

NORTHAMPTON COUNTY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes for Monthly Board of Directors Meeting

Tuesday, January 20, 2026, 11:00 AM (In-Person & Virtual)

Joel Geiger, Chairman, called the Board meeting to order at 11:13AM 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	Nathan Pritchard, Manager
Rich Budihas, Director	Carrie Cevicelow, Staff	Meara Hayden, Staff
Paige Strasko, Staff	Kara Hasko, Staff	Jim Lawrence, Staff
Alexis Krukovsky, Staff*	Jamie Brozman – Guest*	

*Virtual

Note: At the time the meeting was called to order, a quorum was not present, with three Board members in attendance. The Chairman noted that an additional Board member was expected to arrive shortly. In anticipation of achieving a quorum, the Board agreed to begin the meeting with discussion of non-action items only, with the understanding that no official actions would be taken until a quorum was established.

Introduction of Guests

Jamie Brozman, Just Enuff Angus Farm*

Note: Quorum Established - At 11:15AM., Rich DiFebo, Director, arrived. A quorum was present at that time.

Additions to Agenda

Will Carpenter made a motion to add the Lehigh Valley Engineers Council Banquet Sponsorship to the agenda, under New Business, Letter H. 2nd Rich Budihas. Motion carried 4/0

Invitation for Public Comment

None

Acceptance of Minutes

Rich Budihas made a motion to accept the December 9, 2025 Minutes, 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried. 4/0

Treasurer's Report

The Board reviewed and discussed the December 2025 Treasurer's Report. Discussion ensued.

Rich Budihas made a motion to accept the December 2025 Treasurer's Report as presented, 2nd. Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 4/0

Payment of Bills

The Board reviewed the Transaction Report. Discussion ensued. Rich Budihas made a motion to approve the December 2025 bills as they have been paid. 2nd Will Carpenter. Motion carried 4/0.

Correspondence

Nate Pritchard presented two items of correspondence. A letter from the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission designating Travis Miller as its QAB representative, and a letter from Township Tax Assessor Tracy Adamski advising of forthcoming tax reimbursements from the Township and from the School District.

Reports From Cooperating Agencies – (NRCS)

None

State Conservation Commission Report – (DEP)

Caitlin Connolly, DEP Field Rep reported that upcoming training opportunities were highlighted, including a Director Back to Basics Orientation Workshop scheduled for March at multiple locations statewide.

Additionally, a budget overview and Q&A session presented by Karen Books and Jackie Kerstetter will be held on February 20, from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., at the Monroe County Conservation District.

An Ag Chapter 102 Mentor Day was also announced for February 6, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., at the Monroe County Conservation District, featuring staff from the Wyoming County Conservation District. The session will focus on agricultural Chapter 102 considerations.

Old Business

A. NCCD Office Construction Updates – Nate Pritchard provided an update on the interior office construction project. The work was substantially completed in December, prior to the contract deadline, and final Township inspections were completed. A walkthrough with the architect and contractor identified only minor items, most of which have been addressed, with one small item pending. The building is fully in use, the project is ready to be closed out, and no additional Board action was required as the contract had been previously approved.

B. NACD 2022 & 2025 TA Grant Updates – Nate Pritchard presented an update on the 2022 and 2025 NACD Technical Assistance grants. Regarding the 2022 grant, it was reported that the outstanding agreement with the County is being revised. District representatives met with County administration, and comments will be provided so the County solicitor can redraft the agreement to more accurately reflect the grant history and close out the matter. It was noted that the agreement is limited in scope and does not affect other financial obligations.

Note: At 11:52AM Brian Fulmer, Director, arrived in person and joined the meeting.

For the 2025 TA grant, the District submitted an application earlier in the month with a reduced funding request based on a revised staff time allocation to better align with nutrient management delegation requirements. A response is anticipated in March. An update was also provided on the 2024 TA grant, noting that disbursements are pending and subject to quarterly reporting and federal processing timelines.

