

Garrett Soil Conservation District Supervisor's Meeting

September 19, 2023

Garrett Soil Conservation District Board Room

Participants

- Smokey Stanton, Board Chair
- Kristen Enlow, Board Vice Chair, Treasurer
- William Buckel, Board Member
- Butch Helbig, Board Member
- Seth Metheny, District Manager (DM), Joining Online
- Chad Bucklew, District Conservationist (DC)
- Keith Potter, MDA Western Area Coordinator (Guest)
- Jeannie Frazee, Administrative Assistant

Meeting Topics

- Certification of Quorum
- Call to Order
- Approval/Correction of August 15, 2023 Minutes
- Treasurer's Report
- Chairman's Report
- District Manager's Report
- District Conservationist's Report
- New Business
- Old Business
- Public Comment

Certification of Quorum

Smokey Stanton called the meeting to order after certifying a quorum at 7:00 pm. All board members were in attendance.

Smokey Stanton introduced guest Keith Potter, who is the MDA Western Area Coordinator.

Keith Potter gave the Board an overview. Keith said that the MDA has been working hard to get the staff numbers up. There are two new Planners and a new MDA Technician. The Planners have been with the District for almost a year. They are doing very well and meeting their goals. He stated that this is what we have needed to help make up for time lost when staffing was not adequate. Keith said that he has been going over their position descriptions with them and what MDA needs them to do. Some of the MDA employees that have been with the District for awhile have been handling things outside their job descriptions, such as E7. Keith stated that he and

Seth have talked to them about the fact that they need to refocus on their job duties that are expected through MDA. Keith commended Seth Metheny for doing a good job of getting employees redirected. Keith stated that he is hoping to get the new Technician through training soon to be able to start handling job duties.

William Buckel asked Keith Potter that if it is not the role of the MDA employees to do E&S, whose role is it? Keith noted that currently the District has a contractor that is doing E&S. William answered that this is not sustainable. Keith replied that other districts have an E&S position that they pay for with contract fees. William Buckel asked if the District should get permission from the County to set fees. Keith replied that it would be good to have a discussion with the County Commissioners prior to an open meeting. He went on to comment that there are no other Districts of which he is aware that do not already have a fee schedule in place. William Buckel said that the County previously employed an E&S Consultant, but they let him go. Now, the District has to contract for one.

William Buckel asked Keith Potter if the District has to have the permission of the County to set the fees. Keith Potter stated that the District does not have to have the permission of the County. He said that the District needs to create a proposed fee schedule and present it to the Commissioners. They can ask for an adjustment, however, the District needs to get the amount that it needs to pay for the costs of E&S. Keith suggested that the District go to the County with a higher-end fee schedule in case the County asks that they be adjusted.

William Buckel expressed a concern that, right now, there is a boom in building, but it fluctuates. If the District hires someone for \$80,000 per year but building decreases, the District will still need to pay that employee even though less money is being realized from the fees. Keith Potter suggested that the District move quickly to begin the process. That will create some financial padding. William agreed, stating that the budget cannot afford E&S, and the funds from the State are running out quickly. Something needs to happen fast.

Seth Metheny stated that he has reached out to Kevin Null, the County Administrator. He was open to discussion. The next County public board meeting is on October 6. The District could meet with the Commissioners during a work session prior to the meeting. William Buckel asked Seth if he knew when the work session would be. Seth stated that he would find out when he meets with Kevin. Seth asked if any of the supervisors want to go to the work session. William Buckel said that he would be willing to sit in on it, but that he will be gone for a week. Kristen Enlow said that the County did have E&S, but they let that employee. That is when the District needed to employ Randy. Smokey Staton stated that the current County Administrator and the current Commissioners do not have that knowledge. Kristen Enlow reminded the Board that Randy was a County employee that was housed at the District, but his work space and salary were reimbursed by the County, as was Wanda's, the original District Administrative Assistant.

