

**Monongahela Conservation District  
Board Meeting Minutes  
May 1<sup>st</sup>, 2025  
Steve Lebnick Agricultural Center  
Morgantown, WV  
9:30 am**

**Attendance:**

Supervisors: Mark Teets (Chairman), HR Scott, Chuck Cienawski, Brandon Linton, Bob Spaid, Andy Price, Mark Myers, Jean Conley (associate), Art Mouser (associate)

WVU Extension: Carrie See, Josh Malencia

NRCS: Chris Toothman (virtual)

FSA: Robin Ward (virtual)

WVACD: Heather Duncan (virtual) Vanta Coda (virtual)

WVCA: Don Whetzel, Devon Kokoska, Adrienne Hoalcraft, Kaitlyn Jones (virtual)

Visitor: Lucas Sieber

Chairman Teets called the meeting to order at 9:30am.

The pledge of allegiance was led by Mark Myers. The prayer was given by Art Mouser.

Chairman Teets had a visitor, Lucas Sieber introduce himself. Sieber runs "Mon Valley Mushrooms, LLC". He spoke briefly about his operation and the various types of mushrooms he grows.

**Myers moved to approve the minutes from the April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2025, meeting, seconded by Spaid. Motion carried.**

Cooperating Agencies

- NRCS's Toothman provided a written report. He reminded the board of the upcoming Local Work Group Meeting.
- FSA's Ward spoke about payments currently going out from FSA. She mentioned FSA is undergoing staff rearrangements due to early retirements and rifts. She has been working with WVCA's Jones to get maps for cooperators. FSA sent out a letter about crop reporting. Cienawski verified new people couldn't sign up for FSA's honeybee program until the fall. Cienawski also spoke about high tunnels being damaged in micro storm events. He questioned how to get money to cooperators dealing with these damages when the events are not state or even countywide. Ward reiterated that FSA doesn't have funding for high tunnel damage, but that FSA can supply a

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storm report. Whetzel clarified that a storm report isn't enough to activate exigency funding. Hoalcraft will provide Ward with the list of what activates exigency funding.

- Malencia reported the Monongalia County Fair date had been set (Sept 9-13). He spoke on a gardening in small spaces program he is working on and gave a report on the Farm Safety Day event. He reported on an upcoming chicken coop class.
- See spoke on the dry conditions and extension's hope to get ahead of the issues resulting from that this year. See asked about possible interest in a basic high tunnel repair class. She spoke on an agritourism conference she attended and reported that Preston County extension is moving out of their current building this month. Cienawski and Spaid spoke about a high tunnel project for a Preston County school being worked on through RC&D.
- Duncan reported on IRA funds being released. Duncan informed the board that the WVACD Community Outreach Grant has been reinstated but the deadline is September 30, 2025. The board expressed concerns about meeting this deadline. An extension is being requested but is not guaranteed. Duncan reported the GRASS grant has been frozen. The East Area Meeting will be held at MCD at 10AM on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The July quarterly meeting will be held on July 16-17.
- Vanta reported on his work with Envirothon and the Grasslands Contest. Cienawski asked about MCD's rack cards. Vanta reported he was still working on obtaining a QR code for RC&D. Cienawski will get this code to Vanta.

#### WVCA Reports

- Kokoska reported that the Marion County Commission canceled the bid process for the Mannington Channel project. Cienawski said there were concerns with the bids including questions about the contract language and the fact that no onsite visit occurred. The commission will advertise the project. Right now, we are waiting for DEP approval. Kokoska reported the siphon for Upper Deckers 5 is still with state purchasing. Watershed technician Bill Armstrong has returned from his leave. Estimates for mowing contracts are \$15,000 for Upper Deckers and \$25,000 for Upper Buffalo. Myers questioned how bill 941 will change the O&M process. WVCA is working on obtaining further clarification regarding this bill.
- Teets inquired about mowing Upper Deckers twice a year. WVCA will only provide funds to mow once a year. The board will be requesting more funds from the Preston

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County Commission. Kokoska encouraged the supervisors to inspect the mowing on the dams. Ways to improve advertising and attract more bidders for the mowing jobs were discussed.

