

MONTGOMERY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING  
September 9, 2022

The regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Montgomery Soil Conservation District (MSCD) was held Friday, September 9, 2022, virtually on the GoToMeeting platform.

People Present:

Tim McGrath, Treasurer  
Linda Lewis, Supervisor  
Doug Tregoning, Supervisor  
Tom Linthicum, Associate Supervisor  
Joe Lehman, Associate Supervisor  
Chris Miller, Associate Supervisor  
Mike Scheffel, OAG  
Kelly Nichols, Extension  
Sam Engler, District Conservationist (NRCS)  
John Zawitoski, District Manager (MSCD)  
Ibraheem Jastaniah, (MDA)  
Kathleen Sigwart, (MDA)  
Karen Walker, Office Service Coordinator (MSCD)

Having a quorum of 3 supervisors, Tim McGrath, District Treasurer, and the senior supervisor, called the meeting to order at 8:00 am. Mike Scheffel, of the Office of Agriculture was invited to present the report for the Office of Agriculture.

**Agency Reports:**

**OFFICE OF AGRICULTURE:** Mike Scheffel presented the report for OAG and mentioned there are several important items that continue to be listed. Mike shared highlights and details on a couple of items listed.

- **Bill 40-21- Individual Water Supply and Sewage Disposal Systems - Amendments (McCartney-Green)** The Bill 40-21 will be discussed during the October 24, 2022, Transportation and Environment Committee. The OAG will remit to the agricultural groups an amended copy of the Bill 40-21. Highlighted in yellow all of the sections that would be burdensome to property owners and have been recommended for deletion. The agricultural community should promote these amendments as a way to replicate Howard County's septic tank educational program without punishments etc. Mike indicated the best approach should be less adversarial and to present alternatives that would be more acceptable for all stakeholders. Howard County's approach is to provide information, education and not have punishment associated with the septic pump-out law.
- **Office of Legislative Oversight on the Status of TDRs and BLTs** - The OAG staff and MNCPPC are working with the Office of Legislative Oversight to gather data and information to update the TDR and BLT programs. The OLO staff has presented draft sections of the final report and the OAG is providing comments and additional information. The OAG believes the findings from this report will show that the County Government and MNCPPC have not proposed new receiving capacity for TDRs for the past 10 + years. Mike explained the OLO is getting close to the finish line but are awaiting to get agreement on the number of TDRs and BLTs between the OAG and MNCPPC. Once there is an agreement on the numbers, OLO will put together their report and offer their findings.

- **Bill 13-22 Buildings-Comprehensive Building Decarbonation scheduled for Planning Housing and Economic Development Committee on October 17, 2022.**- All agricultural groups provided letters to the County Council and the MAP provided in person testimony during the public hearing. The Council Member Hans Riemer has responded to the letters from the agricultural groups stating that agricultural and farming uses will be exempt from the Bill 13-22. Hans has instructed the Council Staff to draft this exemption for agricultural and farming uses. The link to information concerning Bill 13-22 is incorporated into the minutes below:

[https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2022/20220614/20220614\\_3E.pdf](https://www.montgomerycountymd.gov/council/Resources/Files/agenda/col/2022/20220614/20220614_3E.pdf)

Mike then provided a summary of the proposed amendment that would exempt agricultural and farming uses. This proposed amendment is also being incorporated into the minutes below:

On the bottom of page (2) the Exemptions sections begins on line 27 and carries over to page (3)

27 (c) **Exemptions.** All-electric building standards do not apply to new  
28 construction, major renovations, or additions in:

29 (1) the emergency backup systems of buildings that require an  
30 emergency system and hence backup power;

31 (2) buildings primarily used by a utility regulated by the Maryland  
32 Public Service Commission for the generation of electric power or  
33 steam;

34 (3) applications for building permits submitted to the Department  
35 prior to the effective date of the regulation;

36 (4) district combined heat and powers facilities; and

37 (5) buildings used for the following uses, as defined in Chapter 59:

38 (A) Manufacturing and Production uses;

39 (B) Crematory;

40 (C) Life Sciences; [and]

41 (D) Commercial Kitchens **and**

**42 (E) Agricultural Buildings**

- **Rustic Roads Master Plan Update-** The OAG provided additional comments to MNCPPC on July 29, 2022, in response to the messages from MNCPPC dated July 15, 2022, outlining the progress and status of the Rustic Roads Master Plan Update.