Seth Metheny said that if the District does not provide benefits to an E&S employee, that person will not stay long. Keith Potter stated that every county is different as to how they work out E&S, but they are all self-sufficient. Most of them have vehicles and other employees beyond just one E&S Engineer. William Buckel said that many of them are more urban areas, but that the Garrett District still needs to handle this. Keith Potter advised that the District be leery of getting into something where the District is not running E&S. If someone else is running it, the District does not have control over what is happening. If the District handles it, the District will keep control.

Smokey Stanton asked Keith Potter if Garrett County is the only district that does not have fees. Keith Potter answered that he does not know of any other counties in Maryland that do not have fees already in place. William Buckel asked if each district has a district employee that does E&S. Keith Potter replied that Allegany County has one and that all of the other districts have multiple employees doing E&S.

Keith Potter advised that something else the District needs to think about is space. Where is the District going to house another employee? Seth Metheny stated that FSA had told him that the District cannot put employee spaces in the Conference and Lunch rooms because they are shared spaces. There will potentially be two new employees by spring. Seth suggested that the District may need to stagger employees, meaning that employees may need to alternate working from home. Keith Potter said that the District should not let space stop the District from moving forward with the E&S fees. It is hoped that the District can get some funds built up from the fees before there is a downturn.

William Buckel stated that it is the people building that are causing the need for the position, so why shouldn't they pay for it? William expressed that he feels the fee structure must address the monetary need.

Keith Potter suggested that once the fees are set up, they may need to be adjusted if they are not bringing in enough income to pay what is needed for the District to adequately offer E&S. Smokey Stanton asked Keith if he knows what other Districts put into their costs, ie vehicle, benefits, office space, etc. Keith answered that they include things such as training, computers, a network, vehicle, transportation expenses and whatever is needed. Seth Metheny expressed a concern that the employee would need a local network, which the District does not have at this time. Chad Bucklew stated that an E&S employee would not be able to obtain a link pass.

William Buckel asked if it is the duty of the E&S employee to go out and check the jobs or if someone else does it. Keith Potter replied that in Allegany County the E&S employee goes out and checks in addition to other E&S work. He stated that the E&S employee there is on the road more than in the office.

Smokey Staton suggested that there be a fee for the application and a fee for review if it needs to be reviewed. Chad Bucklew stated that this could offer the opportunity to have more funds to pay a full-time employee. Seth Metheny stated that there are other things that the employee could do during lag time to make more money. Keith Potter explained that in some districts the E&S employee also helps with the Urban Farm Plan as a reimbursable Urban Planner. Seth Metheny suggested that work with the Fam Bill could make more money.

William Buckel reminded the Board that Randy is quicker than a new employee would be at completing E&S work. He expressed that he would be in favor of structuring the fees to double Randy's current costs. Seth Metheny said that Randy will be willing to stay three more years. That will allow the District to save some reserve. Then, before Randy leaves, the District needs to get someone to work with Randy to train for 3-4 months. Keith Potter said that he would have the new employee train longer than 3-4 months.

Butch Helbig asked Keith Potter if MDA funding may change because it is an election year. Keith replied that the MDA budget is not looking great. Covid money has dried up. He is hoping funding will turn around.

Approval of August 15, 2023, Minutes

There were no corrections. William Buckel made a motion to approve the August 15, 2023, Minutes as written. Butch Helbig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Financial Report Monthly & YTD

Jeannie Frazee presented the Financial Report Monthly & YTD to the Board. This is a new report created by Jeannie based on the Board's request of what they wanted included in a report at the August Board meeting. Specifically, it was requested that there be a comparison of money spent against the budgeted amount, carryover available, and information about whether the carryover could be used on a particular line item. The Board had presented a concern at that time that the Board could not make decisions about spending because they could not see the total amount available in each account with carryover without having to do calculations from multiple places.

Jeannie explained the report to the Board. She commented that the intent behind the report is to give the Board a full view of what is happening with the financials in every area. Smokey Stanton explained that when he and Jeannie met the previous Friday about the meeting, he had pointed out that the pages of the report are carrying a lot of information. Therefore, he felt that there need to be three reports. He also said that there needs to be a refinement of format and everything in it, as the Board needs to know how much is left in each account, as some expenses are non-recurring. He said that the Board needs to monitor cash flow. Jeannie Frazee explained how the report addresses each of these things.

