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## Cecil Soil Conservation District

105 Chesapeake Boulevard, Suite B-3, Elkton MD 21921

(410) 398-4411 Ext.3

### Board of Supervisor's Meeting May 20, 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 8:40 by Chairman – Bruce Yerkes. Attendees Supervisors – Van Funk, Willie Ewing, and Alice Crothers. Other attendees: District Manager - Chris Brown, Administrative Assistant – Patty Pierce, District Coordinator – Tracey Rach and Darren Alles, MDA Area Coordinator.

- Van Funk made a motion to accept the April 22, 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. 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 provided updates on the following education and outreach events:

- Envirothon Competition – Rising Sun High School won for the second year in a row and plans to attend the state competition. Chris Brown and Mari McNinch plan to attend on the training day on June 10<sup>th</sup>.
  - 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Ag Education Day recap – April 28<sup>th</sup> – April 30<sup>th</sup>. The event was successful and attracted approximately 1,100 students. CCAEDPA plans to recognize Atlantic Tractor and Hooper as sponsors for their contributions to the event. The group discussed feedback from the event, noting challenges in getting detailed responses from tween-age participants.
  - DNR Senior Ranger Program - Bird Talk was May 13<sup>th</sup> – discussions included warm season grasses and pollinator habitat plantings and what farmers are doing creating habitat.
  - Chris Brown will attend the Southern Association of State Departments of Agriculture Conference on July 16<sup>th</sup>. Chris will be on the panel with Secretary Atticks and others to evaluate the history of voluntary agricultural conservation and its role in the Chesapeake Bays health.
  - Natural Resource Careers Camp – Maryland Forestry Foundation update. Chris Brown provided details including its costs, funding options, and how donations can be designated. Lauren Gilbert will attend the camp on July 20<sup>th</sup>. The group discussed inviting someone from the Cecil County Forestry Board to attend a district board meeting.
- Bruce Yerkes presented the Cecil County School of Tech Scholarship to Raegan Brown at Rising Sun High School on May 6th. The awards event was very well attended with parents and students.

- Chris Brown shared a Cooperator of the Year Update. The board agreed to honor Louisa Pleasanton Zeh as the Cooperator of the Year and her son Bill Pleasanton agreed to accept the award on her behalf. Van Funk suggested including her accepting the award in the video presentation.

### 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, staff trainings, conservation planning activities and engineering designs. Chris explained the technical assistance requests received and assigned section. They discussed the progress of resource conservation plans. Conservation Tracker has been taken down and districts await the new ACRES system. Plans will be entered into ACRES upon release. Engineering activities included three inventory and evaluations, two projects surveyed, a heavy use area protection design was approved by NRCS, a heavy use area protection design was approved "in-house". Six projects are in progress. Four as-built surveys were completed by staff. One grassed waterway & lined waterway or outlet as-built design was approved "in-house". Staff attended one site meeting, a roofed heavy use area tour in Frederick County, a soils investigation, and a pond meeting. Thirty-four full resource conservation plans are in progress. Eleven full resource conservation plans were completed. Two applications for best management practices were submitted to MDA/MACS for cost share. Two approvals for best management practices were received from MDA/MACS for cost share. Chris Brown shared NRCS financial assistance conservation program activities with twenty-nine program contracts with five pending obligations. NRCS monthly activities included aiding applicants with eligibility documents, developing plans for Regenerative Pilot Program, finalizing design estimates for EQIP applications, ranking CSP applications, building contracts and documentation for preapproved EQIP applications, and CREP. Thirty-one urban E&S plans were reviewed and thirteen urban E&S plans were approved. Twelve 378- Small Pond plans were reviewed and three 378-Small Pond plan was approved. Two 378-Small Pond meetings were attended. Five urban meetings were attended. Staff completed Inventory and Evaluations for Agricultural Stormwater Management and Erosion and Sediment Control. Three Agricultural E&S/SWM Plans are currently under CSCD Development and six Agricultural Stormwater Management and E&S/SWM projects are in progress. Willie Ewing made a motion to accept the activities report as presented. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Van Funk made a motion to accept the Cecil Soil Conservation District Associate Board Member Standard Operation Procedure. Willie Ewing seconded the motion. Motion carried. The group discussed the need to fill Vic Priapi's (vacant) and Van Funk's expiring at-large positions and advertising for both at-large seats simultaneously.
- Bruce Yerkes made a motion to approve Board Members cover crop claim. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- The MASCD Summer Meeting is scheduled for August 3-5 at the Hyatt Regency, Cambridge, Maryland. Chris, Bruce, Van, and Tracey will be attending. All registrations have been completed and hotel rooms, reserved. The District Awards have been submitted to MASCD and the summer meeting sponsorship has been mailed.
- Darren Alles provided an MDA update on various programs and initiatives. Darren provided updates on the ACRE migration, explaining that monthly reports are now being sent to districts and discussing concerns about the new system's impact on custom reporting capabilities, with plans for additional training scheduled for June 2nd. Each SCD allowed two users. Cherish Warner and Sean McCandless have been designated by MDA as local users here in our Cecil office. Chris Brown would like the second user (Sean McCandless) to be converted to a district user account (anyone can use this user login). MDA designated two users per county due to licensing. An automatic monthly report email to be delivered to SCDs – monthly plans summary report based on "plan date" and

monthly BMP summary report based on “install date”. Resource Conservation State Employee Annual Meeting is May 19th at Sandy Point State Park, structured for SCD District Managers and all state employees in MDA Resource Conservation, planner/technician breakout sessions, Q&A to MDA program submissions and a safety training. The 2025 WIP outcomes updates will be presented to SSCC soon, followed by regional updates with SCDs. Darren shared conservation grants/MACS update. The group discussed counties drafting a letter to MDA requesting districts to be involved with hiring process of new MDA hires located in district offices. Darren provided a budget and legislative update from the general assembly session: Cover Crop Program - No change as budgeted \$19.5 million, MACS - No Change as budgeted \$8 million, LEEF - Reduced budget from \$900K to \$700K, and MALPF - Increased budget from \$26.7 million to \$38.7 million. Darren shared an update regarding AFO permit in Maryland.

