

ONTARIO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
April 19, 2023
Minutes

Meeting held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension (District Office)

PRESENT:

DIRECTORS: Chairman Sam Casella, Vice Chairman Jim Malyj, Ken Livermore, Ed Jackson, Mark Venuti, Rich Russell, Amanda Amadon (4:36pm)

ABSENT: None

STAFF: Megan Webster, Diana Thorn

USDA

FSA: Joann Rogers

NRCS: None (report submitted via email)

CALL TO ORDER REGULAR MEETING

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

MINUTES

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

Motion that the minutes of March 22, 2023 be accepted as submitted.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Rich Russell.

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

Resolution #20230419-01

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 #4 in the amount of \$57,041.01.

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 not present yet)

Resolution #20230419-02

TREASURER'S REPORT

Diana reviewed her Treasurer's Report with the Board, which includes the financial statements for March 31, 2023. Megan has reviewed and signed payrolls #6, and #7; the March bank statements; and the reconciliation reports from QuickBooks. All bank accounts are reconciled successfully through March 31st.

Diana reviewed the District Savings Certificate of Deposit. It matured on April 7, 2023 with \$304,712.55 and was rolled over for 60 days per Resolution #20200617-03. Diana discussed recent increases in interest rates. In preparation for future interest rate changes, the motion to roll over the District Savings Certificate of Deposit was updated to the following:

Motion to authorize the District Treasurer and/or the District Manager to roll over the District Savings Certificate of Deposit for 30/60/90 days using the best interest rate available at the time of maturity.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

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

Resolution #20230419-03

Amanda Amadon arrived at 4:36pm

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

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Rich Russell.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-04

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Ed Jackson:

1. Ed asked about the Aquatic Connectivity project. Megan explained that this project involves a culvert upgrade on Eelpot Creek to enable fish to pass through. Currently the creek bed is too low for the fish to pass.
2. Ed shared Green County's summer watershed webinars and commented that they look good and wondered if we considered something similar. Megan reported that current staff is stretched too thin to create something like this right now.
3. Ed inquired if Katie or Megan would be submitting an abstract of the HWA project to the Invasive Species Summit. Megan reported that we are not ready as the grant is still open.
4. Ed commented that he found the NYS SWCD newsletter very interesting.
5. Ed asked about Envirothon preparations. Megan reported that they are going well.
6. Ed commented about the photo of Katie in the CDEA newsletter. He also asked if any of our staff participate in the Fish on Challenge. Megan shared that Tyler does and has had success in several categories.

USDA/FSA

Report presented by Joann Rogers

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: https://www.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2023/fsa_grassland_crp_factsheet_040523.pdf

GRASSLAND Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Just announced is the Grassland CRP program that is a voluntary program that assists producers with protecting grassland. We are accepting eligible offers now until 05/26/2023. This program helps protect environmentally sensitive agricultural land and devotes it to a conservation benefit. Here is a link for the Grassland CRP factsheet: https://www.fsa.usda.gov/Assets/USDA-FSA-Public/usdfiles/FactSheets/2023/fsa_grassland_crp_factsheet_040523.pdf

County Committee (COC): The next COC meeting is on Friday, April 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 3.875% to 4.375% 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 5.875% 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 participation from all types and sizes of farm operations, whether you are an Urban or Rural producer/farmer.

USDA/NRCS

Report submitted via email by Dan Weykman

➤ **EQIP**

- Existing Contracts:
 - Payments: ~\$6000– Water Well, Water Testing, Advanced Payment for High Tunnel.
- 2023—26 applications:
 - Pre-approved—6 (Pasture, Forestland, Cropland, Pollinator Habitat)
 - Contracts to be written by May 26th.
- **Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) funding:** March 1 – April 21, 2023 signup (**extended to this Friday**)
 - “Climate Smart and Forestry” (CSAF) practices
 - Round 2 applications + new apps that qualify—approx. 6

➤ **CSP**

- 2023: Ranking done,
 - 1 grazing/hayland, 1 cash cropland – no till

- Other remaining applications moved to 2nd round, or canceled and signed up for EQIP IRA funding
- **IRA** funding application period deadline also April 21, 2023.
- **Food Security Act Determinations**
 - Ongoing. On-site wetland visits will begin again during growing season spring 2023.
 - Recent push to complete backlogged Wetland 1026s. Approx.. 60-70 done since January and approx.. 3 months backlog.
- **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, Not filled, will be re-advertised, Geneseo field office. Very few applications received, outreach encouraged

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

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was going around the room.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Megan Webster, District Manager Report

Megan thanked the County's Records and Archives department for obtaining a grant to have our farm files scanned and stored in a County database. This process allowed us to clear out 5 filing cabinets and free up considerable space in our office area. Access to the farm files will be simple and the digitized versions will be stored in perpetuity.

