

## FREEHOLD SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Regular Meeting  
June 10, 2026

4000 Kozloski Road  
Freehold, NJ

### I. Call to Order

Vice Chairman Robert Dreyer called the meeting to order at 1:47 pm.

### II. Pledge of Allegiance

### III. Roll Call

	<i>Present</i>	<i>Absent</i>
Charles Buscaglia		x
Robert Dreyer	x	
Roger Gravatt	x	
Wayne Van Hise	x (via phone)	
Thomas Taylor	x	

Staff Present: Timothy Thomas, District Manager, Paul Califano, Assistant District Manager and Andrea Farparan, Board Secretary

Others Present: None present

Special comment by Vice Chairman Dreyer  
*The Board extends wishes of good health to Chairman Buscaglia*

### IV. Compliance Statement

Secretary Farparan confirmed that pursuant to the Open Public Meetings Act, N.J.S.A. 10:4-6, et seq., adequate notice of this meeting was provided at least 48 hours in advance by publishing in the Asbury Park Press and the Home News Tribune, mailing the Monmouth and Middlesex County Clerks and posting at the entrance to the District office, a notice giving the time, date, location and, to the extent known, the agenda of this meeting, and stating whether formal action may or may not be taken.

### V. Reports from other Agencies

Morgan Devine, USDA-NRCS District Conservation (not in attendance) provided a written report with updates for the Fiscal Year 2026 Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP). The Freehold Service Center is finalizing contracts in Monmouth County (20), Middlesex County (4) and Mercer County (17) with total funding exceeding \$1.5 million. Funding remains available in the Conservation Stewardship Program, and applications are currently being accepted.

### VI. Approval of Minutes

The Board reviewed the minutes of the May 13, 2026, regular meeting. Supervisor Van Hise made a motion to approve the minutes of the regular meeting with the amendment of "Sayreville received a conditionally satisfactory determination and Piscataway received a satisfactory determination" in Section XI: District Manager's Report, Item 1 Exempt Municipalities. Supervisor Taylor seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

### VII. Treasurer's Report

The Board reviewed the Treasurer's Report. Supervisor Taylor made a motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Supervisor Gravatt seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following roll call vote: Supervisor Taylor – yes, Supervisor Van Hise – yes, Supervisor Gravatt – yes and Supervisor Dreyer – yes.

*VIII. Bills for Payment*

The Board reviewed the bills for payment for June (in the amount of \$ 247,297.95). Supervisor Taylor made a motion to approve the action of the committee of purchase for payment of the bills as presented. Supervisor Gravatt seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following roll call vote: Supervisor Taylor – yes, Supervisor Van Hise – yes, Supervisor Gravatt - yes and Supervisor Dreyer – yes.

*IX. Correspondence*

1. Columbia Bank

- The District received notification that Columbia Bank will merge with and into Columbia Financial, with Columbia Financial being the surviving entity.

2. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) update

- NACD Board Member, Ray Cywinski provided a memo from Jeremy Peters, NACD CEO regarding recent congressional and executive actions.

Supervisor Taylor made a motion to accept and file the correspondence as presented. Supervisor Gravatt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

*X. Committee Report (attached)*

1. FY2026 Scholarship

- Paul Califano, Assistant District Manager reported on the selection process and offered the Committee's recommendation for the recipient of the 2026 William T. Schauer Conservation Scholarship. Supervisor Taylor made a motion to award Alex Blaszczyk the scholarship as recommended by the committee. Supervisor Gravatt seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following roll call vote: Supervisor Taylor – yes, Supervisor Van Hise – yes, Supervisor Gravatt – yes and Supervisor Dreyer – yes.

*XI. District Manager's Report*

1. Fiscal Year 2027 Proposed Budget Key Points

- Category One – Salaries Wages and Benefits reflects current employees as of July 1, 2026 with an additional site inspector to be hired.
- Category Five – Building and Utilities increased due to the addition of an expense line item for Microsoft subscriptions.
- Category Eight – The Scholarship category is being removed and a stand-alone scholarship budget is to be created as recommended by the District's auditor. Increasing the award amounts and the number of scholarships awarded was discussed.

Supervisor Taylor made a motion to approve the Fiscal Year 2027 Budget. Supervisor Gravatt seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following roll call vote: Supervisor Taylor – yes, Supervisor Van Hise – yes, Supervisor Gravatt – yes and Supervisor Dreyer – yes.

