

**ST. MARY'S SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
December 7, 2017**

CALL TO ORDER: The meeting was called to order at 6:35 pm by Chairman Bobby Cooper. Members in attendance were Stanley Boothe, Donnie Ocker, Jeffrey Raley, and Carl Dyson. Also in attendance were Bruce Young, Haley Carter, Sara Williams, Mike Scheffel, Darrell Goode, Bobby Wise and Rachel Yeatman.

MINUTES: The minutes were previously distributed and read. Motion was made by Stanley Boothe and seconded by Jeffrey Raley to dispense with the reading of the minutes and approve as distributed. Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT: Jeffrey Raley moved to accept the Treasurer's report. Motion seconded by Stanley Booth. The Treasurer's report was accepted.

CORRESPONDENCE:

- Bruce distributed information on the January 10, 2018 Southern Maryland Hay and Pasture Conference. Deadline to register at \$15.00 is January 5th.

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT: Bruce reviewed the District Manager's report and a copy is attached.

The board considered approval of the plans and designs as recommended by the District Manager:

Bill Approvals: Upon motion by Donnie and second by Carl, the bills listed on the District Manager's Report were approved for payment.

E&S Control Plans: Upon motion by Stanley and second by Donnie, the plans listed on the District Manager's Report were approved.

Conservation Plans: Upon motion by Donnie and second by Jeffery, the plans listed on the District Manager's Report were approved.

District Conservationist Report: Rachel informed the board that the new Soil Conservationist, Matt Hobart, started this week. He will be stationed in St. Mary's. EQIP sign-up will end on December 15th and we have approximately 15 projects that should be eligible in St. Mary's for either the local funding pool or the regional pot of money. Bruce mentioned that there was an article in the local paper on Wednesday.

Area Coordinator Report: Mike reported that Byron was initiating a focus group to review issues with the new cover crop SQL program. Haley has been asked to participate with the group. The meeting is scheduled for January 9th. MDA employee evaluations will be held on Thursday, December 14th in the morning. MDA Deputy Secretary, James P. Eichhorst has been selected as the new FSA State Director. The vacant technician position is still pending advertisement and is being held up at DBM.

University of Maryland: No Report.

Farm Bureau: Just came back from the FB annual meeting in Ocean City. St. Mary's Farm Bureau received the silver cup for programs. Bubby Norris received recognition for all of his work with Farm Bureau.

OLD BUSINESS

Holton Pond Update: The reconstruction of Holton Pond Dam on the Patuxent Naval Air Station is about 75% complete. The cast in place riser, pipe, cradle, and a large percentage of the core trench and sand filter are completed. The boat ramp is in and the contractor just finished construction of the dry hydrant. The Dam Safety permit is current based on an email from Charles Wallis, Dam Safety. Mike Russell is inspecting the project and Glenn Gass is the Engineer in Charge of the project. He inspects the critical components of the construction project. With good weather, the contractor expects to have the project completed this year.

Christmas Tree Lighting Event: The temperature was in the 40's with a clear night. We had assistance from two CASE students from the Tech Center, our student intern Madison Raley, and one former Envirothon student from the 2011 team that went to the National Envirothon Rob Lewis. All of the volunteers were needed as we popped corn without stopping from set-up at 3:30 until about 8:30. This was our busiest event ever with 582 bags of Kettle corn sold. With donations we raised \$ 2935.00 for our Envirothon program.

Cooperators Dinner Meeting: We have a signed contract with the Bay District Volunteer Fire Department for Friday, February 2, 2017. The total contract amount of \$1,100.00 has been paid. Bruce asked for input on the meal and the board settled on fried oysters, peeled steamed shrimp, stuffed ham, and fried chicken. We charged \$27.00 per person last year at our 75th anniversary, and unsure of our cost this year, the board upon a motion by Stanley and a second by Jeffrey decided to keep the cost the same this year. Bruce inquired regarding District employee awards and mentioned that John Houser would be a good candidate for the James B. Beavan award and Nancy LaRoche for the outstanding employee award. The board will make a decision at the January meeting.

Ag Center Christmas Luncheon: The luncheon is scheduled for Thursday, December 14th and will start between 11:30 and Noon. Bruce asked the supervisors to contact Sara Williams with items to bring to the lunch or they could pitch in towards the Chick Fil-A platters. Spouses of former supervisors have been contacted to attend.