Garrett SCD Monthly and YTD Financial Report – FY 24

Seth Metheny presented the Garrett SCD Monthly and YTD Financial Report to the Board. Smokie Stanton had sent an email on Monday, August 18, to other Board members, Seth and Jeannie stating that he wanted three reports completed by the Board Meeting. Seth created this and the Budget Analysis: Expense Against Income report to address this request. This report compares expenditures against the budget only for the current month and YTD, along with the percentage. Seth pointed out that the District budgeted amount for MASCD is \$2250, but they are requesting \$2625.00. Also, the District budgeted \$400 for the Fair Booth but the total spent was \$468.00. Brinker earned \$1153.03 for the month of August but is at a -44.83 for the FY.

Smokey Stanton stated that he did not understand the format of this report. He said that the District needs to make sure it is not spending all of the carryover or it will be in trouble in FY25. The Board asked if carryover would need to be returned. Seth Metheny said that it is written into the MOU that carryover could be returned. Keith Potter said that he does not see MDA asking for it back. Keith Potter commented that he is not sure where the District obtained its budget figures, which are higher than the State allotment in many categories. He suggested that the District should budget tighter. Smokey Stanton stated that the District budget can have different meanings. The District wants to get a budget in place that takes into account expenditures.

Keith Potter stated that he likes the column in the report that was done by Jeannie that tells whether a line item can be covered with carry over. Smokey Stanton stated regarding Jeannie's report that he believes it to be an ongoing developmental thing. He said the District is starting to get things lined up the way the Board wants it. He said that the report format gives all of the information, but it is busy and does not segregate out information. He said it is a good foundation but only a foundation.

Smokey Stanton stated that at the October meeting, the Board will need to look at YTD for the 1st quarter.

Budget Analysis: Expense Against Income

Seth presented his Budget Analysis report. This report depicts the District budget and shows which things are paid by the State and which things are paid by Local Funding. The goal is to show the Board what expenses are not covered by State resources, thereby revealing why there is a deficit to the budget. The District FY24 budget has a deficit of \$49,158.46. Total expenses that need to be paid by Local funds are \$48,098.46. The District's Budgeted Income is only \$8,510.00, leaving \$39,588.46 deficit to the Local Account, which makes up the bulk of the deficit.

Smokey Stanton asked if the District would have any carryover from FY24 if the District followed this expenditure pattern. Seth Metheny answered that it is correct that the District would not have a FY24 carryover.

Smokey Stanton asked if the Board had approved the transfer of the money from the Money Market account to start the District Account. Seth Metheny replied that it was approved earlier in the year when it was discussed that the Money Market could only have six transactions per month. It was necessary to create a District account and the Money Market funds were the only ones that could be used because it is the only District money readily available for this purpose. Smokey stated that the District could set up another account. Seth Metheny asked where the money would come from.

Smokey Stanton told the Board members that they need to come to the next meeting reading for the following:

1. To know the financial posture of the District
2. Be ready to decrease the budget
3. Be ready to submit a budget request to MDA to request to use the carryover

MDA August Statement

Seth Metheny presented the MDA August Statement. Smokey Stanton asked if Kris Enlow needs to sign it. Seth replied that because Jeannie Frazee had prepared the report, she will sign as the preparer. Then, either Seth or Kris could sign. Smokey Stanton stated that the July MDA Statement was approved at the August meeting, so this one is just August.

William Buckel made a motion to approve all of the financial statements presented. Butch Helbig seconded the motion. It passed unanimously.