- Van Funk provide an SSCC meeting update. Last month’s meeting was in Baltimore County. He will be attending the SSCC meeting tomorrow, May 21<sup>st</sup>, at MDA headquarters. He will provide a meeting report next month. Key speakers include Alisha Mulkey and Harrison Palmer. Alisha will provide a conservation grants update. Harrison Palmer will give a legislation update. The June meeting will on June 18<sup>th</sup> in Somerset County. Topics will revolve around Erosion & Sediment Control – Scope of Work Guidance. The June meeting will be Vans last meeting.
- Chris Brown provided an NRCS update discussing leadership changes. Aubrey Bettencourt has stepped down and Colton L. Buckley has moved into the role as NRCS Chief.
- Chris Brown provided a NACD Regional Meeting Update. The meeting is in Wilmington, Delaware. Bruce Yerkes will attend. Breakout sessions will include a tour the Delaware Food Bank and the University of Delaware Creamery.
- Willie Ewing made a motion to accept Daniel & Catherine Moltion as new cooperators. Van Funk seconded the motion. Motion carried.
- Van Funk discussed challenges with Amish community outreach regarding permits, explaining that since 2020 he has issued 25-30 stop-work orders on Amish properties due to permit violations, primarily due to timing constraints rather than reluctance to comply. He proposed creating a liaison position between the county and Amish community to help navigate the permitting process, similar to a successful model used in other counties. The discussion highlighted tensions between agricultural development and other commercial interests in Cecil County, expressing concern about the direction of land use decisions affecting the rural landscape. The group discussed challenges with the current permitting process for agricultural projects, particularly highlighting issues for Amish farmers who struggle with online systems and face delays that impact their livelihoods. Alice Crothers shared experiences about difficulties with permit timelines and the disconnect between administrative efficiency metrics and real-world project requirements. The discussion concluded with agreement that the district should advocate for the agriculture community by bringing these concerns to county administration, particularly emphasizing the need for user-friendly processes that accommodate cultural norms of Amish farmers. Chris and Alice discussed challenges with the county's permitting process, particularly for agricultural communities including the Amish. Chris suggested starting outreach to agricultural stakeholders to understand their needs and make the process more user-friendly, emphasizing that external feedback would be more effective than internal government initiatives.

Chris Brown provided a Chesapeake Club update. The project has received a response from the consultant and is in the queue for review. The current status is fourth review in the

preliminary stage. The third review in preliminary stage had 105 comments to be addressed. Chris attended a meeting with the county administration and Steven Palmer, Maryland Housing Authority Ombudsman. Challenges with the project were discussed. At the board's request, Chris will set up a meeting with Senator Hershey and Senator Gallion to discuss the districts' role in plan review ensure that the challenges with the project are understood by the senators.

- The board discussed concerns about agriculture's limited representation in the current economic development committee. Topics seem to be heavily influenced by the Chamber of Commerce. The group proposed that the district should fund its own consultant to assess agriculture's economic impact on Cecil County rather than relying on the local administration to advocate for agriculture. The economic impact should highlight the benefits of a rural economy.

The next meeting will be held on June 24, 2026 at 8:30AM. 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. Willie Ewing made a motion to adjourn the meeting adjourn. Van Funk seconded the motion. The general meeting adjourned at 11:21AM.

CLOSED MEETING of CSCD membership (interested parties dismissed)

**PRESIDING OFFICER'S WRITTEN STATEMENT FOR CLOSING A MEETING ("CLOSING STATEMENT") UNDER THE OPEN MEETINGS ACT (General Provisions Article § 3-305)**

**Recorded vote to close the meeting:**

Date: May 20, 2026; Time: 11:21 am; Location: **105 Chesapeake Blvd. Elkton, MD 21921**

Motion to close meeting made by: Van Funk Seconded by Willie Ewing;

Members in favor: All; Opposed: None; Abstaining: None; Absent: Vic Priapi.

**Statutory authority to close session (check all provisions that apply).**

**This meeting will be closed under General Provisions Art. § 3-305(b) only:**

**(1)\_x\_** "To discuss the appointment, employment, assignment, promotion, discipline, demotion, compensation, removal, resignation, or performance evaluation of appointees, employees, or officials over whom this public body has jurisdiction; any other personnel matter that affects one or more specific individuals";

**For each provision checked above, disclosure of the topic to be discussed and the public body's reason for discussing that topic in closed session.**

<b>Citation</b> (insert # from above)	<b>Topic:</b>	<b>Reason for closed-session discussion of topic</b>
§3-305(b) ( 1 )	<b>Scholarship Application review</b> Applicants for Cecil Soil Conservation District Scholarship	Public discussion of applicant names and personal info could discourage people from applying for scholarship

**This statement made by Bruce Yerkes, Chairman.**

Adjournment by Chairman, Bruce Yerkes adjourned the meeting at time 11:31

Respectfully submitted,



Patricia A Pierce  
Administrative Assistant

Board Member Current Attendance Record May 2025 to May 2026

Bruce Yerkes, Chairman	100%
Willie Ewing, Co Chairman	100%
Van Funk, Treasurer	100%
Vic Priapi, Member	50%
Alice Crothers, Member	75%