

Southern Conservation District

Special Board/Committee Meeting Minutes

December 30, 2025

10:00 AM

The Southern Conservation District Board of Supervisors met on Tuesday, December 30, 2025, at 10:00 a.m. in the conference room of the District Office, located at 463 Ragland Road, **Beckley, WV 25801.**

Those in Attendance:

Supervisors:

Randall Patton, Chairman

Edgar Hendrick, Secretary

John Farrell (Teleconference)

Randy Prince (Teleconference)

Rachel Prince (Teleconference)

Bill Cook

Curtis Murphy

Ron Testerman

Steven Johnston

Others:

Jesus Nandi Roman, WVCA

Brian Fry, WVCA

Dave Parkulo, SCD

Morgan Dial, WVCA

Open & Welcome

Randall Patton, Chairman

Bill Cook led in prayer, and Steven Johnston led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Southern Conservation District Operations and Business

Review/Approval of October 2025 Financial Reports

District Operating Account

District Building Account

Supervisor Travel & Per Diem Account

CDO Account

District Reserve Account

Steven Johnston made a motion to approve the October 2025 Financial Reports as presented. Curtis Murphy seconded, motion carried.

Review/Approval of Accounts Receivable Aging Summary:

Dave Parkulo, SCD

After review, Steven Johnston made a motion to approve the reports as presented, and Curtis Murphy seconded; the motion carried.

Review/Approval of Co-Administered WVCA Financial Reports:

Ed Hendrick made a motion to approve the October 2025 reports as presented. Steven Johnston seconded, motion carried.

Edgar Hendrick made a motion to approve the November 2025 reports as presented. John Farrell seconded, motion carried.

Special Board Adjournment:

Following review of all reports, Ed Hendrick made a motion to adjourn the December 30, 2025, Special Board/Committee Meeting. Steven Johnston seconded. Motion carried, and the meeting was officially adjourned at 10:12:22 a.m. EST.

Southern Conservation District Committee Meeting

Purchase of Scale:

The Board discussed the potential need for a scale for District use. It was noted that while a scale may be useful at times, access to an existing scale owned by another individual was available when needed, although it would require transportation and setup. A scale previously reviewed by the Board was described as high quality but costly, and members discussed whether the expense was justified given the District's limited use of it. The Board further discussed scale accuracy and certification requirements, noting that certified scales are typically inspected on a scheduled basis in accordance with state regulations, and that the frequency of certification can vary

The Board then discussed the potential acquisition of a replacement pickup truck for the SCD fleet. Parkulo reported that he is seeking to replace an older District vehicle with a new crew truck and rotate an existing truck into limited local use. He stated that the estimated cost for a replacement vehicle is approximately \$64,000 based on recent pricing and that the District's operating account currently maintains a strong balance. Parkulo noted that prior vehicle purchases were typically paid for outright, and both financing and outright purchase options were considered. Several members expressed general agreement that replacing older vehicles on a staggered cycle is beneficial for reliability and cost management. Patton requested that the proposed vehicle purchase be placed on a future agenda with finalized pricing and purchase options for Board consideration.

Building:

Ed Hendrick, SCD

The Board discussed several building- and office-related concerns that had been raised by staff and others working in the building. Parking issues were discussed, including concerns regarding a vehicle occupying two parking spaces near the rear of the building. It was noted that the individual involved indicated difficulty seeing the parking lines, and staff discussed the possibility of repainting or refreshing the parking markings when weather conditions permit. Additional suggestions included the possible use of reflectors to improve visibility in the area.

Concerns were also raised regarding odors in the restroom facilities at a previous meeting, which were described as having a sewer-related odor. It was noted that the issue appeared to resolve on its own and has not been consistently observed. RD staff also reported stained ceiling tiles and questions regarding air filter maintenance in certain office areas. It was noted that routine maintenance is already scheduled, and Parkulo agreed to monitor these conditions.

The Board discussed exterior lighting and visibility at the building entrance, particularly during low-light or inclement weather conditions. Parkulo indicated that the lighting meets current standards and that no immediate changes are planned; however, minor enhancements to visibility, such as the use of reflectors, could be considered. Discussion also included building access points and long-term considerations related to entrance usage and potential future security requirements, such as those under lease renewals or federal building standards. No immediate changes were proposed. Internet and phone system issues were also discussed. It was noted that the internet service appears to function adequately, including for other agencies housed in the building, and no widespread connectivity issues were identified. However, concerns were raised regarding the phone system, including call routing, voicemail functionality, and the automated message played to callers. Staff noted that the current system does not allow callers to easily reach individual staff members or leave direct voicemails, resulting in inefficiencies.

