

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes for Monthly Board of Directors Meeting Tuesday, July 8, 2025, 7:00 PM (In-Person & Virtual)

Joel Geiger, Chairman, called the Board meeting to order at 7:02 PM with the following Board Members, staff, and guests in attendance:

Joel Geiger, Chairman	Brian Fulmer – Vice Chairman	Will Carpenter, Treasurer*
Rich DiFebo, Director	Jeffrey Warren, County Council	Nate Pritchard, DM
Carrie Cevicelow, Staff	Jim Lawrence, Staff*	Rich Budihas, Public

Virtual*

Introduction of Guests

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and all in attendance introduced themselves.

Additions to Agenda

None

Invitation for Public Comment

During public comment, Rich Budihas provided an update regarding his pending nomination to the board by Trout Unlimited, noting that no action had yet been taken by Northampton County. After reviewing the nomination procedures for Conservation District directors, he suggested that there is no specific direction on how to fill an expired term and that the delay may be due to the County interpreting the vacancy as part of the regular nomination cycle, which typically begins in September. Jeffrey Warren confirmed he had followed up with the Administration multiple times without receiving clarification for the holdup.

To ensure future continuity, it was suggested by Will Carpenter that the board implement an annual review of board terms ideally in September to track expiring seats and alert nominating organizations early. The board agreed it would be beneficial to stay on top of the process and assist the County with reminders. The District Manager was asked to follow up with the County Administration and Council regarding the nomination status and to keep the board informed of any updates.

Acceptance of Minutes

Jeffrey Warren made a motion to accept the June 10, 2025 minutes as presented, 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried. 5/0

Treasurer's Report

Will Carpenter provided an overview of the Treasurer's Report for June 2025. Discussion ensued.

Brian Fulmer made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Report for June 2025 as presented; 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried. 5/0

Payment of Bills

The District Manager provided a summary of the bills for approval. Jeffrey Warren made a motion to approve the payment of the bills as presented, 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 5/0

Correspondence

Nate Pritchard presented the correspondence from PACD regarding a proposed dues increase, as well as notice that PACD has contracted with Verisant Strategies to provide statewide outreach and lobbying services in Harrisburg on behalf of conservation districts.

Reports From Cooperating Agencies – (NCRS)

None

State Conservation Commission Report – (DEP)

Shannon Davis, DEP Field Representative, was unable to attend the board meeting; therefore, her talking points were included in the board mailing for members to review in advance.

Old Business

A. 2023 Audit Update - Nate Pritchard provided a brief update on the status of the 2023 audit. The auditors have pulled several items from the county for testing and are currently in the middle of that review process. The next step will be scheduling a visit to examine the district's records and request any additional hard copy documents from 2023. The auditor had initially targeted August for completion. The board asked the district manager to confirm with the auditor that the audit will be finalized on time.

B. County MOU Updates - Nate Pritchard provided an update on discussions with county administration regarding the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU). He met with Nicole Pietrzak (Director of Administration) and Mike Emili (Public Works Director) to touch base on the MOU and discuss the potential MS4 (Municipal Separate Storm Sewer System) assistance. It was noted during the discussion that the draft MOU appears unlikely to move forward with the current administration.

Nate explained that future MS4 assistance may require a more substantial agreement and possibly additional staffing resources. The board discussed preferring a more predictable annual allocation rather than hourly arrangements. For the current MS4 reporting period (ending in June), the county is requesting a report on outreach activities and permit inspections.

C. PMRS Updates - Nate Pritchard provided an update on the PMRS retirement plan. The PMRS Board of Directors approved the district's plan at their June 26 meeting. The district is now waiting on contract documents to finalize and execute the plan. Once completed, contributions will be retroactively funded back to January 1, 2025. To date,

both the employee (6%) and employer (6%) contribution have been held in the general fund in preparation for disbursement.

