

Berkshire Conservation District Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, June 2, 2020 at 5:00 PM
Remote Meeting
The call-in number is 1(646) 876-9923. Meeting ID 132436088 #

Minutes from May 5, 2020 Meeting

1. Call to order at 5:02pm, and Determination of Quorum.
Present:
Board members: Adam Galambos, Ron Kujawski, David Ellis, Donna Kittredge, Ned Kirchner
Program Administrator: Cynthia Grippaldi
NRCS representative: Gary Blazejewski
Public call-in: Jane Obbagy
2. NRCS District Conservationist comments from Gary Blazejewski
Gary said the NRCS is gearing up for their funding round already. They have pre-approved 20 to 22 applications ranging from forestry to soil health to livestock. Rachel Phillips from NRCS in NH is a soil scientist and is Gary's new boss. Gary also defined the Unfunded Cooperative Agreement which is that NRCS can set the requirements for resources sharing with BCD. Ned asked Gary if another supervisor could have access to the office in the event Cynthia is not available. That person would need a background check. Discussion to be continued.
3. **Secretary's Report** – Submitted by Donna Kittredge
Review and approval of April 9th minutes. Ned motioned with to accept with 2 corrections, second by David. All in favor.
4. **Treasurer's Report** – Submitted by David Ellis
 - There was an \$820 deposit for No-till rental; \$320 for credit union membership; \$1.50 for Viridian; \$850 for the audit. Expenses were \$4,634.30, Income was \$1,141.50, Net Income was -3492.80, Checking Balance as of last day of April was \$5,832.70. See Treasurer's Report for more info.
 - Liability insurance is to insure the equipment.
 - Ned asked for clarification on the checking balance as of which date.
 - The BCC Scholarship will be mailed in time for the graduation ceremony scheduled for May 28.Move by Ned to accept Treasurer's Report with one change to the checking balance. Second by Ron. All in favor.
5. Call-in: Jane O'Baggy, ExecutiveD of MACD — congratulated all on the new website and content.
6. District Supervisors
 - Cynthia and Ned have been trying to reach Holly to clarify her intentions to continue as a board supervisor.
 - Adam knows Greg Caprone (teacher by day, farmer by night) whose interests lie in farming, maple sugaring, and cattle. Alaina Tracer runs MCLA Green Living Seminars and she may

have some names of people interested in serving on the board. Adam will take a look at the website in regard to attracting supervisors and associates.

- Ron thought of a possible person who is trying to start a small vegetable business in Richmond who might have interest in serving.
- Ron spoke with Tom who said it would be great if BCD could send a representative to the State Commission meeting. The meetings are in January, April, July and October. The next meeting will be remote. Jane suggested we try to tap in via conference call as it's a long distance for us to travel to Westboro.

7. Program Status

- Mike has yet to send a proposal for storage of the No-till seeder. We've had two rentals for 2020 season. We need to spend the dollars from the No-till grant by the end of June 2020. That money could be spent on delivery, maintenance and storage but Mike needs to get a proposal to us which we would need to vote on. The thinking was that No-till would become self-generating program and that rentals would pay for the program. It was determined that rentals are lower than expected on account of the saturation of fields. Talk of advertising the No-till will be continued. Adam suggested we should hold out and see what good weather brings. Ron suggested it would be great to get a farmer on the board for networking.
- Adam worked on a small solar grant proposal and a couple of things worked really for promotion — a radio spot on WANW that played on partner stations, and newspaper print ads which go on their websites as well. Adam suggested we work on a plan for advertising the No-till.
- Pioneer Valley inquired about renting the No-till and Cynthia directed them to our website. Ron suggested we might share the No-till with 4 counties as one county may be drier than another. Adam suggested we get feedback from the farmers and possibly a testimonial we can use on our website. It was suggested we give farmers a survey after the rental.
- Out of the 80+ No-till promo cards that were mailed, we only received two bad addresses.
- Nutrient Management update — Cynthia is doing basic research. There are a tremendous number of part-time operators who don't know the requirements for managing nutrient load which is required and can be enforced. Gary will dig into how NRCS can help educate small operators to learn what the state is looking for regarding compliance.

8. Program Administrator Update — Submitted by Cynthia Grippaldi

- Cynthia brought up the need to meet remotely about our Work Plan and mission. She sent out a draft which is on google drive. We need to find a date and time that works for all to brainstorm remotely.
- Payment on all of our insurance policies has come up — Cynthia paid the no-till equipment insurance. The liability policy which was going to be canceled but because of COVID, they decided to keep covering us. She paid \$792 Workman's Comp. Reimbursement was sent to Tom.
- Small pollinator grant — they had a few questions regarding equity of community. They will make the decision by mid May for the grant totaling \$3,500. When they do fund it, they write a check and recipients write a report about how they used it.

9. New Business —

- Ned asked since we had a public call-in for the May 5 meeting, should we add an Open Public Comment under our Call to Order and it was decided to do that going forward. Add it under #2 Call to Order, and include that the meeting is being recorded for note taking. Then add Open Public Comment Period, have whoever is chairing say this is the time to state your comments but there won't be time for deliberation. This will precede Gary's report so he can hear what the public is saying.
- Adam suggested that we move the Upcoming Meetings blurb from the bottom of the Agenda page to the top and include the call-in number for the remote meetings.

10. Comments and Announcements —

- Adam talked about the \$250 BCD scholarship provided to a BCC student who plans to attend a 4-year college to study environmental science or a related field. The scholarship can also be used to pay for the student's final year at BCC. It had been voted on in the past. Since it has been awarded every year, Ned asked if we should vote that it goes through every year unless a board member has an issue. In the past, a BCD representative has gone to BCC to deliver it. Adam will reach out to the Director of Development at BCC to discuss. This year, the check can be mailed or paid online to BCC.
- NACD in D.C. asked us to become members. Membership fees range from \$1 to \$3,000. Ned said we became members for \$500, then in subsequent years we paid in the \$25 range. David will look into the history. They encourage us to pay \$700. Ned mentioned we've sent members to the annual national convention in the past.
- May 29 is the deadline to send in the 2-page application to Tom for the next round of funding. This is for the basic grant and Part 2 of the Nutrient Management plan will be submitted, as well. The grant is awarded in December for fiscal year '21.
- Mass Envirothon teams of high school students compete on environmental topics throughout the state. BCD has helped get participation from Berkshire schools. It was canceled this year. David wanted to know if it was relevant for the work plan as it has fallen by the wayside. To be discussed when we talk about BCD's role in the community.
- Ned would like to see more ag in the classroom.

11. Adjournment — Adam read the Upcoming Events/Meetings blurb for the recording. At 7:01pm, Ned motioned to adjourn. Second by Dave. All in favor.

Upcoming Events/Meetings:

Berkshire Conservation District Supervisor meetings are scheduled for the first Tuesday of each month. Meetings are usually held at 78 Center St., Suite 206, Pittsfield, MA 01201. Until restrictions are lifted for social isolation due to COVID-19, the next meeting will be held remotely on Tuesday, June 2, 2020 by dialing in at 1(646) 876-9923 Meeting ID 132436088 #.