Cover Crop Fall Certification Numbers: Haley reported to the Board the final fall certification numbers for the 2017/2018 program year. St. Mary's had a total of 70 applications of which 56 fall certified for a total of 5995.4 acres. The fall certification acres are much lower than in past years due to the removal of the commodity option in the program and late soybeans this year. All certifications have been submitted to the MACS office via the SQL program and have been paid and/or approved except 2 that are still under review.

NEW BUSINESS:

Ag Waste Facility Signs: It is a NRCS requirement that warning signs be posted on all completed Ag Waste structures. For individual signs, we have received quotes of \$20.00 per sign. If the signs were purchased in bulk of 25 or 50, they are much cheaper. We currently purchase rodent guards for resale to cooperators and Bruce asked if the District Board would be

interested in doing the same thing for these signs. We build one to two Ag Waste structures per year on average and at that rate it would take 12 years to go through the signs. Some Districts in Western Maryland have signs that they could sell to us at cost, but they were more for liquid manure structures. Bruce will check with the other Southern Maryland District's to see if they would have an interest in going in with us on signs.

NACD Technical Assistance Grant: Bruce has been working with Lindsay Thompson to request funding for a planner utilizing funds offered through NACD. The funding is for one year and a maximum of \$50,000.00 to increase capacity within Districts. The grant requires a match and Byron has agreed to provide the match for selected District's through the 2010 Trust Fund. For a planner, the match amount provided through MDA is \$11,000.00 towards the salary and benefits. Bruce spoke to Lindsay today and she is optimistic that St. Mary's and at least one other District in Maryland will be approved for funding. If these funds are not available next year, MDA will absorb the full funding for these two Districts based on workload.

Request to SMADC-Manure Spreader: A request has been submitted to Shelby Watson-Hampton for \$16,750.00 to purchase a new rear discharge manure spreader. SMADC has scheduled a meeting with representatives from the five Southern Maryland Districts and Farm Bureau's to discuss equipment needs. The meeting will be held on January 4, 2018 from 2 p.m. until 4:00 p.m. at the SMADC office in Hughesville. The old manure spreader will be hauled down to Flat Iron Farm and sold at the next equipment auction. It was felt by the majority of the board members that we would probably receive more at the auction than from the scrap yard. Any proceeds from the sale will go towards the new spreader.

MASCD Winter Meeting: The meeting is scheduled for February 7 & 8, 2018 for Annapolis. As of the meeting a hotel has not been selected. Choices are the Loews, Radisson and Sheraton. The Board of Directors meeting will be all day on the 7th and the legislative visits and luncheon will be on the 8th. Bobby said he will attend both days. Stanley will try to make the luncheon and Carl is interested in attending both days but may commute back and forth. Haley received approval from the Board to attend. As soon as registration material is available, it will be sent out to all supervisors.

Maryland Envirothon Dues: We have received the invoice for the annual Maryland Envirothon dues. This year Districts have an option to pay additional amounts for Silver and Gold recognition. The minimum amount to participate at the state competition remains at \$500.00. Upon a motion by Stanley and second by Jeffrey, the Board unanimously approved paying the annual dues at the Bronze \$500.00 level.

Credit Card Machine Replacement: Our current credit card machine is no longer supported by the leasing company and our user fees are going up. It is old and does not include the latest chip technology. PNC Bank has an option to lease a wireless Clover® device which has all of the latest technology and would allow us to accept credit cards remotely. Lease charges are up to \$56.00 per month for two years. Carl advised that there are high user fees through PNC and suggested we look into the Square®. It is a onetime charge to purchase and the fees to use are considerably less. The only drawback is that you need a cell phone or tablet with a data plan. The board directed staff to look at more options before a decision is made.

OTHER BUSINESS: At 8:00 p.m. a motion was made by Donnie Ocker and seconded by Jeffrey Raley to go into closed session to discuss employee performance evaluations and compensation. All members in attendance voted yea to the motion. Authority to go into closed

session is covered under the Open Meetings Act General Provisions Article § 3 – 305(b) article (1). At 8:30 p.m. a motion was made by Donnie Ocker, seconded by Jeffrey Raley to come out of executive session and return to open session.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Donnie moved to adjourn at 8:35 p.m. Motion seconded by Jeffrey. Motion carried-meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

Bruce Young
Acting Secretary