brian to complete reports.

District Conservationist's Report

District Activity Report

Chad Bucklew explained the Activity Report to the Board. There are 15 applications totaling over \$259,000. 1 High tunnel, 3 Forestry Plans, 2 Wildlife & Habitat, 6 Golden-Winged Warbler. There is no pre-approval yet for TEAMS, but they were submitted. For teams, the break-down consists of \$340,000 Livestock, \$10,767 Grazing, and \$18,000 Cropland. We can fund one Cropland, 3 of the 4 Grazing, and only 1 Livestock. We are trying to obtain more funding from TEAMS that was not used in other areas. We expect an answer in a couple weeks.

Interim Consultation Framework for the Northern Long-eared Bat

Chad Bucklew explained that the Northern Long-eared bat was listed as an endangered species on March 31, 2023. This has impacts on some of our Forestry applications. There are three setbacks that apply to practices that can be done. Tree removals cannot be conducted within a certain radius of the bat's nesting areas. This may create issues for some of our practices later on. This year, we do not have any tree harvest practices, so we can make some modifications such as girdling trees on some plans this year. We are giving advice regarding the issue. Working with Fish and Wildlife may give us some permits that can help get around some of the impacts on our projects until June 2024. We will be able to meet most obligations in Garrett County.

There is no new information regarding the building lease.

New Business

MASCD Summer Meeting

Seth Metheny talked about the MASCD summer meeting. Board of Supervisor members will need to register by July 31. Jeannie Frazee is the point of contact.

MASCD is asking the District to donate for their fund-raiser auction. In the past, we have donated Maple Syrup. Seth Metheny suggested that we could offer some framed antique Soil Conservation Service comics that we have found. This will not cost much and should be of interest to bidders.

Old Business

District Scholarship

There were six scholarship applications for this year. Three of them did not meet the specified guidelines with either GPA or course of study. Seth Metheny went over each application with the Board. Kristen Enlow recused herself from discussion and voting regarding the scholarship due to a conflict of interest.

After discussion, Butch Helbig made a motion that the Board select Cristy Enlow as the winner of the 2023 scholarship for \$1000. Katharine Dubansky seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The Board felt that Cristy was the applicant that best fit the Soil Conservation District's mission. Cristy will be attending Potomac State College in the fall to study Agribusiness.

Backbone Update

Seth Metheny stated that the Backbone Solar Project did get final stamps of approval from the MDA, and they have broken ground. Our letter achieved its goal of making sure the project was not approved without the required Dam Safety review.

Dubansky Resignation

Katharine Dubansky is leaving the Board of Supervisors on June 1, 2023. Seth Metheny was commissioned to find out the proper procedure to notify the County Commissioners and to draft a letter asking them to appoint a new member. Smokey Stanton will sign it.

Butch Helbig asked about the County's response to the Board's letter regarding dam maintenance. Seth Metheny replied that we have not heard anything back from them about that letter. The County did send the FY23 funds that had been budgeted. But they have not responded about the FY24 request yet. Seth Metheny contacted the Town and requested an appointment to talk to the mayor. The Town sent him a couple dates and asked if any would work. Seth responded that he was flexible. They did not reply regarding scheduling an appointment. Therefore, Seth went ahead and sent the letter requesting funding for Dam Maintenance, along with a copy of the Attorney's Letter outlining the financial responsibilities of the Town of Oakland for Dam Maintenance. There has not yet been a response from the Town of Oakland.

There being no Public Comment, the meeting adjourned at 9:20 pm.

There was no Executive Session.

