

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

Also present: Douglas Beri Jr. – Executive Director, Tammie Robinson – Office Administrator, Benjamin Wenger – Conservation Program Specialist, Alexis Shank – ACAP Coordinator, Marisa Matlin – Conservation Program Specialist, Aislinn Slausenhaupt-District Educator, Blake Mauthe and Allison Smith-AmeriCorps, Kyle Wirick – PA Fish and Boat Commission Waterways Conservation Officer, Commissioners Mike Keith and Robin Gorman, Tom Beresnyak, Charles Flinn, Doyle Freeman, Sarah King, Hunter Overdorff, John Somonick, and Alysha Trexler-Associate Directors.

#### PUBLIC COMMENTS - none

Simpson 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 VanHorn, motion carried.

Long motioned to pay the bills as presented, second by Simpson, motion carried with Andrie abstaining.

#### DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION DELEGATED PROGRAMS REPORT

Four erosion and sediment control plans were reviewed, and three Chapter 102 site inspections were conducted.

#### ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR REPORTS

Trexler reported she has worked with new District staff on riparian buffer planting and offered to help guide them with their projects.

Flinn reported the IUP arboretum is going into phase II, which includes the area below the Hilton Garden Inn. This phase involves hiring an engineering firm to survey and delineate wetlands and drill and test for hazmat chemicals on site.

Somonick praised District staff for the good job holding a beer brewing workshop and thanked Barb Peace for providing and donating the food. Also praised Applefest and other outreach events recently held by the District.

King reported the Friends of Whites Woods recently removed over 1000 invasive Japanese Barberry plants via the plant invaders program.

#### FIELD REPRESENTATIVE'S REPORT

Suzanna Harris provided a written report prior to the meeting

#### COOPERATING AGENCY REPORTS

Beresnyak reported on available Penn State Extension on-line webinars.

Beri reported the Friends of Indiana County Conservation District held their annual Thank a Farmer Dash to raise funds for the farmer financial assistance fund. The event raised enough funds to cover the costs of the event, fund 2024 grants, with a little excess to jump start next year's event.

#### COMMITTEE REPORTS

Beri reported the Personnel Committee met prior to the board meeting and the report will come later in the meeting.

OLD BUSINESS - none

NEW BUSINESS

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

Andrie motioned to accept a \$50 donation from Joe and Arlene Yackuboskey for the Envirothon Education Grant fund, and \$1,000 from the Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh for Jr. Envirothon event expenses, second by Long, motion carried.

Long moved to approve the purchase of a Kubota tractor from Walker and Walker Equipment, including backhoe and brush hog attachments using Co-Stars pricing of \$24,688.70, second by VanHorn, motion carried.

Long moved to approve Joece Lynn for a 1200-hour AmeriCorps position beginning December 11, 2023, and ending August 2, 2024, second by Andrie, motion carried.

VanHorn moved to accept a PA Department of Agriculture Urban Infrastructure Grant for \$33,788, second by Andrie, motion carried.

VanHorn moved to approve the 2024 budget as presented and recommended by the budget committee, second by Andrie, motion carried.

Long moved to approve the Personnel Committee recommendations for 2023 end of year performance bonuses of \$1250 for staff with a prorated amount for Slaugenhaupt of \$312.50, and \$250 holiday bonuses for staff and AmeriCorps, second by VanHorn, motion carried.

Action on the Brad Overdorff ACAP project is postponed due to bids coming in too high.

Andrie moved to approve an advance payment of 30% of the ACAP contract amount to Dave & Melissa George in the amount of \$71,350, second by VanHorn, motion carried.

Andrie moved to acknowledge Stewart Fencing and Excavating's bid of \$50,936.90 for the Tyler Overdorff ACAP project as the lowest responsible bidder, second by VanHorn, motion carried.

Andrie moved, to accept all the following DRLVR program actions:

1. Approve a Low Volume Contract amendment for LV2202 Brush Valley Township, Spruce Hollow Road for \$1,281.46 for an additional drop box for a new grant total of \$6,438.46.
2. Approve a revised Dirt & Gravel Road project contract for DR2302 East Mahoning Township, Steele Road Project for a new grant total of \$142,164.
3. Approve up to 50% cash advances for the following projects:
  - DR2213 Cherry Tree Borough, High Street Project for \$33,864
  - DR2301 East Mahoning Township, Black Road for \$38,405
  - DR2302 East Mahoning Township, Steele Road for \$71,082
  - DR2303 Green Township, Railroad Street Project for \$16,740
  - DR2304 Green Township, Vanderbilt Street Project for \$6,087
  - DR2307 West Mahoning Township, Griffith Road Project for \$25,361
  - LV2301 Buffington Township, South Factory Hollow Road Project for \$65,798,

second by Long, motion carried.

Beri reported if ICCD has met the DGLVR program five-year spending requirement by December 1, 2023, this could open an opportunity to ICCD to apply for additional funds that have been disencumbered by another Conservation District.

DISCUSSION

Beri serves on the NACD/NACDE board, and he requested acknowledgement of his attendance at the NACD/NACDE Annual Meeting in February in San Diego, CA. Acknowledged.

Beri reported ACAP training was recently held and attended by District staff. It was revealed the Technical Assistance allocation portion of the ACAP program permits the purchase of equipment that can be loaned to our farmers. Staff are working to obtain quotes on a no-till drill to create a rental program. It would likely be on a first come first served basis, modeled after other conservation districts who have established programs. Staff were encouraged to work out where the equipment would be stored, who would transport it, who would maintain it, etc., prior to purchasing.

The next Conservation District Board of Directors meeting will be held Tuesday, December 19, 2023, at 9:30 am at 435 Hamill Road, Indiana, PA 15701. The meeting adjourned at 10:09 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Tammie L. Robinson  
Administrative Assistant