



**Catoctin Board Meeting
Tuesday, February 21, 2023- 9:00 AM
Burkittsville Ruritan**

In attendance: Supervisors: B. Sowers, J. Falkenstein, J. Orlowski, E. Arnold, A. Holter. Associates: W. Shafer, B. Brennan, R. Grossnickle. District Manager, H. Hutchinson. Soil Conservation Coordinator, K. McAfee. Additional Guests: Frederick County Office of Economic Development, Becca Tucker. NRCS, Brent Cammauf. Guest, George Stauffer.

Meeting called to order by B. Sowers at 9:02 AM.

Minutes approved as presented by motion: A. Holter, second by J. Falkenstein. All in agreement.

Treasurer's Report approved as presented by motion: J. Falkenstein, second by A. Holter. All in agreement.

Expenses for the month approved as presented by motion: J. Falkenstein, second by J. Orlowski. All in agreement.

1. **Bank Account Reconciliation** Motion to accept the Bank Account Reconciliation report as is by J. Falkenstein, second by A. Holter.

Old Business:

1. H. Hutchinson reported on the ongoing petition to merge the boards. There are currently forty signatures for Frederick and twelve signatures for Catoctin.
2. H. Hutchinson reported that she along with W. Shafer, B. Sowers, and J. Falkenstein attended the MASCD Winter Meeting in Annapolis, MD.
 - I. They were shown a new ag lease builder tool online for farmers and landowners can build draft leases. <https://agleasebuilder.org>
 - II. The Healthy Soils Grant application closes on March 3rd. There is a limit of \$50,000/farm.
 - III. Dwight Dotterer reported that food waste residuals must be incorporated same day or injection with October 31st being the last day to spread food residuals. Incorporation is defined at 95% coverage. Farmers can start topdressing fertilizer N on small grain on February 15. There are currently 7 vacant nutrient management planner positions in extension. MDA will identify staff who will write NM plans and those SCDs can apply for a license.
 - IV. Byron Petrauskas reported that MDA will be sending out budget a budget request template in February to be returned in March, sending an MOU to each SCD in April that will need to be returned in May, executing the MOU in June.
 - V. Jason Keppler provided the MACS Annual Report. The Conservation Buffer Initiative has included an option for \$330/acre for buffer maintenance and a \$1000/acre bonus for tree planting. The \$1000/acre buffer is also available for CREP plantings.
3. H. Hutchinson reported on the "Digging Deeper into Soil Health" event. 139 people attended and there has been very positive feedback.
4. H. Hutchinson reported on Legislative Day at the New Midway Firehall. Great turnout from farmers and legislators as well as county legislators.

Current Business:

1. An Ag Exemption Request from Bill Brennan and George Stauffer was brought to the floor.
 - I. Bill Brennan and George Stauffer explained the site with provided plans and their intentions.



- II. After discussion, John Falkenstein moved to approve with contingencies: The SCD comments on the sediment and erosion control plan must be addressed, complete a formal Ag Exemption Application, and the property must have a Soil Conservation Water Quality Plan, second by A. Holter. All in Agreement.
2. H. Hutchinson brought forward an Ag Exemption Request for Robert Myers, at the request of the Frederick Board. The request was for Catoctin to make a recommendation to Frederick regarding the exemption to avoid a conflict of interest due to R. Myers position as a supervisor on the Frederick Board.
 - I. The Catoctin Board gives no recommendation as it is out of their district.
3. H. Hutchinson reached out to Keller and Stonebreaker Insurance to inquire about Director and Officers insurance.
4. H. Hutchinson reported that she has still not heard from HR is regards to the position reclassification. This was addressed in an email to the County Executive.
5. H. Hutchinson spoke on nutrient management planning at the SCD. MDA determined that the SCD's would write nutrient management plans, but she hasn't received any direction from MDA. In an email to the County Executive, Heather requested that the county fund a NM plan writer and locate that position in the extension office. A permanent, benefited position may be more attractive than the current contractual model. An alternative approach would be for the SCD to hire a NM plan writer and charge for plans to help offset the salary. If the State offered cost share for NM planning services this might be a palatable option.
6. There has been no formal policy written for meeting reimbursement. Continue to ask for permission before event if possible. If after, board will approve or deny.
7. H. Hutchinson reported that at the January Frederick Board Meeting it was discussed to place an ad for both districts in Homegrown Frederick magazine. K. McAfee shared a sample ad.
 - I. Board does not want to place ad, but final decision to be made at the March meeting.
8. The district would like to purchase an iPad for the urban technicians to allow them to view plans in the field. H. Hutchinson provided pricing from Verizon, Comcast, or Apple.
 - I. J. Orłowski moved to purchase an iPad, second by A. Holter. All in agreement.
9. K. McAfee and H. Hutchinson have been investigating database management systems and have met with Salesforce, Sparkhound, CES, and the county.
 - I. J. Orłowski reported that Salesforce is a backed company with a great system.
10. H. Hutchinson reported that she included a copy of the MOU with the county in each board members folders. If you have any changes to suggest, please email them to H. Hutchinson.
11. B. Sowers reported on a policy that is done by Farm Bureau about standards of conduct.
 - I. Review MASCD for any insight on a code of conduct for the district board members.

Committee Reports:

- **RC&D:** No Report.
- **Info/Education:** No Report.
- **Awards:** No Report
- **Legislative:** No Report.
- **Ag Complex:** No Report.



Communications: H. Hutchinson presented a 'Thank You' from the MD FFA for the districts donation. The county has invited the district via email to participate in the 275th celebration on June 10th at Utica Park and have invited us to have a table.

Conservation Plans: B. Cammauf reviewed plans for signature involving ag land preservation. The new state conservationist and assistant state conservationist have started in their respective positions - they are working remotely as the lease for the State office was not extended.

Cooperating Agencies (MDA, Extension):

1. B. Tucker reported that on March 1st ag innovation grants open. Farmers looking to expand or diversify their operations can apply for funding. Information on the program, including how to apply, is available online from the Frederick County Office of Economic Development at http://www.DiscoverFrederickMd.com/ag_innovation_grant
2. B. Tucker presented each board member with an invite to the Frederick County Processing Facility Community Meeting being held on March 8th at 1pm at the Frederick Fair Office.
3. M. Townsend presented a handout of important extension dates to remember.
 - I. M. Townsend is interested in developing a central MD crop report to provide information on pest pressure, yield, etc. He is looking for fields to scout. Information would be generalized and field locations and producer information would not be shared.

Urban Report: Handout provided.

Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 21, 2023 at 9:00 AM held at the Burkittsville Ruritan.

Adjournment: Motion made by J. Falkenstein and second by A. Holter to adjourn the regular meeting at 11:20AM. All in agreement.

*Closed Session

Minutes recorded by Kendra McAfee