The OAG is developing a power point presentation titled “*The Rustic Roads Through the Eyes of the Farmer*” that will feature pictures of Rustic Roads along with testimonials from farmers regarding their views of the Rustic Roads program and MCDOT maintenance and improvements. There are about 15 farmers that have responded so far. Incorporated into the minutes below are specific links concerning the Rustic Roads Master Plan Update:

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/RusticRoadsFunctionalMasterPlan1996ocr300.pdf>

<https://montgomeryplanning.org/planning/transportation/highway-planning/rustic-roads/rustic-roads-master-plans/>

- **County/State Staff updates-** The interviews to fill Cathy Yingling position were completed on September 2, 2022, and new staff will start soon. Mike noted there were 3 good interviews and offers

were made. Hopefully, we will hear something soon. John shared that there has been movement on the engineering position as well that the position should be advertised soon. Mike responded yes; OHR are beginning to get these positions moving along.

Alga Piechocinski's Faculty Tenure position was announced, and three candidates were interviewed in August during the County Fair and the new 4H Program Extension Educator starts on September 12, 2022.

Rick Walter's Area Extension Direct position was announced, and two candidates were interviewed and presented on August 29, 2022.

The 4H job description for the position that was held by Santana Mays will be posted soon. The Master Gardeners administrative position to replace Linda Walters was posted and Steve Dubik is receiving applications from potential candidates.

- **FY 23 Operating Budget for the OAG:** - The BDS position that Kristin Fisher once held and prior to 2010 was sent to OHR to be posted. The MSCD Engineering Position-Technical assistance was sent to OHR to be posted.
- Mike requested that Supervisors review the attached **FY22 Report for the Farm to Food Bank Program** - There are 32 County farmers that are participating with the program, and we continue to see interest in the program by elected officials, food assistance providers and farmers.
- Mike then provided a quick update on a pending **proposal to assign an FSA Executive Director for both Prince Georges and Montgomery County**-This proposal is coming from the FSA leadership, and it would mean that Montgomery County farmers would no longer work with Missy Donnelly and that Montgomery County Farmers would continue to receive their FSA programs and services from the Derwood Office. Mike noted that John attended the MASCD meeting and invited him to provide an update on the matter. John shared that he had the opportunity to talk with John Sullivan during the Monday night banquet about the rumor floating around about staff assignments for the Montgomery County Office. John specifically asked if there was a proposal that would shift office responsibilities from Missy Donnelly to the County Executive Director in Prince Georges County? John indicated that Mr. Sullivan's response appeared that he did not have a detailed grasp of what was rumored as being proposed or if he was trying to avoid discussing this issue at this time.
- John explained to Mr. Sullivan that what he understood from the proposal was that the FSA Executive Director would travel from Prince Georges to Montgomery County to service farmers. While this may look good on paper, logistically, there is no easy way to get to the Montgomery County Office from Upper Marlboro and would be a tremendous burden on our Farmers if they had to travel to Upper Marlboro. John explained to the Board that he had not had the opportunity to speak to Missy about this rumored proposal as she is hardly ever in the Montgomery County Office anymore. John felt that at this point, we should consider asking for a meeting with John Sullivan, along with the local agricultural support agencies and Board members to discuss this rumored proposal. As of this meeting, we have not received anything formally about this change in operations. There was a lengthy discussion on this matter and Tom suggested that the cluster should be Howard, Montgomery, and Carroll County.
- After the FSA discussion, Tom had a question for Mike on the septic tank bill. Tom noted that Jeremy presented the material to the Farm Bureau and mentioned an easement would be required. Mike responded that this is a potential requirement. Mike shared the proposed easement would allow the county

to have the ability to visit properties for the purpose of inspection and to perform maintenance if a landowner failed to act.

