

ONTARIO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
March 22, 2023
Minutes

Meeting held in-person at the Cornell Cooperative Extension (District Office)

PRESENT:

DIRECTORS: Vice Chairman Jim Malyj, Ken Livermore, Ed Jackson, Mark Venuti, Amanda Amadon (4:41pm), Rich Russell (4:46pm)

ABSENT: Chairman Sam Casella

STAFF: Megan Webster, Diana Thorn

USDA

FSA: Joann Rogers

NRCS: None (report submitted via email)

NYS Ag & Mkts SWCC: PJ Emerick

CALL TO ORDER REGULAR MEETING

Vice Chairman Malyj called the regular meeting to order at 4:30pm and led the pledge to the flag.

MINUTES

Vice Chairman Malyj asked for any comments, changes, or corrections to the minutes. The following motion was offered:

Motion that the minutes of February 15, 2023 be accepted as submitted.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Mark Venuti.

Ed asked if a decision had been made about the Leopold Award, Megan responded that staff are discussing. Ed asked about the sewer snake, Megan responded that there is no update.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon and Rich Russell not present yet)

Resolution #20230322-01

BILLS

A spreadsheet was provided that shows the bills that appear in the Abstract listed with more detail and in their current status.

Motion to approve the bills as submitted and Abstract # in the amount of \$51,389.05.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

Ken Livermore reviewed and signed the bills earlier today.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon and Rich Russell not present yet)

Resolution #20230322-02

Diana discussed with the Board making a budget amendment moving \$500 from the Office Equipment line to the Furniture and Furnishing line.

Motion to approve a budget amendment moving \$500.00 from the Office Equipment line to the Furniture and Furnishings line.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon and Rich Russell not present yet)

Resolution #20230322-03

TREASURER'S REPORT

Diana reviewed her Treasurer's Report with the Board, which includes the financial statements for February 28, 2023. Megan has reviewed and signed payrolls #4, and #5; the February bank statements; and the reconciliation reports from QuickBooks. All bank accounts are reconciled successfully through February 28th.

Diana discussed with the Board changing payroll companies. The current payroll provider is more expensive and provides poor service. Diana provided three bids for payroll service, Allied Payroll Services \$59.00 per payroll and no year end costs, Complete Payroll \$57.56 per payroll, \$21 per quarter, and \$140 at year end, and MP Payroll \$101.00 per payroll. Our current provider is Asure \$67.04 per payroll \$261.69 at year end.

Motion to approve changing to Allied Payroll Services.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon and Rich Russell not present yet)

Resolution #20230322-04

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and February financial statements.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon and Rich Russell not present yet)

Resolution #20230322-05

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Ed Jackson:

1. Ed shared that the recent submission to Key Events was a good write-up.
2. Ed asked about the NYS Federation of Lakes annual meeting in May. Megan shared that she is not planning to attend this year but has been tentatively asked to give a presentation at their 2024 event.
3. Ed shared an article from the Finger Lakes Times that describes The Boys & Girls Club of Geneva's campaign to build an outdoor pavilion that will be "named in honor of Mark and Belinda Venuti for their years of leadership in Geneva". The OCSWCD Board and Staff congratulate Mark and Belinda.

USDA/FSA

Report presented by Joann Rogers

Joann thanked the District for the invite to the recent Soil Health Workshop. She stated that it was a nice event and that she appreciated the opportunity to talk with producers.

Disaster/Pandemic Programs: revenue loss assistance programs for either program years 2020 and 2021 for Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase 2 or 2020 for Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP). Applications will be accepted until 06/02/2023. Contact the Ontario County FSA office at 585-394-0525 ext. 2 for specifics or review the fact sheet at: [Revenue Loss Assistance - PARP and ERP 2 \(usda.gov\)](#)

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): FSA we have general CRP sign up that we are taking offers until 04/07/2023. This program helps protect environmentally sensitive agricultural land and devotes it to a conservation benefit. Additional information can be found at [CRP Sign-Up \(usda.gov\)](#) or contacting the FSA office at 585-394-0525 ext.

County Committee (COC): The next COC meeting is on Tuesday, March 28, 2023 at 9AM; if interested in attending the COC meeting please contact the office at 585-394-0525 ext. 2.

