

Chairperson Commissioner Sherene Hess called the meeting of the Indiana County Conservation District to order on Tuesday, October 21, 2025, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road in Indiana. Other Directors present were Craig Andrie, Janis Long, Barbara Peace, and Gregg VanHorn, along with Aaron Simpson-virtually. Directors absent: Cindy Rogers

Also present: Tammie Robinson and Tiffany Wirick– Office Administrators, Brooke Russick – Conservation Program Manager (Dirt/Gravel Low Volume Roads), Benjamin Wenger – Conservation Program Specialist (Watersheds), Marisa Matlin – Conservation Program Specialist (102/NMP), Rebecca Caldwell - AmeriCorps, Nathan McNutt, Tom Beresnyak, Charles Flinn, Doyle Freeman, and John Somonick-Associate Directors, Kyle Wirick – PA Fish and Boat Commission, and Stephen Campbell – Penn State Extension.

Also attending virtually were Douglas Beri Jr. – Executive Director, Kaine Diehl-DEP Field Representative, and Rich Tice and Jaysa Stitt – McCall, Scanlon & Tice LLC.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

Peace moved to approve consent agenda items including accepting minutes of the previous meeting as presented, treasurer’s report to be filed subject to audit, correspondence, DEP delegated programs reports and staff reports, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

Peace moved to pay the bills as presented, second by Long, motion carried with Simpson abstaining.

Jaysa Stitt and Rich Tice presented the independent audit report and single audit report findings for the calendar year ending December 31, 2024. Details of the entire report were reviewed with the board. The opinion was that the financial statements were presented fairly in all material aspects respective to the financial position of the governmental activities and each major fund of the Conservation District as of December 31, 2024. No deficiencies in internal controls that were considered to be a material weakness were found. Additionally, no instances of noncompliance were identified. Peace moved to approve the 2024 audit report as presented, second by Andrie, motion carried.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DELEGATED PROGRAMS REPORT

Ten erosion and sediment control plans were reviewed, and eight Chapter 102 site inspections were conducted.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Somonick reported there is a tree planting event planned for the Aultman Run watershed.

Flinn reported that the tick population/activity is very high right now. A study in White’s Woods revealed that 52% of adult ticks and 27% of nymphs are infected with Lyme disease.

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Newly hired DEP field representative Kaine Diehl reported that due to the current state budget impasse, all DEP personnel are under a travel ban, environmental education grant application period is now open, all Conservation District audits are due October 31, multiple talks about the state water plan will be held, a Manure Management training module is available on-line, and Streamlining Permits for Economic Expansion and Development (SPEED) updates are available on the DEP website.

COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

Beresnyak reported on available Penn State Extension on-line webinars.

Campbell reported soybeans and corn in the area are being harvested. He encouraged local farmers to participate in the Penn State Extension soybean and corn yield contests. Cover crops are beginning to sprout. Many forage seedings failed due to the current drought conditions. Crops day will be held February 4 at the Presbyterian church in Blairsville. A virtual forage workshop and a bailage workshop are being planned.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - none

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

No nutrient management plans are currently under review. No plans were presented for approval.

Van Horn moved to accept a \$25.00 donation from Hunter Overdorff for the Envirothon Education Grant fund, second by Long, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve two contracts for the Mytrysak ACAP project: Component 1 (excavation) with Logan Hoburg Excavation not to exceed \$109,985.50 and Component 2 (roof runoff structures) with M.D. Sleppy Construction, Inc. not to exceed \$35,028, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

Van Horn moved to approve an ACAP contract with Craig Andrie in the amount of \$240,155, second by Long, motion carried with Andrie abstaining.

Peace moved to approve an ACAP contract with Dave and Karen Fairman in the amount of \$160,595, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

Andrie moved to approve cancellation of Chris Stewart's ACAP13-2024 project contract in the amount \$250,000, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve an ACAP contract amendment for Isaac & Emilie Stewart ACAP16-2024 in the amount of \$50,000 for the addition of access road, stream crossing, and associated engineering costs to the scope of work, second by Long, motion carried.

Andrie moved to ratify a contract amendment for the McCracken ACAP12-2024 fencing contract in the amount of \$1,735.00 to change fence surrounding a gas well and gas well road to 4-strand rather than 2-strand, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to amend Green Township Railroad Street DGLVR program project contract DR2303 in the amount of \$5,904.84 for a new contract total of \$39,385.84, second by Long, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve FY25 DGLVR projects as recommended by the Quality Assurance Board at their May 7, 2025 ranking meeting as follows: Dirt & Gravel projects-Banks Township: Beckett Road \$65,473; Canoe Township: Beulah Road \$130,705; Grant Township: Montgomery Church Road \$46,893; Green Township: Alder Road \$59,148; Green Township: Fir Road

\$11,277; South Mahoning Township: Ox Hill Road – Section 1 \$36,078; South Mahoning Township: Ox Hill Road – Section 2 \$125,778; Young Township: Cribbs Road \$17,895; Young Township: Whiskey Run Road \$12,888, and Low Volume projects - Glen Campbell Borough: Maple Street \$61,916; Grant Township: Smith Street \$16,215; and Rayne Township: Honey Hollow Road \$82,286, and these contracts will not be executed until the Pennsylvania state budget has passed, second by Van Horn, motion carried with Andrie abstaining.

Long moved to accept Hunter Overdorff's resignation as an Associate Director effective December 31, 2025, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve plan year 2026 PA Municipal Retirement System Minimum Municipal Obligation in the amount of \$21,697, second by Long, motion carried.

Van Horn moved to approve adding Tiffany Wirick with full administrative access to the First Commonwealth Bank BillPay system, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve contracting with Young and Associates for engineering services in the amount of \$10,000 to facilitate the construction of a pole building on the Conservation District grounds, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

Long moved to approve filling two Conservation Program Specialist positions and delegating hiring selection to the personnel committee, second by Peace, motion carried.

Van Horn moved to approve purchasing Inland Marine insurance coverage to insure the no-till drill at an annual rate of \$349, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve the updated committee list as presented, second by Long, motion carried.

The board acknowledged Robinson's 2025 NACDE Employee Award (local).

Purchase of cider-making equipment was postponed to a later date.

Two quotes of equal amounts were received for construction of the new shed kit. On the spot internet searches gleaned that Nate's Handyman Construction had experience with constructing sheds. Peace moved to approve the Nate's Handyman Construction quote of \$3500.00 to construct the new shed after consulting with the District's solicitor that we are permitted to do so, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

Peace moved to enter Executive Session at 10:47 am to discuss a legal matter, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Peace moved to return to the regular meeting at 11:13 am, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve a Memorandum of Understanding change request between the Indiana County Commissioners and the Indiana County Conservation District, pending approval from the District's solicitor, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

DISCUSSION - none

The next Conservation District Board of Directors meeting will be held Tuesday, November 18, 2025, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road, Indiana, PA 15701. Van Horn moved to adjourn the meeting at 11:20 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammie L. Robinson
Administrative Assistant