2. FY2026 New Vehicle Delivery

- The 2026 Ford Maverick was delivered on June 2, 2026. The vehicle has been registered, insured and lettered.

3. National Association of Conservation Districts (NACD) Northeast Meeting

- The 2026 NACD Northeast Meeting will be held August 24 – 27 at the Chase Center on the Riverfront in Wilmington, Delaware. Please advise Secretary Farparan if you will be attending.

4. Insurance Servicing Agent

- The District's insurance policies are currently serviced by various agencies. District Manager Thomas requested Board approval to designate Strategic Insurance Partners/Kape Insurance as the sole servicing agency for the District's insurance policies. Supervisor Taylor made a motion that a Resolution be drafted authorizing Strategic Insurance Partners/Kape Insurance to negotiate directly with insurance companies on behalf of the District. Supervisor Gravatt seconded the motion. The motion passed by the following roll call vote: Supervisor Taylor – yes, Supervisor Van Hise – yes, Supervisor Gravatt – yes and Supervisor Dreyer – yes.

5. Requests for Determination of Non-Applicability

- The District receives approximately 800 Requests for Determination of Non-Applicability annually. No fee is charged for processing the requests; however, the District incurs significant postage expenses to mail the letters of determination. A motion was made by Supervisor Taylor to change the distribution to email or pick-up only. Supervisor Van Hise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

6. State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) Meeting

- The SSCC meeting is Monday, June 15, 2026. Supervisor Dreyer and Supervisor Van Hise are being re-nominated for another term.

7. Open Space Conservation Cooperative

- There are currently two open contracts with Natural Resources Conservation Service.

8. July Board of Supervisors Meeting

- A request was made to change the July meeting date due to a scheduling conflict. The Board agreed to change the meeting from July 8, 2026 to July 1, 2026.

XII: Old Business  
None to discuss

XII: New Business

1. Supervisor Gravatt made a motion to approve the attached list of certified Soil Erosion and Sediment Control plans. Supervisor Taylor seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.
2. There were no denied plans.
3. The Board has acknowledged the list of Authorizations to Discharge permits granted by the NJ DEP.
4. A conservation plan for irrigation at a Cream Ridge farm was presented for signature. Supervisor Taylor made a motion to sign the plan. Supervisor Gravatt seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

XIV: Public Comment  
None

XV: Adjournment

Supervisor Gravatt made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 3:40pm. Supervisor Van Hise seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The next scheduled meeting is Wednesday, July 1st at 1:30 pm.

Submitted by: Andrea Farparan

## 1. Summary

The purpose of this report is to formalize the selection process and final decision for the 2026 **William T. Schauer Conservation Scholarship**. Valued at \$2,500.00, this scholarship is awarded to outstanding students demonstrating academic excellence and a steadfast commitment to environmental, geological, or engineering disciplines that align with stewardship and conservation values.

Following an evaluation of a competitive candidate pool, the 2026 Scholarship Committee has recommended **Alex Blaszczyk** as the recipient of this year's award.

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## 2. Review Committee & Evaluation Framework

To ensure an objective and comprehensive review, the scholarship committee was convened to evaluate the merits of each applicant. The 2026 committee comprised the following district officials:

- **Timothy Thomas**, District Manager
- **Paul Califano**, Assistant District Manager
- **Kayla Fenning**, Site Inspector

The committee executed a holistic review of all submitted materials examining each candidate's academic transcripts, curriculum, personal essays, and professional letters of reference. Candidates were assessed based on academic rigor, alignment with conservation principles, and potential for long-term impact in their respective fields.

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## 3. Profile of Applicants

The district received applications from three college students, each demonstrating an impressive academic trajectory:

- **Applicant #1 \* Residency:** Middlesex County
    - **Institution:** Cornell University
    - **Academic Focus:** Bachelor of Science in Environment & Sustainability (Concentration: Environmental Policy & Governance)
    - **Minors:** Public Policy; Law and Society
  - **Applicant #2 \* Residency:** Monmouth County
    - **Institution:** Smith College
    - **Academic Focus:** Geosciences Major (Environmental Geosciences Track)
  - **Applicant #3 \* Residency:** Monmouth County
    - **Institution:** University of New Hampshire
    - **Academic Focus:** Civil Engineering Major
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