MASCD Dues

Seth Metheny told the Board that he received a Statement from MASCD requesting payment of dues. They are asking for \$2625.00. The original amount was \$2750.00 but the District had over paid last year in the amount of \$125.00. Seth stated that he is seeking approval to pay these dues. He explained that the MDA State General Fund will pay for \$1800.00 between MASCD and NACD. NACD dues are \$501.00. There are two options: 1. To use all \$1800.00 for MASCD or 2. To keep back \$501.00 for NACD. Either way, the remainder will need to come out of local funds. Smokey Stanton asked if the District has paid RC&D yet. Seth stated that the District has not yet paid either RC&D or NACD. The District has not yet gotten a bill from NACD. RC&D was paid for FY23 not FY24. Seth also stated that he has not gotten a bill from MPT. Smokey Stanton said that the District was unable to pay MPT last year right away due to budget issues. The MPT manager went to MASCD and told them that GSCD was refusing to pay their dues. The District had to sit down with MASCD to straighten out everything. Keith Potter instructed Seth to contact MPT and ask if the District is going to get a billing this FY. Seth reminded the Board that MPT has to be paid with District funds.

William Buckel made a motion to pay the \$2625.00 MASCD dues. Kristen Enlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Seth Metheny asked if he should take the full \$1800.00 from the State General Account or leave \$501.00 for NACD. The Board had no opinion as to which way the funds were handled in this matter.

William Buckel said that Edward Jones still has an interest rate of 5.4% for a 12 month.

Chairman's Report

Smokey Stanton said that he sent an email to Bonita Simms at MDA asking for policies. He said she sent an email back saying she needed to talk to Byron, but He has not heard anything since. Keith Potter stated that he had obtained the information and had gone over it with Seth Metheny so that he can share it with the Board.

Smokey Stanton said that his big question is what the requirements for a compilation vs. and audit. He inquired as to whether there are policies that the Board does not know about. Keith Potter replied that Seth could go over it with him. The information is from Byron, and Keith feels that it will probably answer everything. Keith stated that they appreciate what Seth has done for the Garrett District.

Smokey Stanton said that he has mentioned to Seth and Jeannie that the District needs to turn its attention to the Annual Work Plan and WIP goals.

District Manager's Report

Nutrient Management

Seth Metheny explained to the Board that the UMD Extension had to cancel their Nutrient Management program when MDA pulled funding. At the July summit, it was announced that MDA would continue to fund the UMD Extension to do Nutrient Management plans for another three years but because the funding is going to UMD, cost share for plans has been postponed. But the Nutrient Management Specialist that was at Extension left for another job when the program was originally cancelled. The Nutrient Management position is now vacant at Extension. This is a problem for many farmers that are interested in District programs including, MACS, Cover Crop, and ACT NOW. If it remains vacant too long, it will leave most producers in Garrett County at a disadvantage. Kevin Potter stated that he does not look for MDA to wave anything because there are private consultants. The Board expressed a concern that those private planners are charging a lot of money for the plans.

Smokey Stanton asked Seth Metheny if it is correct that the District has one MDA staff member that has recently gotten her certification but that she can only give advice rather than writing plans. Seth answered that that is correct.

Brinker Update

Seth Metheny let the Board know that he had found Resolution No. 2006-1 that details how and why the Brinker Account was created. The Resolution states that it was created to provide for a nominal source of revenue independent of annual appropriations, for the purpose of exercising the fiduciary obligations of the District to provide for future employee/retiree expenses, engineering services to assist in meeting Maryland Pond Law responsibilities, and maintenance responsibilities for PL-566 Flood Control dams No 2, 5, and 7.

Kris Enlow stated that she was of the understanding that the account only covered Wanda's retiree expenses. Seth Metheny replied that the wording says "future employee/retiree expenses". Seth Metheny said that the initial seed money was \$200,000. Seth also informed the Board that the District had received a letter from Brinker stating that the billing period associated with the District account will be changing. They said that beginning October 2023, the fees will be paid to Brinker monthly in advance, instead of quarterly as it has been since the District signed the Investment Advisory Agreement.

