

**MINUTES OF MERCER COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
590 HUGHES DRIVE
HAMILTON SQUARE, NJ 08690
AUGUST 8, 2024**

MCSCD SUPERVISORS

Scott Ellis
Theodora Wang
Lucia Huebner
Daniel Pace (arrived 1:00 pm)
Goldshore, Esq.
Gary Mount

STAFF

Linda Sandusky

OTHERS

Lewis

Meredith Melendez

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, S. Ellis at 12:32 pm. The Statement of Adequate Notice was read. The attendees rose for the flag salute.

The minutes of the July 11, 2024 meeting were reviewed by the Board.

MOTION 1

A motion to approve the minutes was made by G. Mount seconded by L. Huebner, with D. Pace not present, carried.

The Treasurer's Report was presented to the Board. The District was in the black for the start of Fiscal Year 2025.

MOTION 2

A motion to receive and file the Treasurer's Report pending audit was made by T. Wang, seconded by G. Mount, with D. Pace not present, carried.

The Director's Report was given.

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION PROGRAM

14 - APPLICATIONS RECEIVED
1 - PREREVIEW INSPECTION
21 - REVIEWS
94 - INSPECTIONS
1 - PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETING

- 16 - FINAL REPORTS OF COMPLIANCE
- 19 - CONDITIONAL REPORTS OF COMPLIANCE
- 0 - VIOLATION NOTICE
- 0 - STOP WORK ORDER
- 0 - DENIALS
- 0 - CERTIFICATION DELEGATIONS
- 5 - 251 EXEMPTION DETERMINATIONS

DISTRICT PERSONNEL LIAISON MEETING

The district manager attended a virtual District Personnel Liaison meeting on 07-30-2024. Topics of discussion included: Department Staff updates - A new NJDA SSCC Engineer has been retained and has begun employment; NJACD Update – The Annual Conference will be held on November 25, 2024 at the Rutgers Eco Complex. All Supervisors are encouraged to attend; RFA / 5G3 Letterhead – Several districts have been issuing RFA letters on their own letterhead. It was reiterated that RFA filing instructions should be provided to applicants on department letterhead; Technology and Social Media Use – Any work related posts or activities are NOT allowed on TikTok; Fee Schedules – It was indicated that Fee Schedule Increases are under significant scrutiny and all increases must be justified as the costs to provide services; Extreme Heat Legislation (\$2422) – District field staff will be subject to the requirements of this legislation if it gets passed and signed into Law. Some of the aspects of the legislation include mandatory breaks, and water supply, along with the development of a Heat Stress Plan and Policy, when temperatures are in exceedance of the threshold established by the legislation; Stormwater Utilities – The topic of creating Stormwater Utilities in NJ has been raised. Districts may be able to have a roll within the created utilities (if they come to fruition) however district creation of the utility or districts running a stormwater utility is likely beyond the capabilities of the program; 251 plan certifications and agricultural / horticultural non-applicability – A topic of discussion during the annual conference may be related to how, and when districts regulate or do not regulate agricultural / horticultural activities; 2:90 rules update – The process to update the 2:90 rules (Soil Erosion and Sediment Control Act) is well underway.

FEE SCHEDULE

The district manager is continuing on the analysis of the district's Fee Schedule. As previously indicated, this requires an in-depth analysis of the times and respective costs to provide all services for the Chapter 251 (Soil Erosion and Sediment Control) program. Upon the establishment of new fees, the district board of supervisors will be required to approve the new fee schedule. It will subsequently have to be approved by the State Soil Conservation Committee. The district manager has been coordinating the process with the NJDA Division Director regarding the process and proper procedure to procure a Fee Schedule modification.

INSURANCE POLICIES

The district received an updated quote for the 2025 Director's and officer's Insurance Policy. The price increased by only \$8.98 for the annual renewal price of \$2,929.58. This policy provides up to \$3,000,000.00 for D & O and the Employment Practices

(EPL) coverage.

The district also received the Miscellaneous Professional Liability Insurance Application package. The district manager is going through the process of preparing the application for 2025 to obtain an updated policy cost.

MOTION 3

A motion to approve the Director’s Report was made by G. Mount, seconded by L. Huebner, carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. New Jersey Farmers Newspaper
2. NJCDEA (N.J. Conservation District Employees Assoc.) Meeting Minutes from 7/11/24
3. NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) News Conservation Clips
4. NACD Annual Report for 2023
5. Hamilton Post
6. NCF (National Conservation Foundation) Annual Report for 2023

CHAPTER 251

2024-6646-T	2024-6628-EW	2023-6405-H	2021-6184-H(R)
2024-6617-HT	2024-6653-HT	2024-6645-HT	2024-6656-HT
2024-6643-P	2024-6641-P	2021-6042-P(R)	2024-6650-P
2024-6651-P	2020-5836-R(R)	NJG0330833	2023-6537-R
2024-6648-R	NJG0349976	2024-6652-WW	

MOTION 4

A motion to approve plans recommended for certification by staff was made by G. Mount, seconded by T. Wang, carried unanimously.

