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## Cecil Soil Conservation District

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### Board of Supervisor's Meeting February 11, 2026

The Cecil Soil Conservation District held a Board of Supervisors meeting with a Zoom call-in option. The meeting was called to order at 8:33 by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, Willie Ewing, Vic Priapi, and Alice Crothers. Other attendees: District Manager - Chris Brown, Administrative Assistant – Patty Pierce, District Coordinator – Tracey Rach and Darren Alles, MDA Area Coordinator, John Gonzalez, and Visitor: Paul Mason – Mason's Chrome View Farm.

Visitor: Paul Mason from Mason's Chrome View Farm was introduced to the group. Paul was invited to the meeting to share his experience with working with our office and the farms participation in federal and state programs. The group discussed differences between Maryland and Chester County's (PA) administrative processes, noting that Maryland requires more traditional paper-based documentation while Chester County operates more digitally (DocuSign, etc.). They explored the benefits and challenges of manure injection versus transport, with injection being more efficient but less cost-effective. Chris explained to the board that since Mason's operation straddles the state line, they are eligible for the injection program in Maryland but do not qualify for transport. Paul and the board also discussed various programs like EQIP and MACS to and how the district has utilized both to optimize funding for agricultural projects. Technical assistance and engineering support were also addressed, highlighting successful collaborations for building design and waterway projects across different states. Paul shared his experience with contractors and project timelines, noting that while there were some initial challenges, overall communication and feedback were positive. He compared the design and review processes in Maryland and Pennsylvania, finding them to be similar but dependent on project specifics and priorities. Chris Brown emphasized the importance of the district conveying realistic timeframes and open communication with farmers, suggesting that over-promising can lead to disappointment. The group agreed to continue periodically inviting cooperators to share their insights for program improvement.

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the January 14, 2026 Board meeting minutes. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Bruce Yerkes asked if the board had reviewed the treasurer's report, and expenses. Chris provided a quick overview of the Ditch Maintenance program for Cecilton and Warwick. Funding and ditch responsibilities were addressed/conveyed. Funding for maintenance comes from the county budget and the district works as the administrator of the program. There were no questions. Willie Ewing made a motion to file the treasurer's report and pay bills. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.

## Old Business

- Chris Brown led a recap discussion of the banquet held on January 16<sup>th</sup>. The group discussed the success of the banquet with around 180 attendees, including elected officials, and received positive feedback for its elegance and organization. There were some concerns about the food quality, particularly the crab cakes, and the timing so close to the holidays may have affected ticket sales, specifically why we had so many late requests. The group also reviewed the banquet's program, noting that it ran smoothly and quickly, with suggestions made to improve the presentation of the amount of data in the BMP presentation in future events. "Bunching" BMPS into slides was discussed. Chris provided an update on the video production, noting that Dan had handled the production completely on his own with success, reducing costs compared to previous years. Alice Crothers shared her experience and honor as being the recipient of the Cooperator of the Year Award. She shared that the video was well-received and has been shared on all of her personal social media platforms.
- Van Funk provided the State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) update. He discussed the upcoming state committee meeting in Annapolis, which will focus on legislative updates and climate resiliency in agriculture. He emphasized the need to find a central area representative by July and explained the structure and authority of the state committee.
- Chris Brown and Tracey Rach provided an update on education and outreach programs, including the Maryland Extension Agronomy Meeting. The Agronomy meeting was on February 3<sup>rd</sup> at a new location, Elkton Parks and Rec on Stockton Street with approximately twenty-five participants. The meeting was well attended with nutrient management and pesticide training. CEUs were provided.
- Planning for the Cecil County Ag Education Days is strongly underway. The event is April 28<sup>th</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup>, and 30<sup>th</sup>. The Land O'Lakes Grant was received. Tracey Rach set up a bank account and 501c3 for the Cecil County Ag Education Days Committee & Organization. Chris Brown and Tracey Rach highlighted the need for volunteers and sponsors.
- Ag Day at the Dupont Farm event is scheduled for April 10<sup>th</sup>. Cherish Warner is working the agenda for that day and working with Maryland Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Management Division for the approval of CEU credits. Tracey Rach spoke with Rachael Coffey at the School of Technology and the Ag Science Students will be attending. Rachael has inquired if the district can sponsor the transportation costs for the event. Tracey provided a rough estimate of \$500.00 or less for the transportation. The board agreed to approve Rachel's request to pay for School of Tech students' bus transportation to DuPont Farm on April 10<sup>th</sup>. Willie Ewing requested the possibility of participants receiving pesticide credits since we have a drone demonstration there. Willie Ewing discussed the cover crop strips that were planted.
- The MASCD Summer Meeting was going to be held August 10<sup>th</sup> through the 12<sup>th</sup> at Solomons Inn but relocating to another location due to a flooding issue at Solomons. The board approved a \$2,500 sponsorship for the MASCD annual meeting, following their previous year's donation of the same amount when Alice was the keynote speaker. Willie Ewing made a motion to sponsor \$2,500 for MASCD Summer Meeting. Alice Crothers seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Chris Brown shared that the district was awarded the Endowment Award of \$1,500 to go towards Envirothon expenses.
- Tracey Rach updated the Board on the three scholarships offered by the district. She has set up one through the Cecil County School of Technology, one with Cecil College, and the final is one that the district will advertise on its own. She has contacted all guidance counselors at the high schools

