

Commissioner Sherene Hess (virtually), called the meeting of the Indiana County Conservation District to order on Tuesday, January 20, 2026, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road in Indiana. Other Directors present were Craig Andrie, Janis Long (virtually), Barbara Peace, Cindy Rogers, Aaron Simpson and Gregg VanHorn.

Also present: Douglas Beri Jr. – Executive Director, Tammie Robinson – Office Administrator, Brooke Russick – Conservation Program Manager (virtually), Benjamin Wenger – Conservation Program Specialist (Watersheds), Nathan Edwards – Conservation Program Specialist (ACAP), Blake Mauthe – Conservation Program Specialist (Educator) (virtually) Marisa Matlin – Conservation Program Specialist (102/NMP), Tiffany Wirick – Office Administrator, Rebecca Caldwell and Lee Dunlap-AmeriCorps, Charles Flinn, Doyle Freeman, Nathan McNutt, and Alysha Trexler (virtually), - Associate Directors, Ariel Coleman–USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, Kyle Wirick–PA Fish and Boat Commission, and Audry Allen Lengel.

Peace administered the oath of office to reappointed director Commissioner Hess. Hess administered the oath of office to reappointed directors Andrie, and Long.

Beri facilitated election of officers. Van Horn moved to retain the current slate of officers of Hess, Chair; Peace, Vice Chair; Simpson, Treasurer; and Long, assistant Treasurer, with Robinson serving as Secretary, and close nominations, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Simpson moved to retain the current slate of officers of Hess, Chair; Peace, Vice Chair; Simpson, Treasurer; and Long, assistant Treasurer, with Robinson serving as Secretary, second by Peace, motion carried.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS

Audry Allen Lengel expressed concern about the impact of the planned AI data center in Homer City on the local water supply, air quality, noise levels, light pollution, etc. Lengel invited everyone to attend a citizen meeting on January 25, 2026, at the Indiana Theatre to learn more. Lengel noted citizens wield a lot of power to pressure local officials to protect the environment.

Simpson 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 Peace, motion carried.

Andrie moved to pay the bills as presented, second by Simpson, motion carried.

#### DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DELEGATED PROGRAMS REPORT - none

#### ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS - none

#### FIELD REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT - none

#### COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

Coleman reported NRCS received a Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) Application. March 15, 2026, is the deadline to apply for USDA programs.

Wirick reported anyone going out on ice should use caution as it is generally not thick enough at this time. Blue Spruce Park is scheduled for a stocking event on April 6. Hemlock lake is to be drawn down to determine where a leak is occurring and to make repairs. There have been on-going issues at Hemlock Lake with juveniles vandalizing the park. Following on-going efforts, 17 citations were

issued to five juveniles. Lastly, discussions are underway to merge the PA Fish and Boat Commission and PA Game Commission law enforcement, maintenance, and licensing by 2028.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - none

The ACAP committee met on January 13, 2026, and recommended actions are found under new business.

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

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

Simpson moved to accept the following donations from for the Envirothon Education Grant fund: Cindy Rogers, \$25; Vince and Toni Receski, \$100; Edward Kuckuck, \$300; J.H. Hickman Surveying, LLC, \$250; Elderton State Bank, \$100; Jim Resh, \$100; and Bonni Dunlap, \$100, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to accept a letter of resignation from Adam Hnatkovich, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

As a result of their meeting on January 13, 2026, the following actions were recommended by the ACAP committee:

Currently, the ICCD has conflicting grant match policies required of landowners. Watershed Improvement Program (WIP) grants require a 15% across the board match on all best management practices outside adjacent stream corridors, whereas ICCD's ACAP match requirement is zero, except for a 15% match on roofed heavy use areas (HUA). Van Horn moved to approve removing the WIP grant producer match requirement of 15% on all practices except for roofed heavy use areas, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve reducing the current 15% landowner match requirement on HUA's to 10% consistently across all ICCD grant programs, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve an ACAP project grant to Adam Fairman in the amount of \$243,009, second by Van Horn, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve an ACAP project grant to John and Holly Domb in the amount of \$145,446, second by Peace, motion carried.

McNutt reported there is a need for local farmer input at meetings planned for the upcoming SW PA Soil Health Conference. He plans to personally reach out to local producers to encourage their attendance and participation. Pesticide credits are available. Andrie moved to approve using ACAP technical assistance funds to provide scholarships to Indiana County farmers to cover the \$50 registration cost up to \$5000 to attend the Southwest PA Soil Health Conference January 27, 2026, at the Fred Rogers Center in Latrobe, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Andrie moved to amend the Gibson-Thomas Engineering contract for professional design and inspection of the Canopy Trail & Walkway Project to add site stakeout in the amount of \$2,200 for a total contract of \$11,200, second by Simpson, motion carried.

No bids were received for either the pole building or the storage room addition. Beri will reach out to Young and Associates to discuss our next move.

Peace moved to award a contract to Dave Roman Excavating for the Parker Stupic HUA funded through ACAP and WIP 27 grant in the amount of \$343,328.50, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve the updated Permitting Service Fee Schedule, to include new expedited review services as presented, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve updates to the Employee Policy Manual, including clarification of holiday pay for part time employees and the new expedited permitting service fee schedule, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve sponsoring the Indiana County Decathlon at a \$50 level, second by Simpson, motion carried.

DISCUSSION - none

The next Conservation District Board of Directors meeting will be held Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road, Indiana, PA 15701. Andrie moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:17 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammie L. Robinson  
Administrative Assistant