Farm Program Loans:

- **Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):** interest rates range from 3.625% to 4.000% for terms from 3 years to 12 years; the FSFL program has a variety of loan options from bulk tanks, hay barns, grain bins/dryers, telehandlers and storage coolers just to name a few; [farm storage facility loan programs fact sheet july 2022.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)
- **Market Assistance Loans (MAL's)** are short-term commodity loans with interest rate of 5.750% for grain stored in bins. [mal ldp fact sheet.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)

Farm Loan: has a variety of loans available and funding is still available. Peter Stoep, Farm Loan Officer; Abbey Combs, Farm Loan Officer; and Kim Weykman, Program Technician.

Farm Record updates: please report any changes in shares of members, change in members of entities, land changes, such as purchases, new leased ground or ground no longer being leased and any banking changes.

2023 crop report maps available: be prepared for the upcoming 2023 crop reporting season and request a set of your maps. These maps have been updated to 2022 imagery and we will review each map to confirm its accuracy.

Reminder to complete the AD-1026 form PRIOR to any clearing or tiling projects.

Please feel free to refer any inquiries on any FSA programs or what programs we have to offer by contacting our office. In addition to myself there are Program Technicians: Courtney Kautz, Alexis McDougal and Sarah Potter.

Please call FSA at 585-394-0525 ext. 2 for information on any FSA programs or to learn more about FSA, we encourage participate from all types and sizes of farm operations, whether you are an Urban or Rural producer/farmer.

(Amanda Amadon arrived at 4:41pm)

(Rich Russell arrived at 4:46pm)

USDA/NRCS

Report submitted via email by Dan Weykman

➤ **EQIP**

➤ Existing Contracts:

- Payments: ~\$38,800 – Laneway, Cover Crops, Waste Storage

➤ 2023—Officially 26 applications: Forestry, High Tunnel, Cropland (zone till & cover crops), Pollinators, Farmstead

- High tunnels—2 contracts written, ~\$27,900

- **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding:** March 1 – April 3, 2023 signup
 - “Climate Smart and Forestry” (CSAF) practices (list attached)
 - Round 2 applications + new apps that qualify—approx. 4 so far

- **CSP**
 - 2023: finalizing rankings for 2 applications this week
 - 1 grazing/hayland, 1 cash cropland – no till
 - Other remaining applications moved to 2nd round, or canceled and signed up for EQIP IRA funding

- **Food Security Act Determinations**
 - Ongoing. On-site wetland visits will begin again during growing season spring 2023.
 - Recently a push to complete Wetland 1026s over 12 months old. Approx. 30-40 done since January.

- **Staffing**
 - Jo Beth Bellanca will be Acting Assistant State Conservationist for Partnerships April-July
 - I will be Acting District Conservationist for LOY team in her absence
 - Soil Conservationist position on the team, housed in Geneseo announced/closed and potentially filled.

****Reminder—AD-1026 to be completed for cropland activities (tiling, clearing) with for NRCS assessment.**

NYS Ag & Mkts SWCC

PJ Emerick, AEA

PJ presented the District Law training module and encouraged Directors to reach out with questions.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was going around the room.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Megan Webster, District Manager Report

Congratulations to Jamie Noga on receiving her 15-year pin at this year’s CDEA Awards Banquet. The District thanks Jamie for her hard work and dedication.

The District is looking into applying for additional federal grants. Often such grant applications ask for signed audit statements. The District has not had an external audit in many years. The Board agreed that this would be a good idea and instructed Megan and Diana to follow up and request quotes.

Megan shared that the District met all of the 2022 Performance Measures and therefore received the full Part C award from the State. Thank you to Directors for participating in meetings and trainings to help us meet these measures. Our award of \$181,746.76 has been deposited into our account. This amount is significantly over the Part C award in the current budget. These additional funds can be

used for the afore mentioned audit, and for adding a technician. We have a significant agriculture workload and we are unable to maximize our use of AEM base funding at our current staff level. If we add a Conservation District Technician, we would be able to better meet the workload and capitalize on the available AEM funds. The additional AEM funds and the extra Part C funds could be used to fund the new position. Megan reported that Civil Service does not have a current complete Conservation District Technician list. Any new hire would be provisional until a test is offered. Megan would like to work with the Personnel Committee to advertise the position and potentially hire by early summer.