Seth Metheny let the Board know that Jeannie Frazee had talked to Daniel Norris, our Brinker representative, requesting his presence at the October Board meeting. Jeannie stated that he at first said he would try to come "if he could", and he then said that perhaps he could join remotely instead, and then he said that it was possible he could do neither, but that he would answer any questions that the Board may have. He said that if the Board wants to write out some questions and send them to him, he will write back and answer them. He would not make a commitment to come to the Board meeting. Jeannie asked if he would call her back when he knew if he could attend. He said that he would call if he could come, but he suggested that it would be a good idea for the Board write down questions to send to him. Jeannie left the conversation feeling it is not likely he will come to the meeting.

Seth Metheny informed the Board that in August of 2020, Brinker was at its highest amount, which was \$377,000.00. Since then, it has steadily declined. It is currently at \$342,076.23. The

initial seed was \$200,000.00, with an additional deposit of \$70,000.00 in 2015 or 2016. William Buckel stated that the Brinker Account should have generated considerably more income by this point. He expressed that he would like to close the account and place the money somewhere that makes more sense. Kristen Enlow agreed with Bill. Kristen asked how the District would move it. William Buckel stated that he does not want to talk to the Brinker representative. He suggested that annuities are a good investment. He said he is in favor of having the representative for Edward Jones come to talk to the Board. Butch Helbig suggested having several representatives come together and present their best offers so that they would need to compete with each other for the investment. William Buckel asked if the District trusts Brian Boal to give good investment advice. Seth Metheny stated that he will be meeting with Brian on Friday, September 22, and could ask him at that time. William Buckel made a motion to explore different financial options with Brian Boal with the intention of withdrawing the Brinker funds from Brinker. Kristen Enlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Sediment & Erosion Control Plan Fee Schedule

Seth Metheny presented the Maryland Code of Regulations, Agriculture, Title 8, Soil Conservation to the Board. Under 8-306(a)(18) Soil Conservation Districts have the power to recommend a fee system to cover the costs of reviewing and grading and sediment control plans. Any recommended fee shall take effect upon enactment by the local governing body. Any fees collected pursuant to this fee system shall be supplementary to county and State funds and may not be used to reduce county or State funds. A Soil Conservation District shall each year determine the reasonable costs of review of grading and sediment control plans for the succeeding year. The SCD shall develop the fee system based upon the costs and shall submit the fee system to the local governing body. The local governing body must, within 90 days, either enact the fee system, to take effect within 90 days after GSCD submits the final fee system to the local governing body or enact a different fee system (which must cover reasonable costs of S&E) or otherwise provide funding to the GSCD from county funds. If the local governing body fails to accept or modify the fee system submitted by the GSCD, the final fee system submitted by GSCD shall take effect on the 91st day after the district submits the fee system to the local governing body, without requiring enactment by the local governing body.

Seth Metheny also presented a proposed fee schedule that was based on costs that the District incurred from the contractor in FY23. If building stays the same for FY24, this would generate \$58,000, not including additional area lines. He also informed the Board that with regard to Small Pond Review, it could be proposed to those constructing that MDE can review their plan for free but it will take a year or more. If GSCD provides an option, whereby the District will have a contracted engineer complete it, there would be a fee. Prices for this service would need to allow the District to also receive part of the fee to fund the costs associated with contracting this service.

Kristen Enlow asked how this fee schedule compares to Allegany County. Seth Metheny stated that it is very similar, except this one adds a fee for Concept Plans and additional acreage. William Buckel commented that there should be an additional fee for Residential Plans for each additional 30,000 feet due to the increased work involved. Kristen Enlow asked how major project fees would be calculated. Seth stated that they would come under Non-Residential & Multi Family. William Buckel stated that he would like the cost to be calculated based on the hours it takes to complete the review because some of the plans are huge. Smokey Staton

stated that the Board needs to put more thought into the fees to settle on what the primary fees would be and the extra acreage. William Buckel suggested that the District talk to Allegany County and find out how their fees work. Seth Metheny stated that the US Census puts household income close to Allegany County's. But Garrett County is not the home address for many of Garrett's part time residents. Kevin Potter reminded the Board that Allegany County's fees could be lower than Garrett's will need to be because their County also helps to pay for some of the S&E costs. He expressed that he does not think \$58,000.00 will be enough to cover Garrett's costs.

