

Chairperson Commissioner Sherene Hess called the meeting of the Indiana County Conservation District to order on Tuesday, February 17, 2026, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road in Indiana. Other Directors present were Craig Andrie virtually, Janis Long, Barbara Peace, Aaron Simpson and Gregg VanHorn. Directors absent: Cindy Rogers,

Also present: Tammie Robinson – Office Administrator, Brooke Russick – Conservation Program Manager (Dirt/Gravel Low Volume Roads), Benjamin Wenger – Conservation Program Specialist (Watersheds), Alexis Shank – Conservation Program Specialist (Special Projects), Nathan Edwards – Conservation Program Specialist (ACAP), Blake Mauthe – Conservation Program Specialist (Educator), Tiffany Wirick – Office Administrator, Lee Dunlap - AmeriCorps, Tom Beresnyak, Charles Flinn, Doyle Freeman, and John Somonick-Associate Directors, Kaine Diehl – DEP Field Representative, Stephen Campbell – Penn State Extension, Ariel Coleman – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, and Kyle Wirick – PA Fish and Boat Commission virtually.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

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 Van Horn, motion carried.

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

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DELEGATED PROGRAMS REPORT

Five erosion and sediment control plans were reviewed, and four Chapter 102 site inspections were conducted.

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Beresnyak reported his PA Woodland Resilience Enhancement Network (PWREN) project is moving forward.

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Diehl reported a director's back-to-basics workshop is scheduled for new conservation district directors. DEP central office is reaching out to districts to make sure manure management program links on their respective websites are up to date. Nutrient Management training will be held in Camp Hill. A SPEED permitting update is scheduled. Hess reported she will be attending the back-to-basics workshop.

COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

Coleman reported Regenerative Pilot Program information has been received and she also shared a report of 2025 NRCS accomplishments in Pennsylvania. Indiana County received 50 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) applications. Indiana and Westmoreland Counties will share one allocation of money and applications be ranked and awarded accordingly.

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

Campbell reported the Crops Day held in Blairsville was well attended and filled with good speakers and information. Pesticide credits will be available at an event at Penns Manor High School and will be the final opportunity to obtain those credits locally. Penn State Extension will conduct a baleage and haylage workshop April 18 at the Brush Valley Firehall. The Indiana County Farm Bureau is offering sponsorships for the \$20 registration fee.

Freeman reported with the recent ice and snow thaw that it is a great time to document drainage issues.

Flinn reported Mauthe gave a presentation to Indiana Garden Club on seed starting and it was very well done and well received.

Trexler reported the Mid-Atlantic Agroforestry Conference will be held June 4 and 5 in Rock Springs, and she will be presenting at the conference.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - none

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

The Alysha Trexler farm nutrient management plan is currently under review. No nutrient management plans were presented for approval.

Long moved to accept the following donations for the Envirothon Education Grant fund: Evergreen Conservancy, \$100; InFirst Bank, \$100; Dilltown Sportsman's Club, \$50; Gibson-Thomas Engineering, \$250; Susan Bowers, \$50; and Bankson Engineers, Inc., \$100; and a donation for the ICCD Education Center Fund from Meghan Siudzinski / Massachusetts Association of Conservation Districts of \$250, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Issac Stewart intends to sell the property for which he has an ACAP project grant contract, but no work has commenced. Peace moved to cancel Issac Stewart's ACAP Contract ACAP16-2024, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve the Growing Greener grant contract for the Stewart Heavy Use Area (HUA) Project Implementation in the amount of \$302,313, second by Peace, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve the Growing Greener grant contract for the Heeter Manure Storage (MS) Project Implementation in the amount of \$334,056 second by Peace, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve the Growing Greener grant contract for the McNutt HUA/MS Implementation Project in the amount of \$499,055, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve the Growing Greener grant contract for the Indiana County Riparian Buffers project in the amount of \$25,393, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Long moved to approve the Growing Greener grant contract for the Pine Run Streambank Stabilization Project in the amount of \$247,901, second by Peace, motion carried.

Van Horn moved to hire Elegant Cleaning for ICCD cleaning services at a rate of \$37.50 per hour with an estimated time of 7 to 8 hours per service, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Simpson moved to approve a contract with AutoAgent for Municipay online payment portal solution and purchase of a VP3350 USB-C card reader for \$199, second by Peace, motion carried.

Peace moved to accept the feasibility report from Rural Support Partners, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Long moved to approve the procurement policy as presented, second by Peace, motion carried.

Van Horn moved to award the growing Greener Ag BMP grant contract for Inventory and Evaluation (I&E) design to HRG, not to exceed \$28,640 for development of six I&Es, second by Simpson, motion carried.

Peace moved to approve an agriculture project match policy that establishes the District will reimburse eligible agricultural conservation project costs using available grant funding up to approved project budgets and will not impose discretionary participant match requirements beyond those required by funding sources. Participants remain responsible only for match or cost limits required by grant programs and for any expenses exceeding approved budgets or not eligible for reimbursement. The policy applies specifically to agricultural conservation cost-share projects and does not alter match requirements in other District programs. Second by Long, motion carried with Simpson abstaining.

DISCUSSION

Hess recognized the staff for all the work being done at the Conservation District, and that it is greatly appreciated.

Van Horn reported Indiana County's America's 250 kickoff will be held Wednesday, February 25 at 1:00 pm at the courthouse and he encouraged everyone to attend.

The next Conservation District Board of Directors meeting will be held Tuesday, March 17, 2026, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road, Indiana, PA 15701. Van Horn moved to adjourn the meeting at 10:13 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammie L. Robinson
Administrative Assistant