

# **NORTHAMPTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

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

**Tuesday, November 11, 2025, 7:00 PM ( In-Person & Virtual)**

Joel Geiger, Chairman, called the Board meeting to order at 7:07 PM with the following Board Members, staff, and guests in attendance:

Joel Geiger, Chairman  
Rich DiFebo, Director  
Nate Pritchard, DM  
Jon Fox, Staff\*

Brian Fulmer, Vice Chairman  
Rich Budihas, Director  
Caitlin Skibiel, DEP Field Rep\*  
Meara Hayden, Staff

Will Carpenter, Treasurer\*  
Jeffrey Keifer, Director  
Carrie Cevicelow, Staff

\*Virtual

### **Budget Workshop (6:00 PM – 7:00 PM)**

The District Manager presented the draft 2026 budget. Board members provided feedback and requested revisions. The District Manager will update the draft for consideration at the December Board Meeting.

### **Introduction of Guests**

Rebecca Hayden, President, WCLV

### **Additions to Agenda**

Nate Pritchard added the following item under New Business:  
G. Penn Vest Letters of Support

### **Invitation for Public Comment**

None

### **Acceptance of Minutes**

Rich Budihas made a motion to accept the October 14, 2025 Minutes, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Fulmer.  
Motion carried. 6/0

### **Treasurer's Report**

The Board reviewed the September and October 2025 Treasurer's Reports. Discussion ensued.

Jeffrey Kiefer made a motion to table the September 2025 Treasurer's Report until an amended version is presented at the Board of Directors meeting on December 9, 2025, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rich DiFebo, Motion carried 6/0

Rich Budihas made a motion to approve the October 2025 Treasurer's Report as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Fulmer, Motion carried 6/0

**Payment of Bills**

Nate Pritchard, District Manager, provided a summary of the bills for approval, noting expenses included temporary building signage, for which a partial refund will be issued due to damage upon arrival, and a delayed invoice for previously approved educational tote bags. Additional IT-related expenses were also noted, including printer setup, VPN installation, and annual Adobe Acrobat licensing. Brian Fulmer made a motion to pay the October bills as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rich Budihas, Motion carried 6/0.

**Correspondence**

None

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

None

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

None

**Old Business**

A. NCCD Office Construction Updates – Change Order – HVAC and Flooring Option  
Nate Pritchard reported that office construction is progressing, staff continue to operate under an extended remote work schedule, with core staff in the office most days and remaining staff rotating in-office at least one day per week. The electrical and plumbing rough-ins and drywall completed and passed inspection. HVAC work is the next phase, and the project remains generally on schedule within the existing construction contract timeline.

A Change Order No. 1, including Alternates 1 and 2, was presented for additional construction work related to HVAC modifications and associated improvements in the amount of \$10,571. Rich DiFebo made a motion to approve Change Order No. 1, including Alternates 1 and 2, totaling \$10,571, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 5/1.

B. NACD TA Grant Update - Nate Pritchard reported that the District is still awaiting the county reconciliation check for the 2022 TA grant, anticipated to be a little over \$23,000. The county has indicated that the check has been cut and is pending their final release memo; Nate will continue to follow up to secure payment by year-end.

For the next TA grant round, the application deadline for the 2025 funding cycle has been extended to December 11 due to the federal shutdown and related NRCS access issues. Nate will submit the application once full access to the necessary NRCS information is restored.

## **New Business**

A. Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley Introduction - Rebecca Hayden, President of the Watershed Coalition of the Lehigh Valley, provided a brief overview of the Coalition's history, partnership with NCCD, and shared resources. She noted interest in developing a future Memorandum of Understanding with NCCD to formally document this relationship, discussion ensued.

B. 2023 Draft Audit Approval - The Board reviewed the 2023 draft audit provided by the independent auditor. The auditor noted that beginning balances could not be verified due to the county's prior accrual accounting system, resulting in disclaimer opinions, but no issues were found with NCCD's internal controls or recordkeeping. Discussion ensued. Will Carpenter made a motion to approve the Draft 2023 Audit as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 6/0

C. 2026 Employee Insurance – Supplemental additions - The Board reviewed options for adding supplemental employee insurance for 2026, including group life/AD&D, long term disability, and short-term disability coverage. Members discussed the value of these benefits for staff retention and requested clarification on how short-term disability interacts with workers' compensation and whether it includes maternity leave. Nate will gather additional policy details, confirm how the coverages coordinate, incorporate the selected options into the draft 2026 budget, and report back to the Board during the budget approval process.