Smokey Stanton asked William Buckel if he would be willing the Chair a Subcommittee for S&E Fees. William Buckel said that he would. William Buckel stated that the District Manager puts time into S&E as well, and his time should also be compensated. It was asked if the DM would be the final signatory. Seth Metheny stated that he hoped once the S&E employee was fully trained, the plans could be signed by that person. William Buckel said that if there was a meeting with Allegany County, he would be willing to go. Keith Potter stated that he does not think comparing Allegany County's fees with Garrett's is a good idea.

William Buckel presented the fact that if the District hires an engineer, that person could also do contract work for the County, since they do not have an engineer. This would bring in more money to help pay for the employee's salary.

Smokey Stanton asked Seth Metheny to complete a report for the Board with the information that was gathered in this Board meeting. He appointed William Buckel as the Chairman of the S&E Subcommittee. He asked that the report and information obtained by the Subcommittee be presented in the October Board meeting. Smokey Stanton also asked Seth Metheny to research the Job Description for the S&E employee from Allegany County and two other counties, including their job functions.

William Buckel stated that he wants to meet with Commissioners before the next Commissioners Public meeting. It is possible that they will simply approve it. Butch Helbig reminded the Board that Garrett County has a lot more at stake with the need to obtain S&E fees than Allegany County does. Smokey Stanton suggested that the District meet with the Commissioners informally at the next workgroup before the next public meeting.

MASCD Annual Meeting Update

William Buckel attended the MASCD Summer Meeting from the Board, and Seth Metheny, Chad Bucklew, and Jeannie Frazee attended from the staff. The meeting was held in Cambridge, MD. William Buckel told Butch Helbig that he would suggest that he go to the MASCD website, as there is a section there with an overview of Supervisor Responsibilities. Kristen Enlow said that they did not have a training when she joined, and she would also be interested. William Buckel advised that Alisha Mulkey with MASCD is a good resource for Board Members. William stated that there was a training at the Summer MASCD for Board Supervisors. He said that he was impressed with the training.

Garrett SCD donated five framed comic books from the 1960's and a half gallon maple syrup for the MASCD auction to raise money for Envirothon. The comic books brought in the most money of any of the items auctioned, raising over \$500.00. The maple syrup sold for over \$150.00. This made Garrett's contribution to the auction very impressive.

Seth Metheny stated that Hartford County has a student associate program which is tied to their scholarship. With the program, students shadow District staff, and they also come to Board meetings. Seth expressed that it seems like a good program. Keith Potter added that they have multiple student representatives on the Board in Hartford, and those reps even give updates at Board meetings. Kevin Potter suggested that Earth Team volunteers is the way to go to get the students in to the District because of liability. That is how Hartford County does it.

Seth Metheny referred the Board to the MASCD SCD Agreement. Funding will be provided to the District for Administrative Support, Outreach Events, Conservation Plans completed above MDA goals for Planners, Conservation Reserve Program Plans, Engineering Designs associated with Farm Bill projects, and Nutrient Management plans. Part of the money will go to the District and part to the employee completing the duty.

District Conservationist's Report

FY24 Guidance for Local Work Group

Chad Bucklew told the Board that the District needed to schedule a Local Workgroup meeting. They gave very short notice. It will be on Monday, September 25, at Grantsville Library from 3 pm to 5 pm. Chad looked into several locations, but this was the only one that did not want to charge a fee. There will not be as much on the schedule to discuss. This year, it will be a review of the previous fiscal year and focusing on prioritizing local natural resource concerns for the current fiscal year. It will be possible to attend the meeting remotely.

Chad Bucklew told the Board that there is a lot of funding available from the federal budget due to IRA funding. The District could double the annual budget next year. Participants do not have to have a Nutrient Management Plan for Farm Bill projects but if the project is something that involves livestock, the applicant must have a Nutrient Management Plan.