sharing the application but has not received any responses. Tracey will contact private schools. Van Funk suggests modifying the post and highlight the amount being awarded.

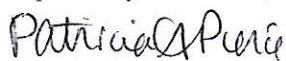
### New Business

- Chris Brown presented the District Activities Report. He provided a detailed overview of the district's activities and discussed various technical assistance requests and training activities, including AutoCAD, security awareness, and USDA co-pilot training. Engineering activities included plan reviews, TAC meetings, and small pond approvals. Staff visited farms for Inventory & Evaluations with NRCS Engineer for various practices. Six full resource conservation plans are in progress. Three full resource conservation plans were completed. Five designs were approved "in-house" and one as-built design was approved "in-house". Two projects are in progress. One application for best management practices was submitted to MDA/MACS for cost share. Chris Brown shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities. There were seventy-five Conservation Practices applied in Conservation Tracker. Revised flat rates for Central Region were completed and emailed. Twenty-six urban E&S plans were reviewed and twenty-two urban E&S plans were approved. Three forest harvest plans were reviewed and two forest harvest plans were approved. Eight 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed and one 378-Small Pond plan was approved. Three urban meetings were attended. Staff completed Inventory and Evaluations for Agricultural Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control as well as Stream Restoration/Wetland Creation Projects. Alice Crothers made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Willie seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Sonya Matlack provided NRCS updates. Contracts estimated to be obligated starting in March. NRCS staff attended regenerative ag program training. CREP new enrollments and re-enrollments opened today.
- Darren Alles provided an MDA update on various programs and initiatives, and budget discussions. Key points included the recruitment for an SCA position, the annual employee meeting, and changes in program management roles. The team discussed upcoming deadlines for conservation grants and the outreach campaign for stream protection. Budget cuts were highlighted for small farm and urban agriculture programs, while new funding was allocated for the LEAF program.
- The Annual MASCD Awards have not emailed out to the districts yet but Tracey has already begun preparing for the submission. Chris wanted to reach out to the Board if they had any recommendations for Outstanding Employee. Bruce will send email. The district will apply for the "Conservation Education District of the Year" award again.

The next meeting will be held on March 18, 2026 at 8:30 AM. The meeting will be held at the office with a teleconference option. The teleconference option will continue to be offered for those working in the field.

As there being no further general business, Bruce Yerkes called for a motion to adjourn the general meeting. Alice Crothers made a motion to adjourn the meeting adjourn. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 10:58 PM.

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia A Pierce  
Administrative Assistant

Board Member Current Attendance Record January 2025 to January 2026

Bruce Yerkes, Chairman	100%
Willie Ewing, Co Chairman	83%
Van Funk, Treasurer	100%
Vic Priapi, Member	58%
Alice Crothers, Member	83%