

**Morris County Soil Conservation District  
Supervisors Meeting  
January 26, 2022**

**The January 26, 2022, meeting was called to order by Chair Louise Davis via phone, 30 Schuyler Place, top deck parking lots, Morris Township, New Jersey. The Chair the Open Public Meetings Act requirements have been met. Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 10:4-6 et seq. adequate notice of this meeting was provided by giving the time, date, and location and to the extent known the agenda of this meeting. At least 48 hours in advance this notice has been posted on the bulletin board, 30 Schuyler Place, Morris County Annex Building in Morristown; emailed to The Star Ledger, the Daily Record and filed with the Office of County Clerk.**

The following individuals were present:

Chair:	Louise Davis
Vice-Chair:	Phill Roehrich
Treasurer:	Marc Slaff
Secretary:	Robert Danowski
District Manager:	Joe Dunn
District Secretary	Nancy Krivda
Ag. Cons. Specialist:	Kara Hasko
NJACD Director:	Lily Mehl

Absent: Bob McEwan, Assistant Treasurer

The Meeting was called to order at 2 PM by Chair Louise Davis

**Correspondence:** Mr. Dunn reported no actionable items in correspondence

**Minutes:** The chair asked for any revisions from the board, seeing none, a motion was requested for the minutes to be accepted as submitted. Motion by member Slaff second by Danowski. The Chair announced all approved and that the motion carried.

**Chair:**

The Chair announced regrettably the resignation of Kara Hasko as our Agricultural Conservation Specialist. Kara has accepted a position with the USDA NRCS Frenchtown Service Center. The Chair indicated the positive result of having Kara remain within the employment of our programs.

**ACS Report:**

Kara indicated that this would be her last meeting and expressed her gratitude toward the Morris County Soil Conservation District for the past four years of employment. She presented the metrics associated with the past month's workload for her position as a whole and Morris County specifically. These included 10 applications assessed and ranked plus 11 site visits with one becoming ineligible. In addition, Assisted a trainee with a site visit surveyed field ditches for cleaning, trained new soil conservationist and Morris SCS ACS on how to create a cost estimate, compiles the NACD grant report

along with the district staff. The board echoed the Chair's regret at the loss of Kara Hasko in the ACS position.

**Finance:** Motion made by Member Slaff and seconded by Member Roehrich to approve paying the bills since the last meeting. The Chair indicated all approved, and the motion carried.

**Manager:** Mr. Dunn is still working on organizing all minor violations under SWO for the subcommittee with Members Danowski and McEwan for discussion next meeting.

Mr. Dunn discussed at length staffing shortages during the last month and half. Staff were divided into two teams for working alternate days. Unfortunately, one team either contracted COVID 19 or were exposed to COVID 19. This required application of the CDC policy regarding 10-day self-isolation. In addition, another member had a 100% loss of his home due to fire which required time away from the office. There were no injuries associated with the fire just loss of the home. As a result, the office was staffed by only one person per day rather than the 2-3 staff per day. This staffing decision allowed for an office presence to remain in effect. Mr. Dunn indicated that by the end of the month that the staff should be back to full strength. He also stated that there were no ill effects to client services as the timing of the staff shortage coincided with the annual holiday/winter lull in applications.

Covid-19 Update: Mr. Dunn discussed the recent history of board actions regarding the use of administrative time to assuage staff from coming into work in contradiction to CDC guidelines. Mr. Dunn requested that the board consider an additional 90-day extension of a 14-day administrative leave policy when CDC guidelines are applicable to otherwise healthy staff. After discussion the Chair requested a motion to grant a continuance of the policy of applying 14 days administrative leave per annum temporarily to be reconsidered at each monthly meeting. Motion by Member Danowski Second by Member Slaff. The Chair announced all approved.

### **New Business:**

The Board was informed of the new federal mileage rate that will be applied to staff use of their privately owned vehicles (POV) when used for work. This is in accordance with district policy as annually renewed at the reorganization meeting every July. The mileage rate is now \$0.58.5 per mile.

The NJACD agenda item was corrected to address another subject regarding NJACD. The item should have been about upcoming regional meeting entitled March Partnership Meeting "Focus on Partnerships" on Monday March 28, 2022, 7AM- 3PM at the Freehold SCD offices. The Chair reminded the members of this meeting date and location.

The presentation regarding Renewable Energy Assessment for farm & rural landowners was given by Laura Tessieri, PE, is the Executive Director for North Jersey Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D). She apologized for the original speaker, Frank Pinto's, absence due to a scheduling conflict. She went on to explain that the local non-profit North Jersey RC&D has received funding from USDA to provide farms and rural businesses in northern New Jersey a renewable energy assessment. The program uses only your utility bills, satellite imagery, and weather data (no site visit) to create a renewable energy assessment.

She described its partner, EnSave, and the program will work with farmers and rural businesses to answer any technical questions, help determine the appropriate renewable energy project, and ultimately develop a renewable energy assessment

report so that applicants can move forward with confidence. EnSave is an independent third-party qualified consultant with over 30 years of serving agriculture and rural communities with their energy needs. She requested that the district help in getting the word out about this program and thanked the board for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Dunn discussed the current circumstances of getting landowner's requests for assistance (RFA's) in advance of the Farm Bill contracts and or plan/practice approvals. The inconsistent nature of these RFA's referred to our attention seems to trend toward denials as RFAs for urgent or non-farm bill related assistance make up the majority of these RFA requests. The same is not true for more traditional farm bill requests and or familiar landowners. After discussion it was the consensus of the board to require RFAs in advance of approvals for USDA work products.

### Unfinished Business

Work From Home [WFH] procedures were discussed, and it was the consensus of the board to allow the Chair and District Manager to determine the scheduling and termination of WFM.

The 251 subcommittee Members Danowski & McEwan met before the holidays and the manager provided the members with the context of the old and current policies regarding plus a tour of three tracts currently in various stages of violation. Member Danowski discussed in general the degree of severity each site along the tour represented. Home sites with major excavation to home site with minor soil disturbances but protracted in nature.

### **251 Certifications:**

Motion made by Member Roehrich to approve 251 Certifications and seconded by Member Slaff. The Chair announced all approved and that the motion carried.

### **RFA Authorizations:**

Motion made by Member Danowski to approve RFA and seconded by Member Slaff. The Chair announced all approved and that the motion carried.

The Chair requested a motion to go into executive session for contract negotiations. Motion made by Member Roehrich second by Member Slaff to leave public meeting and open Executive session for the purpose of negotiation. The Chair announced all approved and that the motion carried. The Chair also indicated that the board would adjourn, will not be taking any formal action or hold public discussion upon conclusion of the executive session.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:55 PM by the Chair.

Let the minutes reflect Member McEwan was absent from the meeting and could not act on any projects or conflicts affiliated with Bob McEwan Construction regarding 251 Certification or litigation.

**Respectfully Submitted**  
**Joseph P. Dunn**