

Garrett Soil Conservation District Supervisor's Meeting

June 26, 2025

Garrett Soil Conservation District Board Room

Participants

- Smokey Stanton, Board Chair
- Kristen Enlow, Board Vice Chair
- Butch Helbig, Board Treasurer
- Nevin Sines, Board Member
- Dorsey Guard, Board Member
- Seth Metheny, District Manager (DM)
- Chad Bucklew, District Conservationist (DC)
- Jeannie Frazee, Administrative Specialist
- Peg Shaw-McBee, Guest, Western Maryland RC&D Director

Call to Order

Board Chairman, Smokey Stanton certified a quorum and called the meeting to order at 7:09 p.m. All Board members were present.

Approval/Correction of May 22, 2025 Minutes

The May 22, 2025 minutes were approved unanimously.

Guest Introduction

Peg Shaw-McBee is the new Western Maryland RC&D Director. She was formerly with NRCS but took the Deferred Resignation. Because she is still employed by NRCS, she cannot talk about federal grants until after September. RC&D was originally part of the NRCS but is now a non-profit. Peg spoke about her background and the history of RC&D.

Treasurer's Report

FY25 MDA General Fund May Statement

Butch Helbig met with Seth and Jeannie earlier in the week to go over the financials. Finances are running very close to the projected budget.

Monthly Income Statement

Total Income was \$21,257.35. Expenditures were \$10,853.73. Net Surplus is \$10,403.62.

Preston Sharps moved the Money Market account into a new Money Market in mid-June.

The new Drill has been ordered but it will not be here until mid-January. They know that the District is renting the old Drill, so they are going to allow us to keep it until then with the same agreement. The old Drill is working fine except the tires. The District is not going to replace the discs since it is to be traded.

The requirement to present a credit card for Drill rental has been enacted. It is going well. The District requires that the card be presented prior to rental.

May First United Holdings Report

The return from First United Holding since January has been 2.72%. This is the first time the account has shown a negative since it was started. The values were down a little bit in each investment category resulting in a \$1,658.97 loss.

Financial Report

Total income is at 93.85%. Carryover is 97.67%. Growth 1.60% for Brinker, 2.72% First United Holdings, Money Market .06%. Expenses are 83.23% for the Local account, 68.68% State General Account, 72.27% Administrative Assistant account, 24.88% Erosion & Sediment. Total income YTD is \$204,337.26. Total Expenses are \$125,936.81.

Butch Helbig made a motion to approve the financial reports. Dorsey Guard seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

There was no Chairman's Report this time.

District Manager's Report

Hiring Freeze

Seth received an email from Governor Moore. The State of Maryland is issuing a hiring freeze. They are cutting open pins. That will affect the District because it does have an open pin. Seth has been stressing for months that Garrett needs that position filled. Maryland is likely going to offer an early retirement program. This is not likely to affect Garrett as all the MDA employees are newer to their positions.

MASCD Annual Meeting

The MASCD Annual meeting is in Allegany County this year, August 4-6. There is a pig roast on August 4. Tuesday, August 5 is the Awards Banquet. Each District donates to the auction. The District will be donating again this year.

District Conservationist's Report

Chad Bucklew said that he has heard little about the NRCS re-organizational plan. It is to be released later. They are planning to shuffle people around. Many office employees are being required to go into the field.

They are consolidating some places that are at 80% or less occupancy. Chad must do a head count in Allegany every day. FSA is the lead agency in Garrett, so they do the head count here.

All the pre-approvals for Garrett contracts have been wrapped up this year. Farm Bill funds have been depleted. However, across the country there are contracts that were cancelled, and that money is coming in. Garrett could get more of its applications funded this year from that money.

New Business

Activity Report

The Planners are working on 18 Conservation plans that are in differing stages. In May, five plans were approved and signed. For E&S, 11 Single Family plans, 1 Timber Harvest, and 2 Commercial plans were under review at the end of the month. One Single Family and four Commercial plans need revisions. Approved in May were 15 Single Family, 6 Timber Harvest, and 6 Commercial plans.

Seth went on a tour with the Land Reclamation Committee.

Old Business

Annual Workplan

The proposed Annual Workplan was included in the Supervisors' packet. The District cannot do the budget until it receives the CBTF MOU from the State and from the County.

For the State General fund, MDA has approved payments totaling \$846.00 less than requested.

District Scholarship

Board members received a copy of all the applications and a rubric for each. They were to score each application and bring in their results. Kristen Enlow secluded herself and left the building, as one of the applicants is a relative. Butch commented that he appreciated the rubric, but he is not sure it covers everything. He also looked at each applicant's response about what they plan to do and their work history. Their objectives are as important as the other items on the rubric. Butch also raised a concern that since there are two scholarships, perhaps they should go to one at each high school. Butch asked if Kristen could vote between the other applicants if her relative was not included. It was determined by the Board that she could. However, based upon the responses of the Board members present, there was a majority, so winners were already determined without her additional vote. Nevin Sines also opted not to score the applicants.

The three remaining supervisors listed the same two individuals as their top two applicants. Dorsey Guard made a motion that the winners of the 2025 District scholarships be those top two applicants, as this represents a majority. Nevin Sines seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

The two scholarship winners are Cristy Enlow and Benjamin Nazelrod. One is from Southern and the other Northern, however, the Board did not take that into account when determining the winners.

Kristen raised the concern that applicants may not have their grades yet at the time the scholarship application is due. The applicants can send them in after the application, but they must have them in by May 1. This is too early for final grades.

The Board may look at revising the rubric for next year.

FY26 Budget

The FY26 budget cannot be set without knowing how much money will come from the County and the CBTF. Seth stated that he would like to see the Administrative Assistant salary be competitive with what it was when Jeannie started. It is based on a grade 12 position. Jeannie has not gotten a raise since 2023. If Jeannie had gotten the step and cost of living increases that others have gotten in this grade, her salary would have increased by \$7,000.00 at this point. For the FY26 budget Seth is suggesting \$49,771.00 for the Administrative Assistant salary. The CBTF is to provide less money this year, but there is \$13,000 in reserves that can cover. The District could also use more of the E&S Administrative funds to cover.

Jeannie reminded the Board that she has a bachelor's degree, and that training has benefited the District strongly, allowing her to accomplish projects beyond the normal capabilities of a secretary. As such, she has taken on responsibilities that were not in the original Administrative Assistant job description. She has contributed to the District's income by administering the Tree Sale, creating the websites which have ecommerce capabilities, and through E&S administration. She has since obtained her Notary Public, which is an asset to the District, as applicants no longer must go elsewhere to get contracts notarized. She has provided substantial savings to the District by being able to handle all web development, newsletter design and printing, and marketing.

Additionally, Randy is making \$21 hour for his services. \$35-\$36 is a fair rate. \$45,000.00 was budgeted for Randy last year, but only \$17,960.00 was spent. Seth would like to see Randy's pay raised to the fair rate.

Dorsey Guard made a motion to adjourn the meeting. It was unanimous. The meeting adjourned at 9:16 pm.