

Garrett Soil Conservation District Supervisor's Meeting

March 18, 2025

Garrett Soil Conservation District Board Room

Participants

- Smokey Stanton, Board Chair
- Kristen Enlow, Board Vice Chair, Via Phone
- Butch Helbig, Board Treasurer
- Nevin Sines, Board Member
- Dorsey Guard, Board Member
- Chad Bucklew, District Conservationist (DC)
- Jeannie Frazee, Administrative Assistant

Call to Order

Board Chairman, Smokey Stanton certified a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:12 pm. All Board members were present. Kristen Enlow attended via phone.

Approval/Correction of the February 18, 2025, Minutes

Dorsey Guard made a motion to accept the February 18, 2025, minutes. Butch Helbig seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Treasurer's Report

Butch Helbig said that he had met with Seth and Jeannie last week. He said he likes First United's report of the investment. It clearly shows how much was gained, each specific investment and their due dates.

FY25 MDA General Fund February Statement

Jeannie went over the FY25 MDA General Fund February Statement.

February 2025 Income Statement and Spending Report

Jeannie went over the reports for the Board.

Total Revenue was \$26,935.54. Expenses were \$7,892.81. Total net surplus was \$19,042.73.

Financial Report Quarterly and YTD

Jeannie went over the report for the Board. Income is at 74.69% and expenses is at 42.91% with only four months left in the fiscal year, which puts the District in good shape financially.

Nevin Sines made a motion to approve the FY25 MDA General Fund February Statement, The February 2025 Income Statement, the February 2025 Spending Report, and the February 2025 Financial Report and Quarterly and YTD Statement. Dorsey Guard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

Chairman's Report

Smokey asked how things are coming with the scholarship. There has been one application so far, but that individual still needs to turn in the essay and transcripts. The staff has marketed the scholarship through Facebook, Email, the Website, writing a news article that appeared in the Republican and contacting school staff.

Smokey said that the General Assembly is at the 2/3 mark. There is no budget yet and nothing about the budget for the State of Maryland.

District Manager's Report

MASCD Award Nominations and Service Pins

Each year, the MASCD recognizes various Districts and individuals in areas of excellence. The Staff is recommending that the Board consider nominating the District for the Outstanding Communications Award. The staff is also requesting that the Board look over the various awards and their qualifications and bring back any recommendations for other nominations of the District itself.

Jeannie outlined why the District should be considered for the Outstanding Communications Award. The District has 3 websites with the main one having over 100 pages, operates a Facebook, sends Farmer Update Emails regularly, produces a newsletter 3 to 4 times a year, puts out press releases to area newspapers, contributes to the newspaper Agricultural section, and submits information to partners for print in their e-newsletters.

The Board was in unanimous agreement that the District should nominate themselves for the Communication award.

For the Conservation Education Teacher of the Year Award, teachers must nominate themselves. Seth contacted Rebecca Cannon Sisler and Lexi Trickett. They referred him to the Communications Director of the Garrett County Public Schools, and he sent information out to all the school principals, who forwarded it to teachers who may be candidates.

Butch said that it is noteworthy that the Board has spent a lot of time getting Brinker straightened out. It was a major accomplishment. Nevin agreed, saying that they had looked at every avenue in detail. Butch added that William Buckel was also very helpful in facilitating moving of the funds.

District Conservationist's Report

Chad Bucklew explained to the Board that there was no Secretary of Agriculture during the last Board meeting. There is now one in place, Brooke Rowlin. This has helped. In some ways, things have been going more smoothly. There is still no update on the IRA funding, but it is only halfway through the 90-day review.

With EQIP, the District has 22 applications obligated with three yet to sign. Without IRA funds the State only has \$11 million for the year, with \$10 million of that obligated. So, there is not much funding left unless IRA is returned.