NRCS UPDATE

The National Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) in New Jersey is now accepting FY2025 applications for the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), climate - smart practices through EQIP funded by the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), the Agricultural Management Assistance (AMA) program and the Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).

EXTENSION UPDATE

M. Melendez attended the 4H Fair in Howell, New Jersey. The Fair was well attended. Many New Jersey Officials attended: Secretary of Agricultural, Edward Wengryn; Mercer County Commissioner, Lucylle Walter; County Executive, Danial Benson; Mercer County Planning Director, Maria Connolly; and Head of Rutgers 4H program, Rachel Lyons. Rodrigo, the 4H Educator for the Extension Office was well received by the children in attendance.

M. Melendez was in California for the International Association of Food Protection Meeting. She conducted a presentation on Agricultural Irrigation Water.

This winter they will be focusing on Ag Water System Inspections and Annual Inspections. They are waiting on detailed guidance from FDA.

M. Melendez is in the process of planning the winter meeting for growers educational sessions.

M. Melendez is filming gleaning activities that Farmers Against Hunger are conducting to create a gleaner training video focusing on food safety.

SSCC UPDATE/NJACD UPDATE

The District Manager received an email from John Showler informing the Districts a second engineer, John Matos, has been hired to assist the Districts and the NJDA in general with various programs.

The District Manager met with J. Showler and J. Matos on August 7, 2024, and toured several 251 sites within Mercer County.

NEW BUSINESS

Next Meeting: September 12, 2024 at 12:30 pm

The meeting adjourned at 1:20 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Sandusky
Acting Secretary to the Board

**MINUTES OF MERCER COUNTY
SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
590 HUGHES DRIVE
HAMILTON SQUARE, NJ 08690
JULY 11, 2024**

MCSCD SUPERVISORS

Scott Ellis
Gary Mount
Lucia Huebner
Daniel Pace

STAFF

Paul Schiariti, P.E.
Linda Sandusky

OTHERS

Lewis Goldshore, Esq.
Meredith Melendez
Lyla Kaul, USDA-NRCS

The meeting was called to order by Chairman, S. Ellis at 12:43 pm. The Statement of Adequate Notice was read. The attendees rose for the flag salute.

The minutes of the June 13, 2024 meeting were reviewed by the Board.

MOTION 1

A motion to approve the minutes was made by L. Huebner seconded by D. Pace, carried unanimously.

The Treasurer's Report was presented to the Board.

The District was in the black for the month with CD interest being accrued for fiscal year 2024. The District was in the red for the first time in many years for fiscal year 2024.

MOTION 2

A motion to receive and file the Treasurer's Report pending audit was made by L. Huebner, seconded by D. Pace, carried unanimously.

The Director's Report was given.

NON-POINT SOURCE POLLUTION PROGRAM

10- APPLICATIONS RECEIVED

4 - PREREVIEW INSPECTIONS

25 - REVIEWS

72 - INSPECTIONS

0 - PRE-CONSTRUCTION MEETINGS

- 9 - FINAL REPORTS OF COMPLIANCE
- 7 - CONDITIONAL REPORTS OF COMPLIANCE
- 0 - VIOLATION NOTICE
- 1 - STOP WORK ORDER
- 0 - DENIALS
- 0 - CERTIFICATION DELEGATIONS
- 5 - 251 EXEMPTION DETERMINATIONS

CHAPTER 251

A Stop Construction Order was issued for The Reserve (a.k.a. The Regency) project in West Windsor. The district manager previously issued a Violation Notice for sequencing issues related to an incomplete Wet Pond Retention Basin. The due date on the Violation Notice was also extended due to weather conditions. The district manager also subsequently met with the developer to outline specific requirements and constraints related to ongoing activities. One of the items discussed was the requirement that roads could not be paved until basin completion. An additional inspection indicated that roads were paved prior to the completion of the basin. A Stop Construction Order was authorized and issued for the project. Approximately 1 week later, the basin stabilization was completed, and the district rescinded the Stop Construction order.

DISTRICT VEHICLES

Both district vehicles have been sold. The 2002 Ford Escape was placed at the driveway entrance and sold privately to an individual for \$1,000.00. The 2005 Dodge Dakota was sold to a salvage yard (Acres Auto) since it did not run, had a bad transmission, dead battery, check engine light and rusty frame. The district received \$500.00 for the sale of the vehicle. The receipts from the sales were under the 15% Bid Threshold requiring the sale to be done, by an auction, if exceeded. The office administrator contacted the New Jersey manufacturers Insurance Company and removed both vehicles from the district's Automobile Insurance Policy. This will reduce the out-of-pocket expenditures by several thousand dollars per year, for the districts auto insurance, as well as the vehicle registration fees.

The district manager turned in both sets of license plates to the New Jersey Division of Motor Vehicles (NJ DMV) in the receptacle box outside of the agency facility. A receipt will be provided to the district upon processing the plates.

