

**Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors.**  
**Meeting Minutes**

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**February 13 2025 at 4pm.**

Attendance:

Staff: Kacey Weber, Carl Bickford, NRCS

Supervisors: Jensen Bissell, Kent Black, Carolyn Ziegra

Assoc. Supervisors: Sam Brown, Arthur Wilkins, Alani Worden

Guests:

The Meeting was conducted via Microsoft Teams.

**Establish a Quorum:** Chair Jensen Bissell opened the meeting at 4:09pm.

**Consent Agenda** - Motion and second to approve the consent agenda and January dashboard. Unanimous to approve. This includes the previous minutes, grant reports, January dashboard and staff reports.

**Finance Report** - 2024 surplus moved into Board Designated Funds account. Onion Foundation Grant work to ensure Education Coordinator funding is on track. CD investment options discussed for existing \$12,500: 9 month CD would net \$380.

*See attached dashboard.*

**NRCS Update** - No report.

**Education Coordinator / Executive Director Report Highlights** -

Kacey reported, *reports attached.*

Taxes completed with Cheryl and Molly in January. Kacey met with SeDoMoCha and MSAD 41 and prepared budget/rates for potential funding sources. Roughly \$6500 for Penquis and \$5500 for SeDoMoCha. After meetings, administrators sat in on events: Trout in Classrooms and other classroom events (good for support at the admin level!) Dustin's training is going well and he's planning dates for all events this year. He's been attending school events and registered for the Maine TREE teachers tour, and other training opportunities.

Low likelihood that TNC funding will be affected by the new administration. RIFFLES (stream restoration work on a larger scale) could potentially be impacted as it comes from the Inflation Reduction Act. Potential for school funding to replace TNC grant funding in the future if TNC funding becomes unavailable. Annual Report submitted to state in January, public annual report completed as well. Americorps Climate Smart Corps Member funding cut as of 3/13/2025. Looking into other options for Louisa as she relocated to Orono for this position.

Events for 2025 started: aquatic invasive plants webinar, Somerset SWCD partner sugaring workshop. Maine Tree Farm Stewardship Hub workshop at PCSWCD, Dustin helping plan. Dustin's onboarding is going well.

**Board Development** - Jensen suggests sledding wood chips around Law Farm week of Feb 17.

**New Business** - Overtime banking language approval requested:

Overtime Policy: *District employees qualify for overtime as long as overtime hours are pre-approved by the employee's supervisor and they do not meet criteria for overtime*

exemption (see below). Overtime applies in situations where an employee is pre-approved to work over the number of hours that employee works on a weekly basis. Overtime is logged at time and half. The employee has the option to be paid overtime during the pay period it was accrued OR bank overtime at time and a half. If the employee chooses to bank overtime hours, the employee must follow procedures under the District's Banked time policy.

State Laws Outlining Overtime Exemption: Maine state statute recognizes the exemption from overtime for people working in a "bonafide executive, administrative or professional capacity" and requires that employers pay a salary according to the requirements of the Federal Fair Labor Standards Act (FLSA). Both Maine and federal law use a three-pronged test to determine if an employee is exempt from the overtime provisions of the law. The three prongs of the test are:

1. The employee must be paid on a salary basis. This means an employee regularly receives a predetermined amount of compensation each pay period.
2. The salary must exceed a certain salary threshold. As of January 1, 2025, the threshold will be \$43,951 per year or \$845.21 per week.
3. The employee's job duties must meet certain tests. There are slightly different tests for the administrative, professional and executive exemptions.

Banked Time Policy: District employees that are pre-approved to accumulate overtime hours may choose to bank these hours. Overtime hours are banked at time and half. Banked hours must be used within a year of accumulation and are capped at half the normal weekly hours worked - ie. Employees that work 40 hour weeks can bank up to 20 hours of time.

Example: 1 hour of overtime = 1.5 hours of banked overtime or paid immediately.

A motion was made and voted to approve this language.

Subcommittee proposed to review MOU and NRCS Cooperative Agreement. Arthur and Kent volunteered to join Jensen. They will report back in March with recommendations to vote on.

Natural Resources Education Center (NREC), part of PEEC - environmental collaborative can sponsor and work with the District. NREC can sponsor training for Maine certified guides. Districts with Guide certified employees may have further opportunities for events. Question if Dustin's work capacity allows for this training; Education Coordinator position hours may remain separate from guide training hours. NREC will sponsor training and potential for sponsorship of his work time and travel costs. This is an opportunity for the District to work more closely with NREC in the future (ex. Maine Woods Explorers). Board supports this idea.

Materials left from UMaine Climate Study: trees, plastic tubs with drainage, fencing. Arthur will take tubs and fencing, trees will go into Tree & Plant Sale.

Trout Sale: bring back for 2025!!!!

Maple taps: Tri County Tech Center students requesting taps for Law Farm. Kacey is looking for volunteer equipment and volunteer time to work with students. Taps are cheap, Jim suggests purchasing taps for District. Kent has taps and buckets to share, Jim can volunteer to do some training with students.