Chad Bucklew explained that Act Now, which is a provision in the Farm Bill, sets a target threshold for ranking. We need to have all of the background completed, Nutrient Management, Endangered Species, and other necessary background work. If all of that is ready, once the project is ranked, if it meets the threshold, we could go to contract in a couple weeks. We need to have a great deal of engineering and planning completed. We need to use Act Now first, then traditional funding. Previously, we could not use IRA funding for livestock projects, but if they have Nutrient Management or prescribed grazing, which are core IRA concerns, we can bring more livestock projects into IRA. IRA funding is through Build Back Better funding. Congress is giving the NRCS this funding because NRCS says that producers will be willing to complete conservation projects on their land voluntarily if funding can be addressed. Congress is giving us until 2026 fund farmer projects. At the end of September 2026, any leftover funds will go to an EPA type organization for regulatory penalties for farmers to clear up what we cannot do voluntarily.

Chad Bucklew expressed that he is not expecting as many people at the TEAMS meeting this time. He told the Board that it would be good if the Board members could be there. It would be good for members of the public to be at the meeting so they can get information about funding. The meeting must be completed by 5 pm, because there is another group using the room after us.

Smokey Stanton expressed a concern that the Board has been cut out of making recommendations for funding of TEAMS projects. He stated that after the TEAMS meetings previously, the recommendations went to the Board, then to the State Tech Committee. They now go directly to the State Tech Committee. Chad Bucklew replied that it is now required to go down state right after the meeting. Smokey Stanton stated that the change occurred without notice.

Chad Bucklew informed the Board that federal funding for NRCS will end at the end of September, and that there is a strong potential for a Furlow. Because we are at the end of the Farm Bill cycle, there will be no left-over funding, and the NRCS cannot operate without funding. If that happens, all of the federal employees in the District will be on Furlow. The network will be shut down and folders will be locked. Currently, all District employees use the federal network. This will make it so that the MDA employees cannot use the computers or files. Here in Garrett County, the MDA and District employee can get into the office because MDA rents space, so they could be in the office physically, but it would be very difficult to work without computers. There is no usable non-federal network. Kevin Potter stated that all of the phones are federal as well. Seth Metheny asked Chad Bucklew if he could get on the network at home with a VPN. Chad Bucklew replied that the CD would be shut down. Chad Bucklew let the Board know that if NRCS would be deemed an "essential agency" they would stay open, but essential agencies have not yet been announced.

Chad Bucklew stated that the NRCS is at the end of the fiscal year. For the year, the District has 25 federally funded contracts. Some are co-cost-shared with MACS. There are \$1.1 million dollars in funding for Garrett County. For the TEAMS Local Workgroup for Allegany and Garrett Counties combined the funding is an additional \$1.134 million dollars, \$761,000.00 of which is Garrett County. There were three large Garrett County projects totaling \$643,000.00.

SQAR Update

Chad Bucklew told the Board that the QAR was last week. The District has not gotten any feedback as of yet. There was no formal wrap-up session, and the District is being asked some follow-up questions. Chad said that he felt the engineering portion was good. He expressed that there will need to be some corrective actions. The building does not meet ADA compliance in some areas, such as the coat hooks in the bathroom are too high, and the water fountain in the hall does not work.

Chad Bucklew told the Board that he has heard nothing new on the lease space.

New Business

Activity Report

Seth Metheny presented the Activity Report to the Board. Chad Bucklew expounded that some of the projects are very large projects. We want to get the engineering designs ready for Act Now. Chad Bucklew also revealed that Craig Zimmerman attended a concrete training for NRCS in Texas, which will be helpful to not only Craig in his position, but also to the rest of the

staff as well. Seth Metheny stated that Jillian Mason has passed her Nutrient Management exam. She needed this certification to be able to advise clients. However, her job position will not allow for her to write Nutrient Management plans.