The NRCS offices were being told to stop having applicants sign 2025 contracts, but this morning, they were given the go ahead to begin again. So, that is back to normal for the most part. The current administration does not like special entitlements for historically underserved. That won't change for 2025, but it may change in the next Farm Bill.

Chad hasn't heard anything about the new lease. As far as he knows, nothing has changed. The last word was that it was in limbo.

New Business

Activity Report

Jeannie went over the Activity Report. The two planners have many plans that they are working to complete. E&S was a little slower in February, but that was to be expected with the winter weather. The District is working on many projects in various stages for many producers in Garrett County. The District is extremely short-staffed compared to the amount of work to be done. With MDA, two of the Technicians are new and still learning, leaving only one Technician to handle the bulk of the work for all the projects. NRCS has only Will and Chad, with Will taking on the role of a Technician in addition to his other work even though he is not a Technician.

Old Business

Temporary Change of Board Meeting Night

Smokey stated that Seth had requested not to attend the Board meetings for a few months. He is coaching a little league team. Jeannie explained that Seth had no control over the scheduling when he agreed to coach the team, and that as soon as he knew it would be on Tuesday evenings, he had reached out with an email to the Board asking if the meeting night could be changed temporarily or moved to the day on Tuesday.

Dorsey Guard made a motion to move the Board meetings to Thursday nights at 7 pm for the months of April, May, and June with the allowance that the day can be adjusted if necessary to accommodate all Board members with a week's advance notice. Butch seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

District Apparel

Seth had requested the use of \$1000 from the Field Supplies budgeted line item to purchase apparel for office staff with the Garrett Soil Conservation District logo. Field Supplies has \$2000 left for the FY, and it is not expected that more than \$1000 of it will be spent the rest of the FY. The District staff does not have anything that identifies them as Garrett Soil Conservation workers. This is particularly important when the staff is out on location. Smokey stated that he is concerned about buying clothing for the staff given the fiscal state of things.

Smokey said that this is not a budgeted expense. Moving budgeted money from one category for use in another is not a good way to run things. Butch said that he thinks the Board should consider this request. Dorsey agreed.

Budget Modification

Because the Board had asked that the Fundraising line item be broken down to provide more information to the Board about where moneys are earmarked, Seth is proposing to add sub-categories in the Monthly and YTD Financial Report under Income for Donations, Scholarship, Grants, and Cooperator's Dinner. Additionally, line items would need to be added to Expenses. Those expense lines would be a line for Donation added under Community Engagement, and a line for Reserve under Reserve allowing for it to be easily seen when Fundraising money may be held from one year to the next.

Smokie stated that if the budget is changed there would not be a trail to do a new budget. Butch explained that this is not a change to the budget but rather, a change to the report to allow for more transparency.

There were no objections to this change. It was noted that if the Board would decide to allow for the purchase of apparel for the staff there would need to be a budget change to move the money from Field Supplies to the correct category.

Annual Work Plan

Jeannie explained that Seth is suggesting that the Board create a sub-committee to create the annual Work Plan through a day session and bring it back to the Board. Smokey said that there are advantages to this and disadvantages. Smokey said that the Work Plan is an ideal way to surface ideas of things that may need changed. A sub-committee is a good way to do it, but with only a few people some things could be left out, so it is good for the Board to go over it after the sub-committee. Smokey expressed that there are community members from other watersheds that do not know what the GSCD does. The District needs to work toward educating those populations without leaving the original constituency behind. There are untouched audiences.

Dorsey and Nevin agreed that a sub-committed would be a good way to produce the Work Plan. It was noted that the District Manager has many duties in many different areas that demand his attention.

Smokey asked for volunteers for the sub-committee. No one volunteered. Nevin said that since staff is involved in the daily work of the district, perhaps the Board can ask various members of staff to volunteer to work on it and bring their recommendations to the Board.

It was decided that the staff should get together and create a recommendation for the Work Plan and bring it back to the Board sub-committee that will be selected at a future time.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 8:53 pm.