C. 2024 Audit Update – Nate Pritchard provided an update on the 2024 Audit. The audit is currently behind schedule due to outstanding documentation requested by the auditor. Nate reported that the remaining records will be prioritized and submitted, with the goal of having a draft audit available for Board review at the February meeting. An extension through the end of February was requested from the State Conservation Commission, and staff will confirm that extension if needed.

D. 2026 Meeting Dates – Financial & Executive - Discussion was held regarding the scheduling of the Financial and Executive Committee meetings for 2026. It was noted that setting the meetings on a fixed weekday created challenges with Board mailing timelines and preparation of follow-up materials. As an alternative, it was recommended that the committee meetings be scheduled 12 days prior to each Board meeting to allow adequate time for follow-up and preparation. Will Carpenter made a motion to re-advertise the Finance and Executive Committee meetings to be held 12 days prior to each monthly Board meeting. 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 5/0

E. 2026 Proposed Budget - The Board revisited the 2026 proposed budget, which had been tabled from the prior month. Nate Pritchard reported that minor amendments had been made since the December meeting, including a correction to salaries and benefits, and an updated reserve figure reflecting anticipated payments of outstanding invoices. It was noted that the office build-out expense was removed from the operating budget and will be handled as a separate project budget. Nate also noted that the proposed budget includes a 2.5% cost of living adjustment (COLA) and recommended applying the COLA retroactively to the first full payroll period of 2026.

Rich DiFebo made a motion to approve the 2026 proposed budget, with the 2.5% COLA retroactively applied to the January 4 through January 17, 2026 payroll period. 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 5/0.

New Business

A. Exterior Office Improvements –

a. Parking Concept Revision – Nate Pritchard provided an update on a requested parking concept revision related to the Zoning Hearing Board decision language referencing a larger parking pad and 18 required spaces. He reported that an updated concept will be presented to the Township/Board of Supervisors for

acknowledgement, and that the revised concept is expected to meet ordinance requirements with less impervious surface.

b. Design Firm RFP's - Discussion was held regarding issuing RFPs and selecting an engineering/design firm to support exterior office improvements, including ADA accessibility and parking improvements. Will Carpenter made a motion authorizing the District Manager to solicit proposals and select a design firm for a proposal amount not to exceed \$20,000, in consultation with the Building and Grounds Committee. 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 5/0.

B. Bookkeeping Assistance Proposal - Nate Pritchard presented information regarding obtaining professional bookkeeping assistance and training related to QuickBooks Online and the District's bookkeeping workflows. He reported that, based on a recommendation from the District's auditor, Stephanie Kostelnick of ASAP Business was contacted. The proposed scope includes a quality assurance review of current bookkeeping practices, workflow assessment, and recommendations for improved efficiency. The services would be provided on an hourly basis, estimated at up to 10 hours, and may include training opportunities for staff and interested Board members.

Rich Budihas made a motion to proceed with bookkeeping assistance services through ASAP Business, for up to 10 hours at \$95 per hour. 2nd Rich DiFebo. Motion carried 5/0.

C. Furniture moving proposal - Nate Pritchard presented a proposal from You Move Me, the same company previously used for the District's office move. The proposal includes moving furniture into the upstairs offices and rearranging select items on the first floor. The estimate is for three movers for approximately three and a half hours, at a total estimated cost of \$1,147.50. It was noted that the expense would be treated as part of the office build-out project.

Rich DiFebo made a motion to approve the furniture moving proposal at an estimated cost of \$1,147.50. 2nd Rich Budihas. Motion carried 5/0

D. ACAP Delegation Discussion & Possible Action - Discussion was held regarding the potential request for the District to assume the ACAP delegation. It was noted that additional information is needed regarding current funding and program logistics. No action was taken, and the matter will be referred to the Executive Committee for further review and future recommendation to the Board.

E. QAB Appointment – Jim Lawrence presented information regarding the appointment of an alternate Wildlife Conservation Officer to the Quality Assurance Board due to the reassignment of the current Northampton County officer. The Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission assigned Travis Miller, Lehigh County Wildlife Conservation Officer, to serve as the alternate.

