



Cumberland-Salem Conservation District
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Meeting Minutes - September 23, 2025

Mike Bonham	Karol Blew	Ralph Sickler
Maury Sheets	Henry Dubois	Ron Thomas
Tom Tedesco	Tairi Melchiorre	Michelle Pedano

Chairman Ron Thomas opened the meeting at 6:00 p.m. Due notice by order of the "Sunshine Law" was given and noted.

Meeting Minutes

The minutes of the June meeting were approved as written. Motion made by Ralph and seconded by Maury. Passed.

NRCS - Cumberland & Salem Field Offices

Michelle and Tairi presented the Cumberland & Salem NRCS field office reports. Tairi Melchiorre is acting District Conservationist for the Woodstown Service Center. NJ Audubon is hosting Black Duck with Biologists on September 23rd in Woodstown. The Vineland Conservation Open House event will be on September 24th and the Cape May Plant Material Center is having a 60th Anniversary event on September 25th. FY2026 Farm Bill Financial Assistance Programs (EQIP, AMA and CSP) signup date is October 17th. There remains an engineering staff shortage at New Jersey NRCS and projects that require engineering will need to contract with private engineering firms for projects. Several farm conservation plans, conservation agreements, and NRCS program contracts were submitted for approval. Motion to approve the NRCS action items made by Ralph and seconded by Maury. Passed.

Financial Report

Mike reviewed the financial report and noted that the District's net income from June 16, 2025 through September 15, 2025 was \$-4,223.23. Chapter 251 revenue was \$51,410.00. The payments for bonding, business auto, workers compensation and the commercial business insurance were paid during the reporting period. Motion to approve the financial reports made by Ralph and seconded by Maury. Passed

CD - CDARS

Staff discussed transferring funds from a low interest savings account to a 3.75% 6 month CD through CDARS. After discussion Motion to approve the transfer made by Ralph and seconded by Maury. Passed

251 Report

Mike reviewed the 251 report. The District remains active with commercial and residential projects in Cumberland and Salem County. Permanent stabilization is underway on projects that were issued temporary compliance during the summer months. The District has been issuing non-compliance inspections reports/violations to projects that are not in compliance with their soil erosion and sediment control plans. The District has been working closely with site contractors to ensure they fully understand the permanent stabilization requirements and expectations for final site compliance. Motion to approve the report made by Ralph and seconded by Maury. Passed.

FY2026 Budget

Mike and Karol presented the draft FY2026 District budget. State Health benefits are expected to increase over 35 percent. The District has budgeted for building maintenance, HVAC improvements, and a second District vehicle. Motion to approve the FY2026 budget made by Tom and seconded by Ralph.

District Audit - Nightlinger Colavita Volpa

Nightlinger Colavita Volpa has been working with District staff to conduct the FY2025 District audit. Staff have been providing the financial reports and requested documentation to the auditors.

Fee Schedule

The District is currently operating on a 2008 fee schedule. The process for revising/updating a District 251 fee schedule involves project file audits and an analysis of District operating costs. Karol has been working through the District operations spreadsheet and based on the input data the District has a Chapter 251 operating rate of approximately \$150 per hour. Based on project file audits, the current complexity of SESC and stormwater reviews for projects, and the District involvement on residential and commercial projects, the District presented a proposed fee schedule/required hours to review/inspect average projects. After discussion the District proposed utilizing a \$120 per hour operating rate and will base the proposed fee schedule modification to the SSCC utilizing a rate of \$120/hour. The District will analyze the hourly rate and fee schedule on a

more frequent basis going forward. Motion to approve proposed fee schedule made by Tom and seconded by Maury.

District 5 Year Audit Review

Mike discussed the District 5 year audit review provided to the District by the SSCC. The findings from this report indicated that the District relies heavily on Chapter 251 revenue. Mike indicated that the District is working towards diversification in agricultural conservation and working with SADC on soil and water cost share.

Annual Conference

The New Jersey Association of Conservation Districts Annual Partnership Meeting will be held at the Conference Center at Mercer on November 24th.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:15 p.m. Motion made by Maury and seconded by Ralph. Passed.