

MEETING MINUTES
BUTLER COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL LAND PRESERVATION BOARD

Farm Service Agency, 625 Evans City Road, Butler 16001

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 THURSDAY, APRIL 22, 2021 – 7:00PM

Members In Attendance	Members Absent	Visitors in Attendance
Ken Moniot	Luke Fritz	
Bill Duncan		
John Allen		
Rick Stuchal		
Rob Burr		
Larry Baumgartel		
Alvin Vogel		
Eugene Bergbigler		
Commissioner Kimberly D. Geyer, Ex-Officio		Staff in Attendance
		Sheryl Kelly

The meeting was called to order at 7:05pm by Chairman Ken Moniot on Thursday, April 22, 2021. A quorum was present.

1. Public Comment

- There was no public comment.

2. Commissioner's Report

- Commissioner Geyer reported as follows:

- The Board of Commissioners met last Friday with Secretary Redding and Bureau personnel. The Department of Agriculture is in the process of developing guidelines for siting solar farms regarding productive farm land.

- Next Thursday (4/29) is the spring meeting of the Butler Farm Bureau.

- The county's Community Gardens will be plowed soon.

- Commissioner Geyer will provide testimony to the state on alternate septic systems and on the implications of how DEP's planned guidance could affect everyone.

- The Commissioners are investigating broadband in the northern areas of Butler County and how accessible it is, how much it is used, needs, etc. They are investigating how it could be provided to the areas that need it because cable, etc. service is not provided or not feasible.

3. Approval of Meeting Minutes

- Chairman Moniot asked for a motion to approve the February meeting minutes. (There was no quorum and no meeting minutes for March.) There was a motion by Rick Stuchal with a second made by Secretary Rob Burr. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

4. Old Business

- **2019 #1 Thurber Farm** – The self-contained appraisal completed for NRCS by Kelly Appraisals has been rejected, however Mr. Kelly reported to Sheryl that he will get in touch with the NRCS appraisal specialist to correct the problems. Sheryl will follow up on this. This farm cannot go to state board for approval until those corrections are made with a deadline of May 14. Sheryl has also not yet received a subordination agreement from the owner of the farm. There was a motion made by Vice-Chairman Bill Duncan with a second by Rob Burr to keep the original offer to the owner as-is with a second by Secretary Rob Burr. All were in favor and the motion was approved.

- **2020 #1 Taggart Farm** - Checks have not been received from the state in order to hold closing. This should happen any day now.

- **2020 #2 Foertsch Farm** – Checks have not been received from the state in order to hold closing. This should happen in May or June.

- **2020 #3 Riddle Farm** – All information has been received and submitted for this farm except for the title commitment which is expected any day. This farm should be on the agenda for state approval at their June 17 meeting.

- **2021 #1 Maple Shade Farm** – The owner's appraisal deposit check has been received and Sheryl will contact Clint Champagne to get this appraisal started.

- **2021 #2 Pizor Farm** – The Pizor's have signed a letter stating they are interested in pursuing Federal through NRCS. Sheryl has been contacted by the state and they have extra money left from the 2020 round to be used for this farm. Either a formal Agreement of Sale or simple Offer Letter can be submitted (and is required by NRCS), and since the AOS cannot be completed at this time, the state has suggested the Board make an offer based on an estimate of the price per acre. They provided Sheryl with a sample letter that can be modified. There was a motion made by Secretary Rob Burr with a second by Treasurer Larry Baumgartel to make an estimated offer of \$4,000.00 per acre to the Pizors and to ask the appraiser Timothy More from Centerville, PA, if he can complete the appraisal.

Sheryl is now asking farm owners up front to sign a statement if they are interested in federal funding so that the Board can hire an appraiser to complete a self-contained appraisal up front, so money is not wasted on extra appraisals. The state can accept either type of appraisal, but NRCS can only accept a self-contained appraisal.

- **Rural Enterprises**- the Board discussed state regulations, the county guidelines and decided to draft a form / application for all preserved farm owners to submit if they are proposing rural enterprises, subdivisions, etc. Sheryl will develop a form for the Board to review.

- **Powell Farm** – The subject of the former 25-year buy back of an easement was discussed and why the state asked for the county solicitor’s opinion. The Board asked Sheryl to contact the state again and get an opinion from their legal counsel.

- **Western Pa. Conservancy** – The meeting has been set between the Butler County Ag Land Preservation Board and the Conservancy on May 26 at 10:00am. Board members can attend from the Planning Commission Conference Room and will meet by teleconference. Several Board members and Commissioner Geyer will be in attendance.

5. New Business

- **There was no new business.**

6. Adjourn

Chairman Moniot called for a motion to adjourn. There was a motion made by Treasurer Larry Baumgartel with a second by Eugene Bergbigler. All were in favor and the motion was approved. The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Next Meeting:

Thursday, May 27 at the

Farm Service Agency Building, 625 Evans City Road, Butler, PA 16001

Respectfully submitted by Sheryl Kelly for Board Secretary Rob Burr.