BANKING

The office administrator obtained several CD / money market rates from local banks to deposit district funds that are currently in accounts paying little interest. She procured a 5.00% APY rate for a Business Money Market account at Citizens Bank. She met with an account representative and received and prepared all of the necessary forms to open the account. Along with the money market account, it was a requirement to open a Business Checking Account. We therefore also opened a checking account at Citizens Bank with a minimum deposit (\$100.00). She also conducted the necessary withdrawals from several other accounts for depositing into the new money market account. All necessary signatures from district officials were obtained, and the account was established.

FEE SCHEDULE

The district manager is currently working on a Fee Schedule change / increase for Chapter 251 project fees. The last complete Fee Schedule increase was in 2006. A partial increase for a specific category of projects (Bridges / Culverts) was undertaken and approved in 2010. The process requires that an hourly rate for all aspects of Chapter 251: Project Administration; Plan Review and Field Inspections, be computed. This is done by a process and formula provided by the State Committee. The process also requires that fees be established based upon actual expenses related to projects in each specific category. This requires an analysis of completed projects that the district has reviewed and inspected to completion, since the last Fee Schedule analysis.

Once new fees are computed, the Fee Schedule must be presented to the State Soil Conservation Committee for their authorization and approval. The new fees (if approved) will be implemented immediately thereafter.

MOTION 3

A motion to approve the Director’s Report was made by G. Mount, seconded by L. Huebner, carried unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

1. Hamilton Twp. Monthly Newspaper was received.
2. An email from Stage Agriculture Development Committee was received with information regarding an alternative method for valuing farmland called the Statewide Farmland Preservation Formula. S. Ellis gave a further explanation to the Board.
3. The District received a save the date for the NJACD Annual Conference being held November 25, 2024.
4. New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts (NJACD) Annual Dues Letter was received by the District.

MOTION 4

A motion to approve annual dues for NJACD in the amount of \$850.00 was made by D. Pace, seconded by L. Huebner, carrier unanimously.

CHAPTER 251

2024-6569-T	2024-6579-T	2024-6636-EW	2024-6634-E
2024-6596-H	2024-6637-H	2024-6639-HB	2024-6631-P
2024-6638-P	2024-6642-P	2024-6624-P	2024-6633-P
2024-6635-R			

MOTION 5

A motion to approve plans recommended for certification by staff was made by L. Huebner, seconded by G. Mount, carried unanimously.

SOUTH JERSEY RC&D STATUS

Northeast Association of Resource Conservation & Development Councils Quarterly Meeting Minutes from 12/11/23, 3/11/24 & 6/17/24 were received.

Christine Raabe, South Jersey RC&D Chair, sent an email to the District Manager requesting the District create a letter and invoice on behalf of South Jersey RC&D (also on their letter head) to the County of Mercer to request dues from Mercer County in the amount of \$300.00.

The Board had a lengthy discussion on the requirements of the District, and the actual work South Jersey RC&D does for Mercer County. The decision was made that the District would not participate in this endeavor.

NRCS UPDATE

L. Kaul updated the District on current NRCS programs. Working on funding Conservation Stewardship Programs. The Deadline for Equip is October. L. Kaul will be attending 4H Outreach Programs at County Fairs underway now.

L. Kaul had one Conservation Plan for review and approval by the Board for a farm in Lawrence Township, New Jersey to restore converted wetlands.

MOTION 6

A motion to approve a Conservation Plan to restore wetlands in Lawrence Township, New Jersey was made by L. Huebner, seconded by D. Pace with G. Mount abstaining, motion carried.

EXTENSION UPDATE

M. Melendez passed around the Rutgers New Jersey Agricultural Experiment Station Annual Report for 2023.

Tomato Tasting will be held August 28, 2024 at Rutgers Snyder Research Farm. Wagon tour of the research and extension programs/field trials and sampling 50+ varieties of tomatoes will be conducted. Information can be found at: Snyder Research and Extension Farm Open House and Tomato Tasting (rutgers.edu).

Master Gardeners are celebrating 30 years of existence. Raised planting beds were installed along the Extension Building which are being used by the Master Gardeners for many programs including WIC and 4H. Partnering with Jeff Byrd, there are now beehives at the back of the building. Master Gardeners are also working with the 4H Summer Camp and completing plantings at the Trent House.

M. Melendez is working on the winter sessions for the Atlantic City Convention.

M. Melendez is taking multiple calls/photos from farmers with heat stress related issues and Crows eating crops for the moisture.

NEW BUSINESS

Next Meeting: August 8, 2024

The District received a copy of a letter to L. Huebner from Edward Wengryn, Chairman, SSCC to confirm that the Committee has extended the provisional appointment as a supervisor of the Mercer County Soil Conservation District to a full-term appointment. This term will expire June 20, 2026.

The meeting adjourned at 1:55 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Sandusky
Acting Secretary to the Board