D. Expedited Review Policy – The Board reviewed the updated Expedited Review Policy, which includes minor language updates, clarification of electronic submission procedures, and a limit of up to four expedited reviews at the District's discretion. The policy also maintains the annual pause on expedited reviews from October through December. Rich Budihas made a motion to approve the Expedited Review Policy as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Will Carpenter. Motion carried 6/0

E. Overtime Policy Revision - The Board reviewed a proposed update to the overtime policy to clarify that exempt employees, such as the District Engineer, may receive overtime or compensatory time specifically for expedited reviews that require work beyond normal business hours. This revision aligns the policy with the newly updated Expedited Review Policy. Rich DiFebo made a motion to approve the revised Overtime Policy as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Rich Budihas. Motion carried 6/0

F. DEP Environmental Education Grant Application - Nate Pritchard presented an overview of the DEP Environmental Education Grant proposal, which would fund four workshops over the next year: two student programs (grades 3–5 and 6–8) and two teacher workshops using a shared curriculum adapted for each age group. The grant would cover materials, possible transportation for field components, with a small District match offset by teacher registration fees. Jeffrey Keifer made a motion to submit the DEP-EE Grant Application as presented, 2<sup>nd</sup> Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 6/0

## **Activity and Committee Reports**

A. Executive Committee – Joel Geiger reported that the Executive Committee met last week. Rich Budihas provided an overview of his review of Sunshine Law guidance. He suggested that if the District adopts a clear committee policy stating that committees only gather information and do not make decisions, then committee meetings may not need to be publicly advertised. Nate Pritchard noted that other conservation districts handle this differently and that further clarification from the state may be helpful.

B. Finance Committee – Will Carpenter reported that the Finance Committee met to review financial reporting practices and the draft 2026 budget. The committee discussed ongoing improvements to QuickBooks reporting, reviewed the draft budget and talked about establishing reserve line items to plan for long-term equipment replacement and building maintenance. Progress continues on refining financial reporting for clearer board review.

C. Education / Outreach Committee – Carrie Cevicelow reported the Outreach & Education Committee has not yet met this month but is scheduled to meet later in the week. She provided a PowerPoint presentation on the recent teacher workshop held at the Chrin Community Center, noting strong attendance, positive feedback, and excellent staff involvement. Teachers participated in field tours, presentations from guest educators, and a hands-on rain barrel session. Carrie shared that the workshop generated strong interest in future collaboration with the district. She also noted that Envirothon “Save the Date” notices will be sent out the week of November 17 to schools, sponsors, and government offices.

D. Resource/Facilities Committee – Rich DiFebo reported that the Resource/Facilities Committee did not meet this month. He noted that staff are currently gathering estimates for snow removal services and deck repair work, with plans to bring options to the board once quotes are received. The district’s existing snow removal contractor remains available as a backup.

E. DG&LVR QAB – Nate Pritchard reported that the committee did not meet this month.

F. Karst Geology Advisory Council – Nate Pritchard reported the committee met last month. The district is awaiting DEP’s decision on the Summit to Laboratory Quarry expansion, which is expected by the end of the year. DEP has tentatively agreed to provide a presentation on the decision once it is issued. Nate noted plans to bring an update to County Council once the DEP decision is finalized.

### **Conservation District Staff Reports**

The staff reports were emailed prior to the meeting. During the staff discussion, Nate noted that many highlights had already been discussed during earlier agenda items. He also shared an update from the PACD Southeast Region meeting, including statewide discussions about potential CDFAP funding increases and the possibility of PACD developing a group health insurance option through the Farm Bureau.

### **Announcements**

Nate reminded the board that he will be out on paternity leave beginning Friday, December 5. He expects to be off for the following week, then working half days for approximately two weeks. Because of this, he will likely miss the December board meeting. December’s agenda will remain light, focusing on final budget approval and setting meeting dates for next year. Jon Fox confirmed that coverage and payroll arrangements are in place during Nate’s leave.

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

The next meeting is scheduled for December 9, 2025, 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 9:30 PM.

Submitted by Carrie Cevicelow, Recording Secretary to the Board