

Chairperson Sherene Hess called the meeting of the Indiana County Conservation District to order on Tuesday, February 21, 2023, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road in Indiana. Other Directors present were Craig Andrie, Janis Long, Barbara Peace, and Gregg VanHorn. Directors absent: Aaron Simpson and Richard Stumpf.

Also present: Douglas Beri Jr. – Executive Director, Tammie Robinson – Administrative Assistant attending virtually, Benjamin Wenger – Watershed Specialist, Alexis Shank – Agriculture Conservation Assistance Program (ACAP) Coordinator, Marisa Matlin – Conservation Program Specialist, Monica Lee-District Educator, Larissa Bohn and Emily Rahalla-AmeriCorps, Tom Beresnyak, Doyle Freeman, Sarah King, Hunter Overdorff, Alysha Trexler, and John Somonick - Associate Directors, and Matt Heffner – USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service.

PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

VanHorn moved to approve consent agenda items including accepting minutes of the previous meeting as presented, treasurer’s report to be filed subject to audit, correspondence, DEP delegated programs reports and staff reports, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Due to Andrie acting on January 2023 payment of bills that he should have abstained from, Andrie requested the motion be rescinded and reconsidered. Peace moved to rescind the January 2023 approval of payment of bills, second by VanHorn, motion carried. The January and February 2023 bills were reviewed and Long moved to approve payment of the bills as presented, second by VanHorn, motion carried with Andrie abstaining.

DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DELEGATED PROGRAMS REPORT

Two erosion and sediment control plans were reviewed, and two Chapter 102 site inspections were conducted.

STAFF/PROGRAM ACTIONS AND REQUESTS - none

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS - none

In addition to his submitted written report, Overdorff reported the PA legislative session is underway a week sooner than planned.

King reported Friends of White’s Woods has a webinar planned for February 23 on managing natural forests in urban areas.

Trexler reported riparian buffer planting season is approaching and she offered support to our new District staff members on projects.

Somonoick reported he is watching to see what develops over a proposal for poultry farmers to be permitted to eradicate Canada Geese around their property due to avian flu issues. However, Canada Geese are federally protected.

FIELD REPRESENTATIVE’S REPORT

Suzanna Harris submitted a written report prior to the meeting. Hess reiterated a portion of Harris’ report regarding the requirement for all board members to submit their annual Statement of Financial Interests reports to Robinson by May 1.

COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

Beresnyak reviewed a list of workshops being offered by Penn State Extension.

Beri reported there are issues with the Friends of Indiana County Conservation District's IRS 501c3 status and he is continuing to work toward a resolution.

Heffner reported NRCS is waiting on Environmental Quality Improvement Project (EQIP) funds to start rolling out. Additional funds are expected to be added to the initial allocation.

COMMITTEE REPORTS - none

OLD BUSINESS

Andrie moved to disqualify CNC Construction, Inc., Open Systems Pittsburgh LLC, Mashan Inc., and Newman Plumbing, Inc. from bidding on future ICCD projects based on documented and continued deficiencies with the ICCD building project, second by Long, motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS

No nutrient management plans are currently under review. No plans were presented for approval.

Andrie moved to accept a \$100 donation from Jim Resh for the ICCD Educational Center fund, and \$100 from Stiffler McGraw for the Envirothon Education Fund, second by Peace, motion carried.

Andrie moved to appoint Alysha Trexler, Tom Beresnyak Jr., Doyle Freeman, Sara King, Hunter Overdorff, Cindy Rogers, John Somonick, and Joe Yackuboskey as ICCD Associate Directors for 2023, second by Long, motion carried.

Long moved to approve the ACAP Committee recommended policies and program documents that include ACAP application and associated documents, application for ICCD technical assistance for plan writing and fee; ACAP program ranking criteria; ACAP program cost share percentages; and ACAP grantee agreement, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Andrie moved to approve the contractual agreement with Gibson Thomas Engineering for the canopy walk project final design, final budget, permitting, bid and construction documents, construction inspection and certification, project management and meetings in the amount of \$9,000, second by Peace, motion carried.

Long moved to authorize Beri and Robinson to access and receive information about ICCD accounts with First Commonwealth Bank, second by Andrie, motion carried. A letter will be sent to Treasury Management for the account files.

DISCUSSION

A salary and benefits study has been commissioned by the PA Association of Conservation Districts to study private sector and Conservation District salaries and benefits in order to give Districts insight into what they are competing with to source and retain quality staff.

The next Conservation District Board of Directors meeting will be held Tuesday, March 21, 2023, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road, Indiana, PA 15701. The meeting adjourned at 10:04 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammie L. Robinson
Administrative Assistant