The Board discussed the need to explore alternative phone system options, potentially through a local provider or the District's internet service provider, to improve call handling and functionality. There was a general agreement that improvements are needed and that staff should

explore options to address the issue. No formal action was taken, and Parkulo was approved to proceed with investigating solutions and reporting back as needed.

Finance:

Curtis Murphy, SCD

Curtis Murphy presented a finance update to the Board. He informed the Board that interest rates are continuing to decline, noting a decrease from approximately four percent to approximately 2.2 percent based on recent inquiries with local banks. He stated that the District's certificates of deposit are not due to mature until May 2026 and expressed dissatisfaction with the current rate environment; however, he indicated that he would continue to monitor interest rates and investment options as maturity approaches.

Murphy also provided an update on the District's outstanding equipment loans. He reported that the District remains current on its loan obligations and that the remaining balances are manageable. Murphy stated that, based on current payment schedules, he expects the District to be able to pay the loans in full within an estimated timeframe of fifteen to thirty months. No action was taken.

Ag Enhancement:

Morgan Dial, Brian Fry, Curtis Murphy, SCD

The Board and staff discussed administrative issues related to cost-share and AgEP program implementation, including project cancellations, sign-up structure, and funding distribution. Staff reported an unusually high number of cancellations during the current year, which resulted in administrative inefficiencies and a number of applicants remaining unfunded. Concern was expressed that the existing penalty structure does not adequately discourage late cancellations or account for the impact on other applicants. The Board discussed potential policy changes to address cancellations, including the possibility of establishing penalties for participants who cancel projects without a valid reason. Examples of valid reasons discussed included serious medical issues or other documented extenuating circumstances. The concept of allowing a grace period of approximately thirty days after sign-up, during which a participant could cancel without penalty, was also discussed. Outside of that period, the Board considered whether participants should be restricted from program eligibility for one or two years. The discussion included whether penalties should be applied per individual co-operator, rather than per practice or per farm, to prevent circumvention through multiple operations. No formal action was taken, and the Board agreed that these concepts should be reviewed further during development of the next AgEP agreement.

The Board also discussed whether Brian Fry should be granted authority to approve the next eligible applicant when a project is canceled, without waiting for Board approval, in order to reduce delays and ensure available funds are fully utilized. It was noted that such authority could be delegated through the AgEP agreement, with staff reporting approvals to the Board at the next meeting. Discussion indicated that replacement approvals would be based on available funding and would not necessarily be limited to the same practice category. No formal action was taken.

Fry outlined challenges associated with the current multiple sign-up periods, including participant confusion, increased mailing costs, and repeated unfunded applicants. The Board discussed the possibility of transitioning to a single annual sign-up period, allowing participants to apply for all desired practices at one time. It was noted that certain practices, such as nutrient management or frost seeding, could still be ranked later in the year, with participants informed that approvals for those practices would occur at a later date. The Board discussed concerns regarding funding equity, noting that some participants may receive funding repeatedly while others remain unfunded over multiple years. A potential approach discussed involved reviewing funding history over several years to inform ranking decisions, while continuing to use required ranking forms. It was noted that any such approach would require Board approval. This item was presented for discussion only.

Education & Marketing:

Ron Testerman, SCD

Ron Testerman provided updates on events hosted by WVU in surrounding counties. He also encouraged the board to submit century farm applications.

Meeting Adjournment:

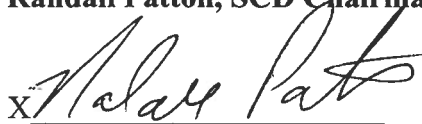
As no official business was conducted, no motion to adjourn was required. The meeting concluded.

Dates To Remember:

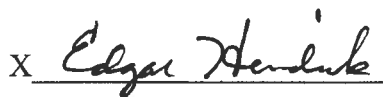
SCD Regular Board Meeting: January 8, 2026, at 10:00 AM @ 463 Ragland Rd, WV, 25801.

Respectfully Submitted: Jesus Nandi Roman, West Virginia Conservation Agency,
Administrative Specialist.

Randall Patton, SCD Chairman

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Edgar Hendrick, SCD Secretary

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RP/EH/JNR

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