

# **PNORTHAMPTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## **Minutes for Monthly Board of Directors Meeting**

**Tuesday, December 9, 2025, 11:00 AM ( In-Person & Virtual)**

Joel Geiger, Chairman, called the Board meeting to order at 11:07AM with the following Board Members, staff, and guests in attendance:

Joel Geiger, Chairman	Brian Fulmer, Vice Chairman	Will Carpenter, Treasurer
Rich DiFebo, Director	Caitlin Connolly, DEP Field Rep*	Rich Budihas, Director
Jeffrey Keifer, Director	Austin Drager, NRCS	Jon Fox, Staff
Carrie Cevicelow, Staff	Nick Dipalo, Staff	Meara Hayden, Staff*
Paige Strasko, Staff*	Kara Hasko, Staff*	Alexis Krukovsky, Staff*
Jamie Brozman - Guest		

\*Virtual

### **Introduction of Guests**

Jamie Brozman, Just Enuff Angus Farm

### **Additions to Agenda**

None

### **Invitation for Public Comment**

None

### **Acceptance of Minutes**

Jeffrey Keifer made a motion to accept the November 11, 2025 Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rich DiFebo. Motion carried. 6/0

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Board reviewed and discussed the September 2025 Treasurer's Report. Discussion ensued. Rich Budihas made a motion to approve the previously tabled September 2025 Treasurer's Report as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 6/0.

The Board reviewed and discussed the November 2025 Treasurer's Report. Discussion ensued. Rich Budihas made a motion to accept the November 2025 Treasurer's Report as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup>. Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 6/0

### **Payment of Bills**

The Board reviewed the Transaction Report. Discussion ensued. Will Carpenter made a motion to pay the November bills as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 6/0.

### **Correspondence**

None

## **Reports From Cooperating Agencies – (NRCS)**

Austin Drager of NRCS provided a year-end wrap-up for Fiscal Year 2025, which concluded on September 30. He reported that Northampton County completed 18 approved conservation contracts covering more than 4,600 acres. These included projects under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), with a primary focus on cover crops, grazing, nutrient management planning, reforestation, and pollinator habitat.

He noted that additional CSP applications will carry over into the next program year due to statewide funding limitations. Ongoing work includes prior-year Conservation Partnership Program projects, heavy-use area improvements, erosion control measures, and water management practices.

Austin also reported that NRCS staff experienced a federal furlough from October 1 through November 13 and have since been working to catch up on active contracts and certifications. Looking ahead, NRCS will continue processing current applications, with a January 15 application cutoff for the next funding cycle.

## **State Conservation Commission Report – (DEP)**

Caitlin Connolly, DEP Filed Rep reported that nominations for the 2026 Conservation District Directors are due by December 15. She noted that the Annual Watershed Specialist Meeting, originally planned as an in-person event, will now be held virtually on February 3–4. District audits are due December 31, and the District is scheduled to request an extension at the December 16 SCC meeting, which is typically approved. Caitlin also reminded the Board of the December 16 conference call and noted that the 2026 State Conservation Commission meeting and conference call dates have been distributed.

## **Old Business**

A. NCCD Office Construction Updates – Staff reported that office construction is progressing well and nearing completion. Major interior work has been completed, with final HVAC work, stair carpeting, main entrance flooring, and minor finish items remaining. An inspection is scheduled for December 16 to allow time for any final corrections prior to project completion.

Staff continue to work on a flexible in-office schedule during construction, with full return planned following inspection approval. The second construction payment installment invoice has been received and will be processed accordingly.

B. NACD 2022 TA Grant Updates – The Board discussed the Mutual Release from Grant Agreement received from Northampton County related to the NACD 2022 Technical Assistance Grant. Board members raised concerns regarding the scope and language of the document. After discussion, the Board determined that the document should be reviewed to confirm that it is limited solely to the 2022 TA Grant and does not waive any

additional rights or claims. The Board agreed that this review should occur prior to signing and that legal guidance may be necessary if sufficient clarification could not be obtained.

Rich Budihas made a motion authorizing the Board Chair to work with the State Conservation Commission (SCC) to review the Mutual Release from Grant Agreement provided by Northampton County for the 2022 Technical Assistance Grant, for the purpose of determining whether the document pertains solely to the 2022 TA Grant. If the SCC is unable to provide sufficient clarification, the Chair is authorized to seek legal counsel to review the document and provide guidance, 2<sup>nd</sup> Will Carpenter. Motion carried 6/0

Rich Budihas made a motion that if, through the actions authorized in the previous motion, clarification and/or legal review confirms that the Mutual Release from Grant Agreement provided by Northampton County is limited exclusively to the 2022 Technical Assistance Grant and does not constitute a broader release of claims, the Board Chair is authorized to execute the agreement, 2<sup>nd</sup> Jeffrey Keifer. Motion carried 6/0

C. PACD Ag Plan Reimbursement Close Out - Kara Hasko reported that the PACD grant approved at the August meeting is complete, with all required reporting finalized. The grant supported reimbursement for an E&S plan for a producer in Northampton County. The reimbursement will be issued, and the item will be closed out and removed from future agendas.