Later, Tim commented as a realtor, all property sold must meet the minimum standards for well and septic and he wasn't clear on the initiative. Mike responded the septic bill would be an avenue for suburban/urban area to achieve their storm water management WIP goals. John noted the 2025 WIP goals are comprised of 4 sectors: agriculture, stormwater management, septic & wastewater treatment and provided the statistics for each sector. John noted that agriculture and wastewater treatment have been carrying most of the nutrient reduction load and this Bill is likely the County's response to holding the other sector (septic), to certain goals to contribute the progress being made by ag and wastewater within the WIP. Unfortunately, owners of ag land would be impacted by this Bill as rural lands are where most of the County septic systems lie.

Tom remarked that he felt the County placing a septic easement on the existing septic system on his property would be illegal. Mike explained that he thought the easement would pertain to new constructed or replaced systems being permitted by the County. This heavy-handed approach by the County is a concern to the ag community and it is why the ag groups have advocated for an approach that should be less heavy handed and more educational. John suggested to huddle up once Jeremy gets back and suggested Supervisor that have concerns to participate in the huddle/discussion. The goal is to present a unified front.

**Upcoming Meetings and Events:**

Montgomery County Farm Bureau Board of Directors- September 6, 2022; COG FARM Committee Tour of Ag Reserve-September 9, 2022; Montgomery Soil Conservation District-September 9, 2022; MCFB Policy Development Committee-September 12, 2022; Agricultural Preservation Advisory Board-September 13, 2022; Poolesville Day-September 17, 2022; MSCD Cooperators Dinner-September 19, 2022; Agricultural Advisory Committee-September 20, 2022; MCFB Legislative Event at Calleva-September 29, 2022

**MDA-** Adam Lyon, Patuxent Area Coordinator presented the report of behalf of MDA. Adam explained that following the 2022 MASCD Meeting, MDA is working hard to get the conservation plan prioritization tool rolled out so it would be available for Districts to utilize.

MDA is working on an equine GIS database to assist in MDA's outreach effort to the equine community. Once the information is compiled, Adam will work with each district to try and figure out how the partnership may better serve the equine community and let them know of the available MDA programs. Again, this year MDA will be attending, the Maryland 5 Star at Fair Hill. The event is scheduled for October 13 – October 16 and last year's event was very successful, and districts had several new cooperators as a result of this event. This year we are expanding our efforts, thinking outside of the box, and offering a saddle pad give-a-way as an effort to attract and get interest from the equine community.

Continuing with the massive recruitment of new positions is still something MDA is currently facing. They have already interviewed, for the District Manager positions for Garrett and Sommerset Counties. They have advertised and interviewed for a western area coordinator position. Interviews will be conducted during the week of September 26 for planners and technicians. MDA is looking to fill 20 positions and they will be conducting 8-10 interviews per day. The goal is to get them on board as soon as possible with the new position description and roll out the technician reporting workbooks.

Adam then reported on Avian Influenza (AI) and informed the board that new cases of AI have been reported in Virginia and Kentucky. Unfortunately, we do expect it to return to Maryland and MDA is working with Delaware, NRCS and other agencies to have a comprehensive plan to address a future outbreak. Adam noted more than likely he would be assigned to this task and apologized in advance for not being available for some Board Meetings. Adam noted having the Western Area Coordinator position filled should help. Although Adam couldn't share the name of the person offered the position he is well known.

Tom asked Adam about flock identification and noted there are a lot of birds in Montgomery. Adam responded that backyard flocks are to be registered and noted that is Maryland law. This led to a lengthy discussion and John shared two situations/matters whereby landowners with limited English proficiency have flocks which we believe are not registered, and that either flock owners were unaware of flock registration requirement or have been informed but failed to comply. To date John is unaware if the birds are registered and he noted that often birds are slaughtered, and producers haven't received any training and are not following the proper licensing protocols. Adam would like to work with John and follow up to see if the flocks are registered. John noted there will be a featured article on Avian Influenza in the upcoming October MSCD newsletters. Maryland law on flock registration will be a part of the article and we will work with our social media person to get the information out. Tom thanked Adam for the things that MDA does and noted this situation could negatively impact the entire agriculture community.