Rich Budihas made a motion to approve the appointment of Travis Miller, Lehigh County Wildlife Conservation Officer, as the alternate member of the QAB . 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 5/0.

F. 2025 Ethics Forms – Nate Pritchard provided a reminder that 2025 Statements of Financial Interest (Ethics Forms) are required annually by the state. Printed forms were made available, and it was noted that the forms may also be completed electronically. Completed forms are maintained on file at the District office.

G. PACD Lawn Conversion Grant Application - Paige Strasko presented a request to submit a PACD Lawn Conversion Grant application for a proposed riparian buffer conversion project located on Black River Road in Lower Saucon Township. The project would convert approximately one-half acre of lawn into a riparian forest buffer. It was noted that the grant would be a pass-through to the property owner, with no financial commitment from the District other than staff time for grant administration. Rich DiFebo made a motion to approve submission of the PACD Lawn Conversion Grant application; 2nd Brian Fulmer. Motion carried 5/0.

H. Lehigh Valley Engineers Council Banquet Sponsorship - Meara Hayden reported that she has been selected to receive the Young Engineer of the Year Award from the Lehigh Valley Engineers Council. Information was presented regarding a potential shared sponsorship of the District's table at the upcoming banquet in recognition of the award, including available sponsorship levels and associated costs. Due to the late notice and the need for formal sponsorship documentation, no action was taken. The item will be brought back to the Board for consideration at a future meeting.

Activity and Committee Reports

A. Executive Committee – Joel Geiger reported that the Executive Committee meeting scheduled since the last Board meeting was canceled. The next Executive Committee meeting will be held 12 days prior to the next Board meeting on February 5, 2026.

B. Finance Committee – Will Carpenter reported that the Finance Committee met and discussed items addressed during the Board meeting, including the proposed budget, reserves, mortgage allocation, and accounting matters. The Committee also discussed the outstanding county payment related to the NACD 2022 issue and reviewed the QuickBooks training, which was approved earlier in the meeting.

C. Education / Outreach Committee – Nate Pritchard reported that current efforts are focused on the Envirothon, which is the primary education outreach initiative at this time.

D. Resource/Facilities Committee – The Committee did not meet. Kara Hasko and Meara Hayden presented updates on current facilities-related items. Kara Hasko reported that three pest control quotes were obtained and forwarded to the District Manager for future Board consideration, noting concerns related to mice in the building and differences in service frequency among vendors. Additional discussion was held regarding challenges in securing consistent snow removal services due to the size of the property, while lawn care services remain more attainable. Updates were also shared regarding HVAC and boiler maintenance, with no immediate issues reported and follow-up to continue as needed.

E. DG&LVR QAB – Jim Lawrence presented the report, noting that the Committee met two weeks prior for a work session. Discussion included Rich Budihas’s participation in ESM training, a status update on the Hyden Road project, and a review of existing policies, with several updates in progress for future QAB consideration. Jim also requested the Chair’s signature on the Upper Mount Bethel Township contract previously approved in June, noting that partial program funding is being received and reimbursement will follow upon submission of receipts.

F. Karst Geology Advisory Council – Nate Pritchard reported that the Council has been largely inactive. DEP was expected to issue a decision regarding the Hercules deepening by the end of 2025. No additional updates have been received at this time, and further review and recommendations are pending DEP’s decision.

Conservation District Staff Reports

The staff reports were emailed to the Board prior to the meeting. No questions were raised.

Announcements – It was noted that agricultural training opportunities are upcoming later in the year. Paige Strasko reported that the Watershed Specialist Training will be held virtually on February 3, having been delayed due to the state budget impasse. An in-person training is anticipated later in the year.

Set time, date, and place of next meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for February 17, 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

Brian Fulmer made a motion to adjourn the meeting; 2nd Rich Budihas. Motion carried 5/0. The meeting was adjourned at 1:39 PM.

Submitted by Carrie Cevicelow, Recording Secretary to the Board