- Teets asked why the district couldn't buy the siphon for Upper Deckers 5 and be reimbursed by the state. Kokoska reported that the agency did not sign off on that plan.
- As of now, 35 applications have been received for FY26 AgEP. For FY25, just over \$31,000 has been spent if the payments on today's agenda are approved. The AgEP committee will work with Jones to discuss approving more applications to get FY25 funds spent.
- Hoalcraft reported Tom McKee had requested an extension for his PDF due to some injuries. **Myers moved to grant McKee an extension on his pasture division fence contract until May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, and for the AgEP committee to continue to have the authority to grant extensions, seconded by Cienawski. Motion carried.**
- The board discussed issues with the AgEP timeline, especially not knowing how much funding they will receive until late summer.
- Lucas Sieber provided more information about his operation to the board. He highlighted the ways he's working conservation into his operation and how he wants to continue to do so. He expressed interest in the Urban Ag cost share, specifically for obtaining compressed oak pellets and soy hulls. The board encouraged him to apply under Urban Ag. The board discussed ways to broaden what Urban Ag covers in the future.
- **Myers moved to approve the cooperator agreements for Brandon Linton, Doug Sanders, Larry Sharp, Charlotte Wolfe, and Timothy Zaharko, seconded by Scott. Motion carried. Brandon Linton abstained from the vote.**
- **Myers moved to approve the AgEP payments for Robert Bartholow (PDF-\$7,500), Conrad Gall (lime-\$1,100), Barry Shahan (PDF-\$7,500), and Jeffrey Zinn (Lime-\$975), seconded by Scott. Motion carried.**
- **Myers moved to approve the GRASS applications for Brandon Linton and Peter Wentzel, seconded by Price. Motion carried with Brandon Linton abstaining from the vote.**
- Hoalcraft spoke about the GLCI Pasture Walk opportunity. The topics that can be covered are forages, nutrient management, grazing techniques, weed control, and

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soil health. The costs for the event, except for refreshments, will be reimbursed by WVCA and videos and pictures will be taken for future outreach purposes. Vanta discussed some of the plans of other districts. No action was taken.

- Hoalcraft provided a written report. She reminded the board they needed to make refreshment plans for the upcoming local work group meeting. **Myers moved to have Becky Williams provide food for the local work group meeting, seconded by Linton. Motion carried.**
- Whetzel provided a written report and highlighted the changes to the budget. He clarified that the overall AgEP budget would remain the same.

Solid Waste

- Scott reported there was an ecycle event held last weekend. Hayward Helmick attended a pollinator event that MCD participated in.
- Hoalcraft will share Preston's report when it becomes available.
- No report was provided by Marion County.

The financial statements were not available in time for this meeting. Their approval will be placed on the next agenda.

Whetzel and Hoalcraft reported the GRASS grant has currently been frozen. The hope is that the grant can still be reworked but may look different. The LOR for the GRASS grant funds is still being processed as originally planned, but these funds are tied to the GRASS grant and may need to be recalled once the revision is completed.

Letters of Request

**Myers moved to approve the following LORs:**

- **16300 – WVU Extension GRASS Partnership - \$40,000**
- **16314 – FY25 AgEP Exigency Rebalance Allotment - \$2,804.98**
- **16347 – Q1 District Support Allotment - \$33,082.00**