**Extension Report**– Kelly Nichols - U of MD presented her report and explained that she received some questions on controlling Palmer Amaranth and Water Hemp. She shared details on weed identification and how to distinguish between red root or pig weed and noted that at this season there is little that can be done for control.

**Staffing Updates** -Kelly was excited to announce that Arnelle Quashie will be starting as the new 4-H Educator here in Montgomery County. Her first day will be next Monday. There is a second Open 4-H Educator that she hopes will be filled soon.

**Tar Spot Confirmed in Maryland**- Tar spot, a new (to Maryland) fungal disease of corn, was confirmed in Harford County in late August. Tar spot was first confirmed in the Midwest in 2015, then in Pennsylvania in 2020. At this point, most corn is far enough along that tar spot likely won't cause much yield loss. However, this is something to scout for next summer. Tar spot likes cool, wet conditions. If it infects corn at early dent or earlier, there is potential for significant yield loss. Lesions from tar spot look like tar splattered on the leaves; they are usually raised and cannot be washed or scraped off. Tar spot also causes corn to dry down more quickly. Other diseases can look like tar spot. For more information on identification and management, see this fact sheet from the Crop Protection Network. She also noted if someone thought they were impacted by any diseases she could send samples for diagnostic testing, and it is a free service for commercial growers and farmers.

**Close Encounters with Agriculture** - We are gearing up to welcome thousands of fourth graders to the Farm Park! Close Encounters will take place most days in October. Students learn about agriculture, nutrition, and the environment through various activities and lessons. The field trips take place from approximately 10:15am-1:30pm. If you are interested in seeing the program (or perhaps volunteering!), please reach out, and she will be happy to provide you with more information. We thank the Farm Bureau Board and MSCD for their continued support!

**Atrazine Changes** - EPA is proposing changes to the use of atrazine. One proposed change is to reduce the annual application rate from 2.5 lbs to 2 lbs per acre. More information can be found in an article in our latest Agronomy News.

**Survey for Cole Crop and Leafy Green Producers** - Weed scientists from Clemson University are interested in gauging interest in autonomous weed control in Kale and leafy green crops. To participate in this national, 10–15-minute survey, visit the survey website.

**Survey for Urban Ag and Small Farmers** - The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA) is developing a financial assistance program to support urban agriculture and small farm operations. The agency is interested in hearing from farmers whose operation is within an urban or peri-urban area or rural/suburban area with a production area that is less than 10 acres.

**Fall Armyworm and Western Bean Cutworm Traps** - Traps are located near Poolesville and she recently removed them. To date, no fall armyworm moths have been caught. Three western bean cutworm moths were caught in July, but none since.

**Potomac Edison Agriculture Initiatives** - A representative from Potomac Edison contacted Kelly with information about their Energy Solutions for Business Program, which includes incentives for agriculture. Eligible incentives include the purchase and installation of energy efficient livestock waterers, low-pressure irrigation system, engine block heater timer, high efficiency ventilation fans, and high-volume low speed fans. For more information, visit Potomac Edison's website or contact Melissa Felton at 443-529-0855 or [melissa.felton@clearesult.com](mailto:melissa.felton@clearesult.com).

