



Members Participating: Rick Dovey, Mike Rigolizzo, Matt Ward, Jim Hill, Ray Cywinski.

Also Participating: Ines Zimmerman, Executive Director; Frank Minch, SSCC; Sara Mellor, SSCC; Robert Reitmeyer, Burlington SCD; Matt D'Alessandro, Somerset-Union SCD; Dan Caldwell, Burlington SCD; Christine Raabe, Ocean SCD; Mike Bonham, Cumberland-Salem SCD; Tim Thomas, Freehold SCD; Janet Rekesius, HEP SCD; Michael Kent, Cape-Atlantic SCD; Erika Boyland, USDA-NRCS.

Call to Order: President Dovey convened the meeting at 10:45am.

Motion to Approve Minutes: Deferred. The minutes from the March 11, 2024, meeting were not presented. William Engisch, NJACD Secretary, was not in attendance. Ines will transcribe the video recording from the March meeting and for this April meeting and circulate same to the members. The minutes for both will be presented for approval at the June 10, 2024 meeting.

Financial Report: Treasurer Hill gave a report, noting that additional certificates of deposit with better interest yields have been added. An account spreadsheet was sent electronically earlier in the week.

Annual Budget: The budget was emailed to the full membership on March 15, 2024. The 30-day comment period requirement has been satisfied.

Matt Ward moved the approval of the 2023-2024 budget. Mike Rigolizzo seconded. Voice vote: All members voted "aye" in the affirmative. Motion carried.

President's Report: The National Association of Conservation Districts' Spring Fly In was held on March 20, 2024, in Washington, DC. Representing New Jersey: Rick Dovey, Mike Rigolizzo, Matt Ward, Erika Boyland, Joe Lomax and Ines Zimmerman. NJACD prepared a 2023 Congressional Annual Report, as well as NACD Farm Bill flyers and several other one-page documents noting the NRCS and NACD requests and accomplishments. President Dovey and 1st Vice President Rigolizzo found the Hill visits very productive in raising awareness about the districts and their mission.

Regional Supervisors Meetings: Registration for the regional dinner meetings is complete. Scheduled are:

Southern Region Meeting, **April 18th** at the Maplewood III, Vineland—28 registered

Central Region Meeting **April 23rd** at Villa Mannino, Bordentown—37 registered

Northern Region Meeting **April 30th** at Barka, Mountain Lakes—24 registered

An agenda is in circulation. Newly appointed NJ Department of Agriculture Secretary Edward D. Wengryn plans to attend all meetings to introduce himself to the district representatives.

The 2024 NJ Envirothon is coming soon. President Dovey thanked the Freehold SCD for their ongoing efforts to prepare for the May 18, 2024 competition. Ines Zimmerman offered that the NJACD had sent in the park permit application and is securing a one-day insurance binder for the event. Food has been ordered, t-shirts and awards are in progress. At last count sixteen teams were registered, with potentially more to join.

President Dovey entertained a discussion regarding NJACD annual dues. Matt Ward asked whether scaled dues may be revisited. Treasurer Hill will send out vouchers for payment to the districts. **Consensus: Dues will remain at \$850 per district for this year. Dues discussion will continue either at regional meetings, by committee or at the annual business meeting.**

President Dovey asked for a motion to authorize a contract to be extended to Ines Zimmerman as part time Executive Director now that the budget is approved. Motion: The motion to offer the contract was made by Mike Rigolizzo and seconded by Ray Cywinski. **Voice vote: All members voted “aye” in the affirmative. Motion carried.**

Executive Director Report: The 2024 NJ Poster Contest local winners are being sent to the Freehold District. Districts are holding their own contests and grade level winning posters will be sent on to NJACD for state level judging and awards.

The 2024 NJ Envirothon is scheduled for May 18, 2024, at Big Brook Park in Monmouth County. NJACD and Freehold are coordinating with Chris Edwards for the development of a scorekeeping protocol.

NJACD has been asked to partner with NJDA and the NJ Water Supply Authority to apply for a grant from the USDA-NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP). The goals of the grant application will focus on district capacity building, agroforestry and climate smart agriculture initiatives, green infrastructure planning and conservation easement enhancement. NJ Water Supply Authority is authorizing additional financial support to extend the reach of the RCPP grant proposal. The deadline for submittal is July 2, 2024. NJACD has engaged the services of a civil engineering firm to help prepare the grant application proposal.

Updates to the website were discussed. Matt Ward offered to help with content opportunity ideas and made several suggestions for enhancements. All agreed that the website will be a helpful information hub for regional, national and statewide initiatives.

NACD Board Member Report: Ray Cywinski, NJ Representative to NACD, reported planning for the NACD Summer & Northeast Region Meeting agenda and training opportunities is ongoing.

Several regional grant opportunities for districts will be circulated from NJACD as they become available. Districts may also receive training notifications and webinar notices.

NJDA Report: Frank Minch, SSCC Executive Secretary stated that the NJDA is pursuing various grants including an EPA Climate Pollution Reduction Implementation Grant (CPRG). These competitive grants are for eligible executive branch levels of government to plan and implement measures through air pollution controls and energy and water efficiency.

This is budget time for the Department and the SSCC is working with the new Secretary to discuss program need.

NRCS Report: Erika Boyland, NRCS Acting State Conservationist, reported USDA-NRCS Chief Terry Cosby visited with staff and partners at the state office on April 11, 2024. Several agencies and interested were represented. He asked for cooperative support to meet the demand of unprecedented levels of funding for conservation measures.

Erika noted that her assignment in NJ would end by June 30th. President Dovey offered thanks for her work and partnership.

Other Agency Reports/Closing Remarks: Mike Kent, President of the Northeast Conservation District Employees Association reiterated Chief Cosby's intent to create long term agreements with the Conservation Partnership and found the discussion encouraging.

Matt Ward, 2nd Vice President recommended that a team be assembled to start planning for the NJACD Annual Business Meeting and Conference. Ideally a "Save the Date" card should go out, with a location confirmation TBA. He also offered the need to continue discussion on supervisor performance standards.

Motion to Adjourn: Hearing no additional comments or discussion, **1st Vice President Rigolizzo offered a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by Matt Ward. By voice vote, all participating members voted "aye" in the affirmative. Motion carried.**

The meeting concluded at 11:40am. The next meeting will be held on June 10, 2024, immediately following the regularly scheduled State Soil Conservation Committee meeting.

Approved On: June 10,
2024

Minutes Prepared by:

Ines Zimmerman, Executive Director