Motion to approve the Personnel Committee and Megan moving forward on advertising and interviewing candidates for a new Conservation District Technician position.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-06

Grants & Projects Updates

Sustain Our Great Lakes

Staff submitted a pre-proposal for this grant for regenerative agricultural projects focused on small farm BMP implementation. We are still waiting to hear about the pre-proposal, and if accepted, the full proposal will be due April 25, 2023.

GLC

The District would like to apply for the Great Lakes Sediment & Nutrient Reduction Program in cooperation with Seneca and Yates Counties for Ag BMP focused practices.

Motion to apply for the GLC Great Lakes Sediment & Nutrient Reduction Program with Seneca and Yates Counties.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-07

CAFO Landmark

This project is paid out and closed.

CRF Round 6

EI-VI has completed the procurement process and has selected a contractor. The farm chose the second lowest bid for the earthwork and transfer because of a preference for that contractor. They are fully prepared to pay the difference in the bids.

AgNPS Round 25

The request for an extension on the Will-O-Crest Farms Waste Storage and Transfer System was approved by SWCC at their February 28th meeting.

AgNPS Round 28

Both J Minns and Tamberlane are waiting on final designs from their engineers. Work is still expected to begin in late spring/early summer on both projects.

Finger Lakes Cover Cropping

We would like to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with Yates County SWCD for this grant.

Motion to sign a Memorandum of Understanding with Yates County SWCD for the Finger Lakes Cover Cropping grant.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-08

GLC Cover Cropping

Six farms participated in 2022 and all have been paid. We have submitted the paperwork and request for reimbursement to Yates County. We will work with the farms to complete the remaining acreage in 2023.

GLRI

The request for bids has been released and bids are due Friday 3/24. Katie is meeting with contractors at the site as requested to answer questions and show the specific area. We have had interest from new pesticide applicators and are looking forward to reviewing the bids. The Village of Naples EBP funds are allocated to Grimes Glen. We received word from the State they have funds to do treatment in Harriet Hollister. At this time, we would like to allocate \$20,000 of this \$50,000 grant to treatment on County owned sections of Briggs Gully. Treatment must start in early April.

Motion to approve contracting with the lowest bidder not to exceed \$20,000 for HWA treatment at Briggs Gully.

Motion made by Rich Russell, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-09

WQIP Round 18

We were awarded \$610,000 for Roadside Stabilization in the Towns of Canadice and Bristol.

Other

New Vehicle Purchase

Megan received a new set of bids for a Chevrolet Silverado Crew Cab. The lowest bid is \$42,424.43 for a build to spec truck. The other two bids received were for existing stock but the trucks have additional packages making the costs higher. Megan spoke with the contact listed for the lowest bid and he stated that if we get the paperwork to him tomorrow, we could be in the April build cycle making delivery of the truck in early summer. The Board advised Megan to go ahead with the lowest bid per the motion from the last meeting (Resolution # 20230215-06).

Legislative Days

Megan attended the 2023 Legislative Days event and met with several legislators from both the Senate and the Assembly. Megan received very positive feedback regarding the work we are doing. This was a good opportunity to continue educating people about all that we do.

Soil Health Workshop

We had an excellent workshop with about 100 attendees. We received a great deal of positive feedback. We will begin working on plans for summer field-based workshops soon.

Women in Ag

Megan, Katie, and Alaina attended the Women in Ag event in Livingston County. They met with Marjorie Byrnes and Pam Helming.

Approvals

Katie would like to attend the Regional Grazing Workshop and host a table with Yates County.

Motion to approve Katie attending the Regional Grazing Workshop.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-10

Leadership Institute

Megan would like to offer this opportunity to staff.

Motion to approve offering the opportunity to participate in the Leadership Institute at the Ranger School to staff.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-11

Office Needs

As we continue to clean, organize and rearrange our office space, we may need additional storage shelving, organizational materials, and office furniture.

Motion to approve the purchase of storage shelving, organizational materials and office furniture.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-12

Ed asked if there was any update regarding the watershed group's proposal to change District Law. Megan reported that no bill has been officially submitted. Many other groups and municipalities have submitted resolutions opposing the proposal. NYACD is still working on this but it appears that the original group has stepped back at this point.

Next meeting: April 19, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 5:51 pm.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230322-13

Diana Thorn, Secretary/Treasurer to the Board