### Upcoming events

- Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) Training on September 14 & 15 in the evening. For more information, contact Carol Allen at [callen12@umd.edu](mailto:callen12@umd.edu). If you can't make this training but still want to learn more about GAP certification? Let Carol know!
- Practical Experiences in Nutrient Management, September 27, from 9:30am-3:00pm at the Central Maryland Research and Education Center in Clarksville. Topics include pasture and hay management, corn yield checks, question and answer session with MDA, and manure spreader calibration. Cost is \$30 and includes lunch. Four nutrient management credits are available. For more information and to register, visit [go.umd.edu/PENMseptember2022](http://go.umd.edu/PENMseptember2022).
- Pasture Walks will be offered across the state this fall at the following dates and locations:
  - September 22, 5:30pm, in Clear Spring (Washington County). Topic: Multi-Species Grazing. [www.go.umd.edu/septemberpasturewalk](http://www.go.umd.edu/septemberpasturewalk)
  - October 12, 4:00pm, in Edgewater (Anne Arundel County). Topic: Equine Pasture Renovation. [www.go.umd.edu/octoberpasturewalk](http://www.go.umd.edu/octoberpasturewalk)
  - November 17, 4:00pm, in Ellicott City (Howard County). Topic: Grazing Stalks/Cover Crops. [www.go.umd.edu/novemberpasturewalk](http://www.go.umd.edu/novemberpasturewalk)
- Agriculture Law Education Initiative Conference on October 28, at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Annapolis. Sessions planned for the 2022 conference include the upcoming debate on the Farm Bill, agricultural and environmental law developments, food waste, environmental justice, heirs' property, and the hemp industry in Maryland. Registration is \$50 to attend in person or \$40 to attend virtually. For more information, visit the conference website.
- Pesticide and Nutrient Management Meetings for Montgomery County will take place later this fall. Dates are listed below. All meetings will take place at the Montgomery County Extension Office from 6:00-8:00pm. Registration information will be announced soon.
  - Private Applicator Pesticide Exam Training (optional): Thursday, October 27

- o Private Applicator Pesticide Exam: Thursday, November 3
- o Private Applicator Pesticide Recertification Meeting (for those who already have a license): Thursday, November 10
- o Nutrient Management Voucher Training: Thursday, December 1

After Kelly presented her report, Doug commented that he remembers Atrazine being a 4lbs per acre applied product and he wanted to know where we are on the proposed change reduction. Kelly went to the website and noted that EPA is proposing changes to reduce the annual application rate from 2.5 lbs. to 2 lbs. per acre. Doug noted concern about avenues to really address use of this chemical, as lower amounts may not be effective for control. Kelly concurred and she would like Kurt to speak at the Agronomy Update Meeting on the matter.

### **SECRETARY/ TREASURER'S REPORT**

John noted that approval of the August Board Minutes was next on the agenda. Tim remarked all have received a copy of the minutes and asked if there were any questions or corrections. Having no questions or corrections, a motion was made by Linda Lewis and second by Doug Tregoning and passed approving the August 12, 2022, Board of Supervisors Minutes.

Karen then presented the financial report and confirmed that the checkbook and bank statement have been reconciled. She has received notice of the annual MDA audit and that she has contacted Daniel Ensor of the TGM Group, to prepare for the audit. Her goal is to get the initial draft to TGM soon so that she can meet the October due date. She shared she has received notice of the CBTF, and the 1<sup>st</sup> payment will be mailed soon. She noted the Board had provided previous approval to address the Cooperators Dinner and shared that we have secured both caterer and tent for the dinner. It appears we may have record attendance, and this will result in increased costs for this event.

Karen indicated for this month that there were two MDA expenses for the month of August; MSCD purchased stamps and renewal of Adobe software license. She was not aware of any donation requests. John confirmed there were no requests and provided a reminder that last month's donations: members of the Envirothon team (\$300 each) and support for CEWA (\$1,000). Karen recommended approval to file the August Financial report. A motion was made by Doug Tregoning and second by Linda Lewis and passed approving to file the August MDA Financial reports.

### **District Activities Report and Program Update**

Sam Engler, District Conservationist presented the August Activities Report and John placed the report on the screen. Sam noted there are several conservation plans in progress and that we have 7 completed plans. John listed the conservation plans he had to present. After listing the plans Ibraheem noted there was a signed conservation plan that was submitted late. Sam noted he would check for late submittals, but they may just be submitted for approval next month.

John addressed the one request for assistance and shared it is a pond issue. John provided great details and noted the pond is not agricultural or stormwater management; It is a recreational pond. John addressed all the challenges associated with this request and has only committed the District to conducting an on-site visit to help evaluate the project and permitting requirements. John shared details required for meeting NRCS 370 Pond Standards and shared information on how the District evaluates whether a project can be considered maintenance vs reconstruction. John explained that if the project involved reconstruction, it would require the landowner to hire an engineer to do the design work. The request resulted in a lengthy discussion and John shared generally this is something the MSCD would not be involved with. After the discussion on the RFA,

John asked if there were any questions or concerns on the activities listed on the report and if there are none, he requested a motion to accept the August Activities Report. A motion was made by Linda Lewis and seconded by Tim McGrath and passed approving the August Activities Report.

