



Turtle Creek Watershed Association Board of Directors Meeting Minutes August 25, 2026



Call to Order President Jim Brucker called the Board of Directors meeting, conducted in person at the Irwin Council Chamber and via Zoom, to order at 5:29 pm.

In attendance:

Board of Directors: Jim Brucker, Chuck Duritsa, Karen Rose Cercone, Jason Fronczek, Jason McCabe, Bill Mihalco, Kylie Schultz

Associate Directors: Amy Baer, Rob Cronauer, Ben Hedin, Ed Zinkan

Executive Director: Tom Keller

Members and Guests: Mike Baer, Shari Martino

1. Special Public Presentation about Biddle Project

Jason McCabe reported on the progress of the drilling program that is doing the research for future AMD treatment. Three of the drill holes drilled so far have definitely hit the mine void with 8-10 feet of clear space encountered. Probes have been installed in these holes, hanging inside the well to measure water pressure and temperature. The data are uploaded every 2-3 weeks.

A surveyor is coming out later this week to geolocate the drill holes and determine their elevations. Preliminary data suggest that the Paintertown Mine (sourcing the discharge into Coal Run) may not be connected to the other two, meaning that its discharge would not be eliminated by pumping from Biddle. An actual pump test of the mine has been suggested for feasibility, but the water disposal logistics would be very difficult. It could be folded into the design phase of the project.

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion was made by Chuck Duritsa, seconded by Bill Mihalco, to approve the minutes of the July 28, 2026, meeting. The motion was approved.

3. Treasurer's Report and Invoices

- Karen Rose Cercone reported for Paul Whealdon that our checking account balance is now \$8,196.37. Our savings account is now \$501.19; our first Certificate of Deposit has increased to \$15,103.54; and our second Certificate of Deposit is now \$10,087.08.
- Bill Mihalco made a motion, seconded by Chuck Duritsa, to approve the Treasurer's Report for July 2026. The motion was approved.
- Jim Brucker informed the board that TCWA's insurance policy estimate came in at a slightly higher rate than the previous year. Karen Rose Cercone made a motion, seconded by Bill Mihalco, to approve payment of this invoice. The motion was approved.
- A motion to approve Tom Keller's expenses of \$119.28 was made by Karen Rose Cercone and seconded by Chuck Duritsa. The motion was approved.

4. Executive Director's Report

- Tom reminded board members to submit their in-kind hours to him.

- Tom also asked for suggestions to improve our membership diversity and numbers. Several members and guests offered suggestions:
 - Shari Martino suggested making in-person presentations at Norwin Rotary, Norwin Chamber of Commerce and the Irwin Business Professionals Association and also partnering with the local high schools AP classes/gifted class/eco club teachers.
 - Karen Rose Cercone suggested recruiting high school or college students to serve as junior board directors for a year as a community service project.
 - Amy Baer suggested sponsoring volunteer projects that are more accessible to younger people. She also suggested staffing a table at a Creek Connections meeting or offering shadowing experiences in the field or in the office.
 - Kylie Schultz suggested offering our unsold t-shirts for a special membership drive. Tom Keller and Karen Rose Cercone agreed that this would work well for early 2027.
- Karen Rose Cercone and Tom Keller will work on putting a canned presentation together for TCWA members to present to local business groups and schools.

5. Letters issued and letters / emails received since the last meeting

- Email from Marco Vigilante about 2026 PA AMR Conference Oct 20-22 in Grantville, PA near Harrisburg. Lodging scholarships are available for non-profits – contact Robert Hughes at rhughes@epcamr.org for more information. Registration is open at this link: 2026.treatminewater.com/registraton/ (Ed note - typo in link address is theirs)

6. Old Business

- a) Irwin Discharge Committee – Jason McCabe
 - Kylie reported that RFP's are due tomorrow to assess the coal piles so that an informed decision can be made about the best way to remediate the coal piles and grade the site.
 - Road and gate construction at Biddle will continue gradually as mini-grant funding permits.
 - The federal earmark has been delivered to Westmoreland County. The funds will cover preliminary engineering to determine the best access route, site permitting, utility surveys and possibly bridge design. Jason Rigone, Executive Director of Westmoreland County Industrial Development Corporation, will oversee use of these funds.
- b) A list of TCWA attendees for the Westmoreland Conservation District Awards Dinner on September 9 at 6 PM has been completed. Karen Rose Cercone will transmit the names to Tammy Marsh at the Conservation District.

7. New Business

- a) TCWA received an invitation to present our current remediation work along with MAWA at the Penn's Woods Trout Unlimited October 12 meeting in Sewickley, 7 PM. Either Ben Hedin or Karen Rose Cercone will do the presentation with Melissa Church.
8. A motion to adjourn was made by Chuck Duritsa, seconded by Bill Mihalco. The motion was approved by unanimous consent and the meeting adjourned at 6:37 PM.
 9. The next regular TCWA Board Meeting will be held on September 19, 2026, 5:30 PM at the Monroeville Municipal Building and via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted,

Karen Rose Cercone