

## **Berkshire Conservation District**

### **Meeting Minutes February 12, 2025**

The Berkshire Conservation District convened a virtual Supervisors Meeting. Members of the public were invited to attend via Zoom at the link above and were welcomed to speak only during the public comment period.

#### **1.4:30 Call to order and Determination of Quorum - Adam Galambos**

There was a quorum, and Adam convened the meeting at 4:37pm. Present: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), Donna Kittredge (Secretary), Ned Kirchner, Dave Klimowitz, Ambrose Clausen (Program Manager), Cynthia Grippaldi (District Administrator), Jill Wenner (Strategic Program Assistant), Max Prum, and Kaliegh Walther (NRCS).

#### **2.4:45 Public Comment Period**

There were no members of the public present.

**3. 4:50 Report from NRCS Representative** - Kaliegh Walther, Acting District Conservationist Kaliegh gave us the updated list for applications. Two planners from the Amherst office are coming to the Pittsfield office during the week. The Pittsfield office is staffed five days a week. There is no information yet about long-term staffing.

#### **4. 5:00 Secretary's Report** – Submitted by Donna Kittredge

Ron made a motion to accept the January 8, 2025 Meeting Minutes with one edit, seconded by Ned. There was a roll-call and all were in favor.

#### **5. 5:05 Treasurer's Report** – Submitted by Lynn Browne

Lynn said there's nothing new to report. Ron made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report, seconded by Adam. There was a roll-call and all were in favor.

#### **6. 5:15 Program/Grant Updates** - Ambrose Clausen

##### **a. FY24 B&I Grant 'Resilient Soils Campaign' update**

Farmer Dinner — five farmers were in attendance at Bounti Fare in Adams. The farmers are doing biochar and composting and are applying to NRCS for funding. Everyone learned something and all expressed interest in attending for more discussion and sharing feedback. Consensus from the farmers is that they would like to spread lime. Ambrose will organize another event.

Muddy Brook School has chosen four dates for April and three dates in May when they will be doing art projects based on soil microbes. Ambrose will attend one of the classes. MAPS (Music Arts Puppets Sound) will be working with the students.

b. Challenge Grant 1 update

Ambrose has three events with dates tbd. He would like to put up \$4,000 for compost reimbursement after soil testing is done.

c. No-Till update

Ambrose is working on a new contract for the new 5607 drill with the same legal language for past rental seasons. He will start an advertising push for it at the beginning of March. He had new no-till postcards printed.

d. EEA FY25 B&I and Challenge Grant 2 status

We are waiting to hear back about these two grants which are under state control.

e. Mass Ag in the Classroom - partner and match

Ambrose proposes that BCD match the \$1,500 state grant.

f. Strategic Planning

g. BCD Long-range work plan

Max asked if we are doing anything about the hemlock wooly adelgid and diseased beech trees. Conservation districts can form subcommittees that can expand what we do.

## **7. 5:45 New Business**

a. Review BCD Mission

Jill suggested that the long-range plan which is a good model has an expansive mission statement that could be adopted in some fashion. For future funding opportunities, it would be helpful to have an updated mission statement. There's a time issue based on a grant that Ambrose will discuss. Ron suggested we focus more on agriculture and soil management. Expand it to outreach and education and mention the plants sale somehow but not specifically. Jill and Ambrose will work on a rewrite. There will be a long-range plan available to vote on at March meeting.

b. NACD Urban and Community Agriculture Conservation Grant Initiative

Ambrose has been looking at the NACD grants that are due on April 1. There are two grants available — one for \$10,000 and one for \$75,000. They allow activities under energy, water, soil health, and, animal and human impact. Fifty percent of the budget covers staff and speakers. There is a matching component of 25%. This is one of our best opportunities. NACD requires working with at least one partner. Ambrose would like to identify a couple of organizations that would support us and match funds and he has many ideas. Ned suggested we leverage what we've written about biochar/composting and expand what we're doing — not put additional efforts on the table at this time.

c. MACD \$100 membership invoice

Cynthia suggested we have given them a lot of in-kind assistance. Donna made a motion to send \$30 to

MACD for membership, seconded by Ron. There was a roll-call, and all were in favor

**8. 6:10 Supervisor/Staff Comments and/or Announcements**

On January 24, Jill attended a half-day workshop on climate change (CISA). There were farmers attending with four presenters, two from CISA, one from AFT, and one from UMass. The workshop was geared for farmers to share their climate stories and talk with others about the problems of climate change. With farmers telling their stories, it helps emphasize the importance of buying local. Solutions to climate change rely on communities and local food for resilience. Jill wrote an article for our January newsletter.

Cynthia thanked the board for the recent review and asked if there were any comments. The comments were that she has been and continues to do a great job.

**9. Schedule March Supervisor meeting**

The next meeting will be on March 12 at 4:30pm via Zoom.

**10. 6:15 Motion to Adjourn Meeting**

Donna made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:11pm, seconded by Ned. There was a roll-call and all were in favor.