After the approval of the Activities Report, John noted there are no outside attendees in this meeting and in the interest of time, he suggested to close the general meeting to conduct an Executive Session and to reconvene the General Meeting once conservation plans were approved. The Supervisors agreed and by unanimous consent, the General Meeting Closed at 8:45 am to conduct the Executive Session. At 9:00 am, the General Meeting was called back to order and the remaining public business for the meeting continued.

**District Managers Report:** John noted there is only one action item required from the District Manager Report and mentioned Linda Lewis is having a farm tour that is scheduled to start soon. In the interest of time, he would only address items or any questions the Supervisors may have. The entire report would be incorporated into the minutes.

### **New Business**

**CBT Fund Budget Update-** We have received the Trust Fund Agreement between MDA for the Board's review and approval. MDA has aligned support for non-state Secretaries and District Managers to the State of Maryland Standard Salary Schedule effective July 1, 2022, at the grade and step utilized in FY22. The fringe was estimated at a fixed rate of 31%. The budgeted amount is \$70,209, which is \$17,552 per quarter. This amount represents an increase in funding of \$2,989 for the FY.

John recommended the Board support executing the CBTF MOU with MDA. John noted that a live signature is required, and he suggested for Doug Tregoning to sign the agreement as he comes to the office. We will need to execute 3 original agreements and forward them to MDA. A motion was made by Tim McGrath and seconded by Linda Lewis and passed approving to sign-off on the CBTF agreement.

**Looming CBTF Shortfall FY24-** During the MASCD District Managers meeting, there was a short discussion about a looming shortfall in CBTF funding for FY24. This would be next year's budget issue. As you know, the CBTF supports cost share for the Manager and our Office Services Coordinator Positions. When MDA did the major staff up, many positions funding as contractual positions in the CBTF were migrated to full time pinned state positions. Now that these positions are State funded, the demand on CBTF is going to exceed MDA's current budgeted amount. The last time this occurred MDA asked the District's to solicit the legislature for increase in CBTF to the Department to continue support for the DM and administrative support. We may be asked again to conduct a similar outreach. MDA is weighing options and will be reporting back the District on this matter this fall. Adam explained that MDA's Administration is looking into ways to continue to provide services. Also, there was a discussion on the incoming new governor and the budget process. John noted that when we meet with the legislators for the MASCD Winter Meeting, this will be a top priority. The CBTF and the Looming shortfall are linked together.

**NACD/MASCD Meeting Discussion/Observation -** Overall, the combined meeting was well organized and well received by staff, and supervisors in attendance. There were two resolutions adopted by the association:

1. Solicit NRCS to prioritize agricultural stormwater management in their training program. This training is needed to allow districts to assist with stormwater management through the Soil Conservation and Water Quality Plan.
2. Solicit MDA's support to increase the State contribution of per diem for supervisors attending meetings from \$25 to \$50. The per diem rate is capped at \$100 in total however MDA currently only supports \$25 of this amount.



There as one additional resolution offered from the floor by Lee McDaniel. It concerned MASCD's support for NACD to pursue discussions with federal delegation to discuss the ongoing issue many states are having with maintaining NRCS and FSA in District collocated offices. The Federal agency who oversees federal spaces does not understand the long-standing relationships have with Districts and it has resulted in at least 2 Districts where NRCS and FSA are no longer collocated. This resolution in intended to help get this issue resolved as it is in no one's best interest not to have these offices collocated. This amendment was supported unanimously by the Association membership.

The MASCD Board of Directors passed the Association's budget for this year. An increase in dues is expected for Districts. While there was a discussion on deemphasizing grants to supplement the Association operating budget, the Board of Directors did not want to see the Association abandon the pursuit of mission central grants to help Districts.

The Board also reconfirmed its support for the PBS Farm and Harvest programming and will be looking for support from all the district's for this item.

