

BCD Supervisor Meeting Minutes

Thursday, November 14, 2024 starting at 4:30pm

The Berkshire Conservation District held a Supervisors Meeting in a hybrid format. Members of the public were invited to attend via a Zoom link and were welcome to speak during the public comment period.

1. Call to order and Determination of Quorum - Adam Galambos

There was a quorum, and Adam convened the meeting at 4:38pm. Present: Adam Galambos (Chair), Ron Kujawski (Vice Chair), Donna Kittredge (Secretary), Ned Kirchner, Ambrose Clausen (Program Manager), Cynthia Grippaldi (District Administrator), Dave Kimowitz and Jocelyn Latvalla (BRPC). There was a roll call, and all supervisors were present.

2. Public Comment Period

Jocelyn Latvalla from the BRPC attended and was here to learn more about the District.

3. Report from NRCS Representative —

There was no representative available from NRCS. There have been staffing changes at the Pittsfield NRCS office.

4. Secretary's Report – Submitted by Donna Kittredge

-Review and approval of October 8, 2024 Meeting Minutes

Ron made a motion to accept the October Meeting Minutes, seconded by Ned. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.

5. Treasurer's Report – Submitted by Lynn Browne

-Review and approval of Treasurer's Report

We paid off most of the big expenses — the loan on the new equipment, grants are in good shape financially and we have a good amount of savings. The audit is close to done. Ned suggested using caution in spending until we see what happens with federal funding under the new administration. Lynn said we should be in good shape through fiscal year 2026. Donna made a motion to accept the October Treasurer's Report, seconded by Ned. There was a roll call, and all were in favor.

6. Program/Grant Update

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

Ambrose is working on a webinar for this winter at American Farmland Trust. Sara Keleman is the biochar person at AFT.

We will continue to focus on soil health and soil pH. Ned asked how we will differentiate

ourselves from information that already exists. A proposed survey will help us engage with farmers who have yet to use the no-till. It may be largely about pH, but issues may come from it. Lynn asked if our soil experts at UMass are available to help craft the survey. Ambrose has a verbal agreement with Sam Corcoran of the UMass Soil Lab to assist us with results from the survey. We also plan to budget for more support personnel.

We will partner with Pittsfield community gardens and will provide funding to them for composting, invasive removal, native plants and we will be involved with Woven Roots Farm. Ambrose is working on a webinar with American Farmland Trust and NRCS on biochar. He is also working on three workshops, spring, summer and the third date tbd.

b. Challenge Grant (Round 2) is due Tuesday. Ambrose took the lead on this grant. We will be increasing personnel to assist Ambrose and Cynthia.

c. No-Till update — we had 13 renters in three states covering 625.5 acres using the Esch #5512 (large drill) and 2 renters covering 13 acres using the Esch #5607 (smaller drill). Ned suggested contacting FSA as they would advertise our two drills in their newsletter.

d. Proposals for FY25 B&I and Challenge Grant RFRs from EEA — (See Item A)

e. Strategic Program Assistant position — Cynthia crafted a job description, and we will put it on our website and send it to the recipients of our newsletter, as well.

f. Annual Meeting Date — we decided to meet on December 9 at Jae's, time tbd. The NRCS update has traditionally occurred at the Annual Meeting. We will combine our regular meeting with the Annual Meeting. We will stay after the meetings to socialize over dinner.

g. Urgent Supervisor Recruitment — Lynn suggested advertising at the colleges (Bard, Williams, BCC) to try to attract young people. Ambrose suggested posting at BBG and Monterey Community Garden. Donna will talk with Jane Winn at BEAT. Ron will contact Dave Long who was one of his students.

7. Supervisor/Staff Comments and/or Announcements

a. Office space — we need a storage unit and a meeting space. Lynn suggested looking into Greylock Glen as they have an ecological use space that may be available for meetings or events. The NRCS office is still available for meeting space, but we need to be out of the building by 5:15pm when security leaves.

8. Motion to Adjourn Meeting

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