New Business

A. NCCD Interior Office Construction – Updates & Special Meeting Request - The Board discussed the status of the interior office construction project. The project was re-advertised with modifications to allow for alternative scope options and cost flexibility. Bids are expected to close on July 17, 2025. To avoid delaying action until the August Board meeting, the Board agreed on the need to hold a special meeting to review and potentially award the construction contract. Jeffrey Warren made a motion to advertise the special meeting to be held on Tuesday, July 22 at 7:00 PM, 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried. 5/0

B. Fiscal Year 25-26 Nutrient Management Delegation Renewal - The Board reviewed the annual renewal for the nutrient management delegation. It was noted that the State has eliminated the quarter-time funding level, and all districts will now receive a minimum half-time allocation. As a result, NCCD's yearly allocation will increase. There is still some uncertainty regarding whether 50% staff time will now be required instead of 25%. If needed, adjustments to staff time and future grant requests can be made accordingly. It was also noted that additional funds this year would allow for staff workstation improvements, including upgrading equipment. Brian Fulmer made a motion to submit the renewal for fiscal year 2025–2026, 2nd Will Carpenter. Motion carried. 5/0

C. Fiscal Year 25-26 CDFAP ACT Renewal – The Board reviewed the annual renewals for the Conservation District Financial Assistance Program (CDFAP) and ACT Program funding for fiscal year 2025–2026. Funding allocations will remain unchanged from the previous year, with final amounts to be confirmed following the upcoming State Conservation Commission meeting. Rich DiFebo made a motion to renew both the CDFAP and ACT programs for 2025–2026, 2nd Jeffrey Warren. Motion carried. 5/0

D. 2026-2028 PACD Dues Increase Proposal - The Board discussed the Pennsylvania Association of Conservation Districts (PACD) proposed dues increase for 2026–2028, which would gradually raise district dues over three years based on county classification. The Board expressed concerns regarding the need for additional clarity on how the increased funds would be used. No formal motion was made; the district's alternate delegate, Nate Pritchard, will gather further information and use his discretion when voting at the upcoming PACD Executive Council meeting.

E. August Dinner Meeting (8/12/25 @ 5:30) - The Board received an update from Carrie Cevicelow on the upcoming annual dinner meeting scheduled for Tuesday, August 12, 2025, at 5:30 PM. The event will be catered by Country View Meats, and invitations have been sent to nominating organizations, county officials, and state representatives. RSVPs

have started to come in, and a follow-up invitation will be sent at the end of July. All arrangements are confirmed and on track.

Activity and Committee Reports

- A. Executive Committee – Joel Geiger reported that the committee met last month to discuss the MOU and have plans to reach out to county executive candidates for an introductory meeting and early outreach. The next meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2025
- B. Finance Committee – Will Carpenter reported the committee did not meet last month. The next meeting is scheduled for July 24, 2025.
- C. Education / Outreach Committee – No meeting was held last month. A planning session for the upcoming Teacher Workshop is scheduled for July 15, 2025.
- D. Resource/Facilities Committee – Rich DiFebo reported that the Committee did not meet last month. However, it was noted that a standing monthly meeting time has been established for the Thursday before each board meeting at 1:00 PM to ensure regular discussions moving forward. The committee will also be reviewing upcoming construction bids.
- E. DG&LVR QAB – Jim Lawrence reported, no major updates, noting that the district is awaiting the passage of the state budget. Once approved, the initial 50% funding installment will be received and passed to Upper Mount Bethel Township to begin the Heiden Road project. The contract with the township will be finalized after funds are received.
- F. Karst Geology Advisory Council – Nate Pritchard reported on a recent meeting that included an overview of a new stormwater document from the Geological Survey. Outreach to municipalities will begin to share this resource, and the next statewide meeting is tentatively planned for September, which will include updates on the Karst hazard mapping project.

Conservation District Staff Reports

The staff reports were emailed prior to the meeting. It was noted that Paige Strasko has been actively working on multiple projects, including submitting the Growing Greener Grant, the PACD Lawn Conversion Grant, and leading two garden restoration projects in Hanover Township and Plainfield Township with support from the Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley.

Announcements

A. Joint PACD/SCC Conference – July 15th - 17th, Seven Springs, PA - Nate Pritchard to attend.

B. Plainfield Township Farmer's Fair – July 22 - 26th

C. Blue Valley Farm Show – August 12th - 16th

D. Nate Pritchard - Vacation Notice - Nate Pritchard notified the Board per the communication policy that he will be on family vacation the week of August 18th and has coordinated with John Fox for administrative coverage during his absence.

Set time, date, and place of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for 8/12/25, 6:00 PM, Louise Moore Park, Pavilion #1, 151 Country Club Road, Easton, PA. No virtual option.

Adjournment

Jeffrey Warren made a motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried. 5/0

Submitted by Carrie Cevicelow, Recording Secretary to the Board