

**Berkshire Conservation District
Meeting Minutes for
Wednesday, September 6, 2023
at 5:30 pm**

This meeting was held via Zoom

1. Adam called the meeting to order at 5:33pm and there was a quorum.
Present: Supervisors: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), David Ellis (Treasurer), Donna Kittredge (Secretary), Ned Kirchner, Ambrose Clausen (Healthy Soil/No-Till Coordinator), Cynthia Grippaldi (Program Administrator) and Dan Harris

2. Public Comment Period
There were no comments from the public.

3. Report from NRCS Representative -
Sylvia Muniz spoke about some of the contracts. The 2024 dates have not been approved yet. The first sign up will be for the Conservation Stewardship program and she asked if we know of anyone who might be interested in this program. She asked us about the MOU. Adam mentioned the Civil Rights Responsibility for Partners that we need to sign. He mentioned that the way districts work with NRCS has changed and he asked Sylvia for clear direction of what she needs from us. Ned mentioned that about 10 years ago, every 2-3 years the MOU was signed by both the District and NRCS. Sylvia will talk with her supervisor about this. Adam would like to meet with Sylvia to discuss our proposed grant activity and what we can do to benefit NRCS while we're out promoting and engaging with the public.

4. Secretary's Report – Submitted by Donna Kittredge
 1. Review and approval of August 2, 2023 Meeting Minutes. Adam made a motion that we do not review the August 2023 minutes and we vote on them during the October 2023 meeting, seconded by Ned. All in favor.

5. Treasurer's Report – Submitted by David Ellis
 1. Review and approval of July 2023 Treasurer's Report
See the July 2023 Treasurer's Report. We exceeded our expectations on the Plant Sale with a preliminary number of \$4,750. In 2022, we broke even. Ned made a motion to postpone the approval of these minutes until we find the discrepancy in the amount of \$1,500, seconded by Adam. All in favor.

Last month we spoke about engaging with a bookkeeper. Adam believes we have outgrown spread sheets. David feels that with the number of grants and reports for two contract laborers that the bookkeeping is beyond his skill. He does not want to be responsible for people's pay. He's all for transferring this to a bookkeeper.

Tom sent an email about filing for reimbursement. Cynthia, Adam and Megan understood that the money could be drawn against it till end of fiscal year '24 or into 2025. They spoke with Tom and he advised us as such that we need to forward him a

copy of our board resolution which was signed on May 3 2023. It stated that we will established the Healthy soils contract in the amount of \$25,000 and it was designated for Healthy Soils only.

6. Program Status/Actions

1. Fall 2023 Plant Sale - Lou

1. Recap and debrief

Adam said the Plant Sale was a smashing success and thanked everyone for assisting, especially Lou. Lou has shared that she wants to step down as the Plant Sale coordinator as she has a lot of commitments. Ambrose is interested in the position but needs to talk with discuss it with his other employer. That job may be ending in May 2024.

Cynthia sent a file for the debrief and there are a number of suggestions on it. Ron said he would like to see the Master Gardeners there again. They brought a poster that contained important information pertaining to native plants.

2. Healthy Soil/No-Till Program – report by Ambrose Clausen

1. Reporting of the past month

Ambrose reported he will be attending an event in Hampshire county and will talk with folks about our seed drill. We have 3 rentals that will give us almost 200 acres in September. They are outside Berkshire county. He wants to talk with Mike about the health of the drill and how putting 200 acres on it will have an impact. He asked for support from us when talking with Mike who is concerned about the towing.

2. Rental activity

Mike finally signed the indemnity agreement. If the caretaker agreement is in effect, the indemnity agreement should be in effect. They should both be one. They are both annual contracts. Adam can send it to Courtney for comment.

7. District Administrator Updates

1. MACD presentation at Oct. meeting - Statewide Local Working Group

Cynthia reminded us that MACD wants to do a presentation at our October meeting.

2. July B&I request for reimbursement submitted \$5,540.58. Cynthia has submitted the July, 2023 reimbursement with August to follow.

8. New Business/Actions

1. Annual Meeting - planning and set date. Last couple of years we did it virtually. Last year was in November. We decided on Thursday, November 9th, time tbd. We need to discuss having it be hybrid, remote, location, and do we need a speaker. There is a stipend for the speaker.

2. Hiring a Bookkeeper - discussion with David and supported by Adam and Cynthia. Cynthia and Adam sent an FY24 proposal. They crafted a reasonable and achievable proposal to further healthy soils funded through this pot of money. It's a public outreach campaign utilizing biochar.

3. Migration to Quickbooks Online Adam tabled this.

Adam asked if we used to have software and why did we not continue using it. Ned said Quicken was previously used. Cynthia said there was a history of a Quick Books account but she did not pursue it. David said Quick Books would track numbers much better. It's \$60/month for basic. Ned suggested we get a bookkeeper first and hear what the bookkeeper likes for a software products. Adam said in his experience, most bookkeepers are Quickbook proficient. Cynthia has a bookkeeper who is interested in the position. We will offer \$20-25/hour. David is thinking 4 to 8 hours weekly. David made the motion that we move forward to hire a bookkeeper, seconded by Donna. All in favor.

4. Update from MACD on digital payment challenges
MACD has been made aware that we are unable to get a Venmo account that is not tied to one of our social security numbers. No other platform will work for us without a SS#.

9. Old Business
There was no old business to discuss.

10. Supervisor/Staff Comments and/or Announcements
Cynthia will be away starting tomorrow, September 7 and returning beginning of next week.

11. Confirm date of next Supervisor meeting Oct. 4 @ 5:30pm, via Zoom.

12. Adjournment
Ned made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 7:16pm, seconded by David. All in favor.