

TYGARTS VALLEY CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Regular Board Meeting Minutes

February 9, 2026, 9:00 AM
TVCD Office in Philippi, WV & via TEAMS

ATTENDANCE

Supervisors Present: Donnie Tenney (Chair), Delbert Vandevander (Treasurer), Mateal Poling, Joseph Shaffer, Jim Nester, Tom Short; TEAMS: James Dean (Vice Chair)

Partners Present:

WVCA: Jim Roy, Ben Heavner, James Helmondollar, Amber Higgins; (TEAMS) Don Whetzel, Erin Coda, Jocelyn Gaujot
 WVACD: (TEAMS) Vanta Coda
 WWU Extension: (TEAMS) Brittany Leggett
 WVDOF: Rudy Williams
 NRCS: Jared Nestor, Tyler Putzulu, (TEAMS) Robbie Shomo

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chair Tenney called the meeting to order at 9:00 AM.

Nester led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda & Minutes:

- February 9, 2026, Agenda
- January 22, 2026, Special Meeting minutes
- Motion by Shaffer, seconded by Short, to approve Agenda and Minutes as presented; Motion carried.

New WVCA Conservation Specialist: James Helmondollar was introduced as the WVCA Conservation Specialist assigned to TVCD. He's a senior at WVU, set to graduate with a degree in animal science and a minor in agriculture. He'll work part-time (Mon/Wed/Fri) until May 18, then transition to full-time.

TVCD REPORTS

Treasurer's Report: Vandevander

- Jan 1 Primary account balance: \$30,770; Jan 31: \$50,964
- Accounts receivable: \$6,662
- Freedom Bank: \$1,329 (secondary checking), \$19,324 (savings)
- Income: Rentals \$1,640; Community Grant Reimbursement \$8,165; CDO support \$23,397
- Expenses: Utilities \$2,428; Building Repair 1,283; Event Supplies \$410; Per diem \$4,520; Travel \$1,781; Mortgage \$1,133; Payroll taxes \$1,203
- **Motion to accept Treasurer's Report as presented was made by Shaffer, seconded by Nester. Motion carried.**

District Conservation & Crew Report: Vandevander

- Two crew members currently working; painting office spaces
- Jan payroll: \$1,615
- Income from prior months: \$7,450
- Accounts receivable of \$6,662 paid last week
- Skid steer repairs complete

Watershed O&M Report: Roy

- Working with Vandevander on work orders for Pecks, Shooks, Elkwater
- Possibly also some work for West Fork CD

AGENCY REPORTS

WVCA: Whetzel

- CDO budget and personnel plan (on agenda for approval later)
- Highlight: SB631 would transfer flood control responsibilities from districts to the state agency; board consensus requested
- **Board opposed SB631** due to potential loss of maintenance work and control over dams
- Higgins will notify WVACD with this statement:
“The Tygarts Valley Conservation District Board of Supervisors has reached a consensus on SB 631. The board is opposed to the bill because it would likely result in Conservation Districts losing maintenance work, as well as all control and involvement with dams and watershed structures.”
- Upcoming events:
 - Quarterly meeting – Feb 17, Association Office, Elkins
 - Ag Day – Feb 18, Capitol (shuttle service provided)

WVACD: Tenney (on behalf of Duncan) and Vanta Coda

- Feb 17 Flatwoods coordination; Feb 18 Conservation Day at Capitol (TVCD will staff table)
- Association seeks event sponsors; \$100 non-supervisor memberships available
- State Fair volunteer sign-up
- Vanta Coda’s updates:
 - “Seeds for Support” handouts with seed packets for Ag Day
 - Media package for Maple stories to be distributed
 - Coordination with Maple Syrup Producers Association and Future Generations University

WVU Extension: Leggett

- Upcoming educational opportunities:
 - Feb 24 Winter tree ID workshop (6–8 PM)
 - Beekeeping classes start Feb 24 (Barbour Co., Tuesdays)
 - Small Farm Conference end of Feb, Charleston (includes WV Pop-Off popcorn contest)
 - Webinars every Tue in March: animal health, pasture & weed management, ponds, invasive species
 - Producer efficiency webinars Feb 12 & 26
 - Weekly “Lunch & Learn” series continues Thursdays at noon
- Other local meetings:
 - Taylor Co. “Farming Outside the Box”
 - Randolph Co. dinner meeting on minerals & animal health

NRCS: Nestor

- 210 applications throughout TVCD in progress for first-round funding
- Regenerative Ag initiative handled through EQIP and CSP; soil health is likely easiest entry point
- New soil health practices require advanced testing by certified Technical Service Providers; 5–10-year contracts with extensive recordkeeping and data reporting
- Local Work Group priorities outlined in letter; board to review and provide feedback
- Planning for next Local Work Group meeting (date/venue to be on agenda for next meeting)
- Cost-share available for pond building through EQIP/AMA (must serve ag/livestock water needs, continuous signup)

WesMonTy RC&D: Poling

- Bluebird and pollinator houses are available; new varieties are coming soon
- Exploring new ideas (e.g., bat houses, monarch habitats)
- Preparing for Capitol Day; new rack cards ready

WVDOF: Williams

- Fire danger currently low
- Recent activities: log checks, road clearing with crews, landowner reconnaissance
- Pocket planners available
- New hire: Emmy Bradley (Taylor Co.); Wetzel & southern Marshall positions still vacant, intern lined up for May
- Preparing for Capitol Day; staffing adjustments ongoing