## **New Business**

A. 2026 Budget Discussion & Approval - The Board discussed the 2026 budget and acknowledged that it had been reviewed by the Finance Committee and prepared for consideration. It was noted that amendments may be made after adoption if needed. Board members indicated that there were additional questions and clarifications needed and agreed that further discussion would be appropriate once the District Manager returns.

Jeffrey Keifer made a motion to table the 2026 Budget approval for further discussion until the next Board meeting in January, 2<sup>nd</sup> Will Carpenter. Motion carried 6/0

B. 2026 Meeting Dates - The Board reviewed proposed options for scheduling 2026 Board and committee meetings. Two options were presented, with discussion focusing on Option B, which moves Board meetings to the third Tuesday of each month to allow additional time for staff to complete and distribute accurate financial reports and supporting documentation following month-end activity. The Board also discussed committee meetings being held one hour prior to scheduled Board meetings, when needed, to ensure sunshine compliance, with the understanding that such meetings may be cancelled when not required.

Will Carpenter made a motion to accept the 2026 meeting schedule as presented under Option B, with the following provisions:

1. Board of Directors Meetings: The Board will meet on the third Tuesday of each month, with the following time adjustments included: May at 7:00 p.m. and the August Annual Dinner Meeting at 5:30 p.m. (all other months as presented in Option B).
2. Standing Committee Meetings: The Finance Committee and Executive Committee meeting schedule is amended to the second Tuesday of each month, held virtually, with Finance at 1:00 p.m. and Executive at 2:00 p.m.
3. Other Committees and Sunshine Notice: All other committee meetings will be held one hour prior to the scheduled Board meeting and will be advertised along with the 2026 Board and standing committee meeting schedule.

2<sup>nd</sup> Rich Budihas. Motion carried 6-0.

C. Envirothon Location Discussion – Jeffrey Kiefer provided an overview and shared his perspective on the potential benefits of relocating the Northampton County Envirothon to Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center, based on his site visit and preliminary considerations. Carrie Cevicelow, Envirothon Coordinator, presented a prepared statement supporting continuation at the current location, citing safety, logistical, and budget considerations. Board members asked clarifying questions and discussed both viewpoints. It was noted that the Envirothon would remain at its current location for the upcoming year, and that any consideration of alternative locations would be for future planning purposes.

Jeffrey Keifer made a motion directing the District Manager and staff to prepare a report evaluating the potential relocation of the Northampton County Envirothon from Louise Moore Park to Jacobsburg Environmental Education Center or another suitable location, including consideration of logistics, costs, benefits, and feasibility, for future years (not the 2026 event). 2<sup>nd</sup> Rich Budihas. Motion carried 6/0.

### **Activity and Committee Reports**

A. Executive Committee – Joel Geiger reported that the Executive Committee met last month and discussed items that were addressed earlier during this Board meeting. The Committee’s final meeting of the year is scheduled for Thursday, December 18, 2025.

B. Finance Committee – Will Carpenter reported that the Finance Committee meeting scheduled for November was canceled due to scheduling conflicts. He noted that the

Committee expects to meet Thursday, December 18, 2025 to continue discussion and review of the 2026 budget and related financial matters.

C. Education / Outreach Committee – Paige Strasko reported that the Education Work Group met on Friday, December 5, 2025. Discussion included drafting and finalizing newsletter articles, with plans to distribute the newsletter by the end of the month or the first full week of January. The group also discussed social media content, potential materials to purchase for the upcoming year, and expanded outreach efforts using existing tools such as the website and newsletter to increase engagement with schools, including career day opportunities.

D. Resource/Facilities Committee – Kara Hasko reported that committee is in the process of obtaining quotes from contractors for HVAC maintenance, lawn care, snow removal, and extermination services. Once the quotes are received, the information will be presented to the Board for review. It was noted that current services have been satisfactory, though concerns were raised regarding delayed billing, prompting the review of additional vendors.

E. DG&LVR QAB – Alexis Krukovsky reported that now that the State Budgets has been passed the funding is expected to be released soon, pending submission of required financial documentation. The District elected to proceed with the Low Volume Roads Program rather than the Dirt and Gravel Program for this cycle. A one-day training session is planned for February 2026, and outreach has been sent to municipalities that are not currently certified to gauge interest. Due to seasonal conditions, project implementation is anticipated to begin in early spring, depending on municipal readiness.

F. Karst Geology Advisory Council – None

### **Conservation District Staff Reports**

The staff reports were emailed prior to the meeting. During the staff discussion, Nick Dipalo provided an update on a proposed Easton warehouse project. Nick also shared positive observations following one year in the District's new office location, noting that operations, staff performance, and regulatory deadlines have remained on track. He further discussed ongoing efforts to strengthen coordination with municipalities to improve compliance, enforcement efficiency, and education related to development and stormwater management.

**Announcements** – None

**Set time, date, and place of next meeting**

The next meeting is scheduled for January 20, 2026, 11:00 AM, Lower Nazareth Township Building, Suite 110, Conference Room, 623 Municipal Dr., Nazareth, PA ( In-Person & Virtual, check website agenda for Zoom Link).

**Adjournment**

Jeffrey Keifer made a motion to adjourn the meeting; 2<sup>nd</sup> Rich DiFebo. Motion carried. 6/0  
The meeting was adjourned at 1:32 PM.

Submitted by Carrie Cevicelow, Recording Secretary to the Board