Old Business

Tree Sale

Jeannie Frazee updated the Board about the progress with the Tree Sale. The Tree Sale Committee has selected Fruit Trees in 3' to 5' size, Hardwoods in 6" to 18" size, and Berry Bushes to sell. Jeannie Frazee has completed a store website where customers can buy directly online. It is up and running for the Board to preview. Jacob Metcalf has spent a great deal of time talking to nurseries and researching Tree Sales at other districts. He is also leading the Tree Sale Committee. The Tree Sale Committee selected 1600 hardwoods in 10 varieties and 505 fruit trees with 13 varieties. Both of these will require a contract with the nursery and deposit. The committee is estimating a profit of \$8206.52 if all of the trees and bushes budgeted are sold. Pricing is \$20 per fruit tree and \$10 per bush. A great deal of time has gone into selecting varieties that grow well in the area and that have particular appeal in Garrett County.

The Board asked if the District anticipates any problems with shipping. Jeannie Frazee replied that Jacob Metcalf has made plans to pick up both the fruit trees and hardwoods, and shipping from the berry bush nursery has been dependable. Plans are to hold the sale in mid April but the Tree Sale Committee would like to open sales as soon as possible.

Jeannie Frazee, on behalf of the Tree Sale Committee, requested that the Board approve the use of Square on the website to accept online credit card sales. Additionally, the Tree Sale Committee asked the Board to approve the signing of the contracts and payment of the deposit.

Kristen Enlow asked the Board where the money should come from to make the deposits. William Buckel asked if the District is obligated for the full amount if we do not sell them. Jeannie Frazee answered that both of the nurseries are telling us that we can switch trees around and put some back if we do not sell them. However, the contract they are making us sign is a contract that states that we are purchasing those trees listed. So, they could choose to enforce it. Jeannie explained that both nurseries sell to other conservation districts for their tree sales, and this is the procedure they use for all of them.

Having no objections, the Board approved the installation of Square on the District Store website.

Kristen Enlow stated that the tree sale has to potential to be a money maker but she had concerns about where the money would come from since the District is already and a very large deficit for the year.

William Buckel suggested that we advertise the Tree Sale on the Forestry Board and Farm Bureau website. Seth Metheny suggested that there were too many Oak Trees in the list. William Buckel stated that the Tree Sale Committee should talk to Melissa Nash about the hardwood varieties. He had concerns about Redbud and Black Walnut growing in the area, but stated that he would like to see Red Spruce. Seth Metheny stated that Allegany does not do hardwoods because there are free hardwood giveaways in Allegany County. Kristen Enlow suggested that the District only sell fruit trees and fruit bushes this year and possibly add

hardwoods next year. Butch Helbig agreed. Jeannie Frazee let the group know that the profit for hardwood, even if all were sold is much lower than either of the other two categories. Butch Helbig asked if all of the fruit trees and berry bushes would grow in this area. Jeannie replied that she had done a great deal of research on the fruit trees and berry bushes and there should not be a problem with them growing in the County. Most of the varieties selected are zoned for extremely northern (zone 3 to 4 and above) climates.

Kristen Enlow stated that the money should come from Money Market. It will be necessary for payment to come from District money, so it would need to be Money Market.

William Buckel made a motion to go forward with the Tree and Bush sale, deleting the hardwoods, and staying the with same number of Fruit Trees and Berry Bushes ordered and listed on the projections. Kristen Enlow seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Dam Visits and Maintenance

Seth Metheny let the Board know that Dam visits are scheduled for the first week of October. October 3 will be dams #1, #3, and #6. October 4 will be #2 at 11:00 am and #5 and 2:30 pm. October 5 will be #5 at 8:00 am and #7 at 10:00 am. The District's dams are #2, #5, and #7. Seth stated that he will send out an email with location to all Board members. Any Board member who wishes to do so may ride with Seth.

Seth Metheny requested Board approval to advertise bid requests for Dam Mowing on the website, Facebook, and in the Republican. Final bids need to be in by October 4. William Buckel asked if the dam visits would affect what is added to the duties for Dam Mowing. Seth answered that it would not because the dam mowing is pretty straightforward. There being no objection, the Board advised to Seth Metheny to proceed with bid advertisement.

There being no further business, the board adjourned at 10:30 pm.