OLD BUSINESS

Revised CDO Budget & District Personnel Plan: Vandevander

- Copies included in board packets
- Revisions balance state agency funding
- **Motion to approve Revised CDO Budget and District Personnel Plan was made by Nester, seconded by Poling. Motion carried.**

Eat & Reap Dinner, Feb 11, 2026, “Farming Outside the Box” at Tygart Lake Lodge

- 31 RSVPs (includes one voicemail RSVP during office closure)
- Within \$1,000 budget approved in January; attendees will pay \$10 each (speakers exempt)
- Past events indicate that actual attendance may be lower than RSVPs

WV DEP Air Sensor Partnership

- DEP seeking two air sensor locations per county; municipal/city/county/state building locations needed, spaced apart for better coverage; board members asked to confirm sites and provide contacts
- County status:
 - **Barbour:** (Covered) Audra State Park application received; TVCD office working on second application
 - **Taylor:** (Need 1) Tygart Lake application received; one needed away from Grafton
 - **Tucker:** (Need 2) Suggestions for Blackwater Falls and Canaan Valley, but no applications yet
 - **Upshur:** (Need 2) No applications or suggestions received
 - **Randolph:** (Need 1) Kumbrabow State Forest applied; need one spaced away from there
- Chair requested DEP program details be emailed to supervisors for outreach
- Item will remain on next month’s agenda

Northern Panhandle CD/Wheeling Watershed Assn Case: Dean

- No updates
- Board agreed to take no further action at this time

NEW BUSINESS

WVU Soils Team Sponsorship: Tenney

- Budget allows for contributions; past donations included similar support for soils teams and other programs
- **Motion to donate \$250 to WVU Soils Team was made by Short, seconded by Nester. Motion carried.**

WV Small Farm Conference – Feb 26–28, Charleston: Tenney

- Board reviewed packet with sponsorship/exhibit options
- Leggett suggested prioritizing local events over sponsoring/exhibiting at Charleston conference
- No action taken; item noted for consideration

Century Farm Applications: Tenney

- Four applications received (two Barbour, two Randolph)
- After review, board agreed to submit all four to the WV Century Farm Program for further consideration
- Names to remain confidential (one is a surprise for a family member)
- **Motion by Shaffer to approve all four applications for submission to the WV Century Farm Program for further consideration; Poling seconded. Motion carried.**

Appalachian Grazing Conference Scholarship: Tenney

- Board agreed to allocate \$250 total, providing two \$25 scholarships per county for the five counties TVCD serves
- If fewer applicants, total expense will be reduced
- **Motion by Shaffer to allocate \$250 total for Appalachian Grazing Conference scholarships; Nester seconded. Motion carried.**

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Building, Budget & Finance: Vandevander

- Painting in office spaces is ongoing; darker colors being covered
- One office completed, a few remain
- A new custodian has been engaged on a contract basis; first cleaning occurred over the weekend
- Staff and tenants are pleased with the results so far, noting attention to detail

Education, Publicity & Exhibit: Poling

- New educational materials prepared for Charleston event
- Education efforts continuing despite weather challenges

Legislative: Tenney

- Board discussed Senate Bill 651
- Members planning to visit Charleston to meet with legislators; no major funding requests anticipated
- Focus will be on educating legislators about the importance of conservation and district services to constituents

Grassland/AgEP: Dean

- Recommendations from 2/6/26 AgEP Committee Meeting:
 - Practices to remain the same for FY27: Lime, Pollination, Pollinators, Small Scale Soil Amendment, Watering System, Heavy Use Area Protection, Urban Agriculture
 - Pond Cleanout removed; two new practices added:
 - Invasive Species Management (Chemical only; 75% cost share, \$500 max)
 - Frost Seeding (60% cost share on seed, \$720 max)
- FY27 AgEP Signup Period: May 4–May 29, 2026; applications accepted Mon/Wed/Fri
- Completion Deadlines:
 - Dec 18, 2026: Watering System, Heavy Use Area Protection, Lime
 - May 28, 2027: Frost Seeding, Pollination, Pollinators, Small Scale Soil Amendment, Urban Agriculture, Invasive Species Management
- Contracts void if not signed and returned within 45 days
- Cancellation notice required at least 60 days before completion deadline to protect future eligibility
- Exigency program cooperator cap moved from \$500 to \$750
- Newsletter and application materials will stress need for updated farm map and soil sample with each application
- Staff at TVCD office may be limited during signup:
 - Applications accepted Mon/Wed/Fri; cooperators should call ahead if visiting Tue/Thu
 - Agency and supervisors may assist with coverage
- **Motion by Nester to approve AgEP recommendations as presented; Shaffer seconded. Motion carried.**

Water Resource: Short

- Noted that water levels should improve when snow melts and rain begins
- Some springs currently appear frozen; thawing expected this week

WVACD Directors: Nester, Tenney

- No additional items reported

Personnel, Work Crew, Equipment & Safety: Cunningham

- Will need additional crew members for summer
- Plan to start mowing soon; need a couple crew members to run weed eaters

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

- Supervisors reported attending RC&D meetings and participating in association committees
- Preparing educational materials for upcoming events, following up on education-related grants, and planning for future district and association activities

ADJOURNMENT

Board Chair Tenney adjourned the meeting at 11:05AM. (Minutes compiled and prepared by Amber Higgins, WVCA Administrative Specialist)