**Seconded by Spaid. Motion carried with Brandon Linton abstaining due to a conflict of interest with the GRASS LOR.**

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New Business

- Summer meeting sites were discussed. Cienawski and Linton are looking into Apple Annie's as an option for Marion County's August 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. Teets and Spaid are working on a Preston County location for the September meeting.
- The board worked on completing their annual plan. **Scott moved to approve the annual plan as completed in the meeting, seconded by Spaid. Motion carried.**
- Jean Conley, Art Mouser, and Andy Price were chosen as the Nomination Committee.
- Myers expressed a desire to order new district merchandise. **Myers moved to approve ordering new district merchandise, seconded by Spaid. Motion carried.** Hoalcraft will get prices and options to the board at the next meeting.
- **Myers moved to move the July meeting date to Thursday, July 10<sup>th</sup>, seconded by Linton. Motion carried.**
- **Myers moved to donate a rain barrel and rain barrel diverter kit to Operation Welcome Home for a training class, seconded by Linton. Motion carried.**
- Hoalcraft will reach out to possible district farm of the year candidates to schedule visits on Wednesday May 7<sup>th</sup> or Friday, May 9<sup>th</sup>.
- **Cienawski moved to approve a new contract for Ray's Land Services for Snow Removal and Lawn Care, seconded by Scott. Motion carried with Myers abstaining from the vote.**

Hoalcraft provided various correspondence to the board.

Funding Request

No action was taken on the request from the State Fair Committee.

**Myers moved to approve the cost of 2 Conservation Camp campers (\$550), seconded by Price. Motion carried.**

Committee Reports

Safety/Building/Grounds/Equipment

- The appraisal came back and all drawings from Mills Group have been completed.
- Redoing the bathrooms was discussed.

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- The post driver lost a pin and a fastener. Parts have been ordered to fix the issue.
- The 5-ton lime spreader has a lot of issues. Mike Sisler is working on addressing them. Scott requested that Sisler send an invoice for parts and labor.
- The contract for the NRCS outside building was discussed. Myers stated it was a term lease that couldn't be broken. Myers moved to not sign the release of claims for the shed, the motion died due to lack of second. No action was taken on the outside building release.
- The release of claims for the office space was discussed. Cienawski urged the board to not sign the release of claims until repairs were done, especially to the walls. The damage to the NRCS door was discussed, a claim will be filed with NRCS once a quote for a new door is received. **Myers moved to sign the release of claims for 201 Scott Ave. Suite B (office space only/not outside building), seconded by Price. Motion carried with Cienawski opposing.**
- Myers urged the board to consider redoing the bathrooms and the plumbing for a kitchenette. He also would like the board to consider purchasing new, updated cameras and buying a few additional cameras to cover blind spots on the property.
- Cienawski stated the board needed to tackle one project at a time due to funding.
- Spaid stated if the board is redoing the plumbing for the bathrooms, the plumbing for the kitchenette should be done at the same time.
- Bathroom changes and that process was further discussed.
- **Spaid moved to begin the process to renovate the bathrooms and update the plumbing pursuant to the blueprints provided by Mills Group, seconded by Myers. Motion carried.**

**Upper Deckers Watershed**

- The siphon for Upper Deckers 5 was further discussed. Cienawski questioned why it was taking so long and what would happen if a major event occurred. Kokoska assured the board he would provide them with an update as soon as he receives it, reiterating that going through the proper channels to make a major purchase takes time.

**Upper Buffalo Watershed**

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- Cienawski reported the Marion County Commission would be sending \$7500 for support in July.
- Cienawski also reported the Marion County Commission would put money towards the Mannington Channel cleanup.

**Education**

- Price reported that the Farm Safety Day did not have a great turnout, but the pollinator event had a great turnout. He highlighted an upcoming rain barrel class.

**Grasslands**

- Myers reported the Appalachian Grazing Conference will take place across 3 different locations.
- Myers reported the Morgantown High School Envirothon team received 3<sup>rd</sup> place at Envirothon.

Mouser thanked the district for their support of him and his family.

**Spaid moved to adjourn the meeting at 1:28pm, seconded by Price.**

*Mark Teets                      6/5/25*  

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*Mark Teets, Chairman*