The Board of Directors also voted one additional item form the floor. This involved MDA's cover crop program eligibility tied to the Nutrient Management Certification Report. For a number of reasons, Cover Crop Program acres are down across the State this year. Cover Crops are a big WIP nutrient reduction tool farmers can employ. There was concern expressed among supervisors that at a time when Cover Crop acres are down, disqualifying farmers applications on the basis that they were not able to get their Nutrient Management Plan updated in time for Cover Crop program application seemed counter intuitive. Supervisors felt some leeway should be provided to accept this application and provide farmers some additional time to get their plans updated. By and large, the farmers turned away had plans but they had expired. The BOD voted to write a letter to MDA expressing their concerns about this eligibility requirement and to see if there was not some avenue available to maximum participation in this program.

**Update MDE Small Pond Approval Program and Engineer-** MDE has informed the District's that they are moving ahead to implement the new State Policy concerning Small Pond Approvals. Once we have an engineer hired, we will need to formalize an agreement with the State. John did reach out to Jennifer Smith at MDE to let her know that the District has an approved position and is in the process of hiring an engineer. John explained to Jennifer that our requirements for our engineer were patterned by the requirements in the draft MDE/District MOU and that once we knew who would be on staff, that the District would coordinate with MDE on finalizing the agreement for the MSCD. John has worked with the OAG to finalize the job announcement and advertisement. One thing that was discussed during MASCD was the challenges many districts were having in finding qualified candidates.

**District Annual Audit-** MDA has sent notice that October 19<sup>th</sup> is the due date for the audit. We are preparing to work with our previous auditor the TGM Group, LLC (Daniel Ensor).

**MDA's Urban Ag and Small Farms Program-** MDA announced at MASCD a new urban agriculture and small farms program. This program is designed for producers that are located within an urban area or have a production area less than 10 acres. There have asked for our help is distributing a questionnaire to potential clients. The data gathered from the questionnaire will assist with the development of a financial assistance program for these operations that typically have been ineligible for most of the programs through Conservation Grants. John has reached out to our staff to make them aware of this new opportunity and to reach out to any cooperators that they are working with that might benefit from this program. We also will be doing a newsletter article to help promote this new program to potential applicants. The link to the questionnaire is incorporated into John's report below:

[https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfpSGyhLqGdimq-RVQa3\\_YEdR\\_5k505zmAsfrZILg4QTiGGXA/viewform?usp=sf\\_link](https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfpSGyhLqGdimq-RVQa3_YEdR_5k505zmAsfrZILg4QTiGGXA/viewform?usp=sf_link)

**OLD Business**

**2022 Cooperators Dinner Update-** Planning for the Dinner continues. We have received over \$1,000.00 in sponsorships so far and reservations are continuing to come in. It looks like our dinner will be highly attended this year. John thanked Tom for Seneca Ayr’s support for the dinner.

**Cover Crop FY23 sign up and program participation observations** – John wanted to provide Supervisors a quick summary of this year’s cover crop sign up. As expected with fuel costs, availability of seed and commodity prices, we have seen a decrease in enrollment for this year’s program. Before the meeting officially adjourned, Linda asked if the numbers are low for FY23 Cover Crop due to submitting applications online. John responded that this may be one reason; however, the process does not preclude a farmer from making paper applications. MDA does prefer online submittal is but not all farmers are able to submit applications online.

**Close Encounters with Agriculture-** The Close Encounters with Agriculture Program will be held during the month of October. Doug can provide additional details concerning CEWA. If any Supervisor is interested in volunteering during the program, please let me know.

**ADJOURNMENT AND NEXT MEETING**

The meeting officially adjourned at 9:25 a.m. and the next scheduled Board of Supervisors Meeting will be in person with the option to attend virtually on October 14, 2022, at 9:00 am.

Regards

Karen Walker, Administrative Assistant

<b><u>MEETINGS ATTENDED</u></b>	<b><u>PERCENTAGE</u></b>
Butz	100%
Butts	80%
McGrath	100%
Linda Lewis	100%
Doug Tregoning	100%
*Linthicum	50%
*Joe Lehman	60%
*Chris Miller	90%

\*Associate Member