Megan shared the details of an email that she received from Tim Davis, Executive Director of CCE. Their Facilities Committee has approved the replacement of the flooring in our office area. The old worn carpet will be replaced with a hard surface flooring that will be much easier to clean. He also noted that they will not be replacing any windows at this time. They will continue to collect quotes and review the window situation throughout the building.

Megan reported that CCE has given us access to an additional office upstairs. This changes the terms of our lease. The additional space will add \$176.74/month to our lease payment. We will be expected to pay the increase beginning in May.

Motion to approve the increase in rent for 2023 to include the additional upstairs office.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Jim Malyj.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-05

Discussion was had regarding future office space needs and the option to have a Board committee helping to review options and negotiate terms.

Motion to approve renaming the Annual Planning Committee the Annual and Facilities Planning Committee and tasking this committee to work on negotiating future lease agreements with CCE, and future office locations with Ontario County.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-06

Megan shared that NACD Stewardship week is April 30 – May 7. Ontario County SWCD is creating an entry. Megan and Alaina are putting together a script and video including drone footage to submit.

Megan shared that the District is below the Federal threshold requiring annual audits of financial statements. The District will not be pursuing such an audit at this time.

Megan reported that she was contacted by Joe Nacca from the Ontario County Attorney's Office regarding the Brock Acres Lawsuit. The trial date has been set for June 19th-23rd. Megan spoke with a representative from the Scolaro Law Firm to determine how she and Tucker will be involved. He requested that Megan plan to attend the trial as a District Representative and that Megan and/or Tucker be available for testimony. Megan and Tucker will participate in pre-trial preparations.

Grants & Projects Updates

Ontario County Residential Tire Recycling

The first Ontario County Residential Tire Recycling event will be May 6th at the Town of Canandaigua Highway Facility. Registration is open now. There will be 2 more events this season. One at the Town of South Bristol Highway Facility and one at the Town of Gorham Highway Facility.

Motion to approve payment to Casella for roll off containers and transportation, and Seneca Meadows for tire recycling for all three 2023 events. These expenditures will be reimbursed by Ontario County.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-07

Sustain Our Great Lakes

The pre-proposal for this grant for regenerative agricultural projects focused on small farm BMP implementation has been accepted. The full proposal is due April 25, 2023.

GLC

The application for the Great Lakes Sediment & Nutrient Reduction Program in conjunction with Seneca and Yates Counties for Ag BMP focused practices is due Friday, April 19th. Staff is finalizing the application and needs a letter of support. This grant is being written for implementation funds. The District will dedicate AEM technical time and District Admin time to support the grant work.

Motion to approve a letter of support for the Great Lakes Sediment & Nutrient Reduction Program grant application.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Rich Russell.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-08

Base AEM Year 17

The Livestock Exchange is now called the Canandaigua Stock Yards. The planned AEM Implementation project is beginning as scheduled and is now waiting on engineer approval of the design.

AgNPS Round 25

Will-O-Crest Farms is working with their engineer for a design for the transfer portion of this project.

AgNPS Round 27

The strips and underground outlet are laid out for the project at Reifsteck's and this project is now ready for implementation.

AgNPS Round 28

Tamberlane has the final design and they are working on getting bids. This project should begin in June.

Base AEM Year 17 – Soil Sampling

Maslyn and Hickory Lane recently submitted samples for analysis. Katie prepared the samples and delivered them to Cornell for testing.

FOLLOWPA

The Whitney Rd project at Hemdale Farms is done and the payment has been made.

The Armstrong Rd project is being designed. The District will oversee and the landowner will do the work. We will reimburse once the project is completed. This project includes funds from FOLLOWPA, the Town of Geneva, and Seneca Lake Pure Waters (SNRP).

The East Lake Rd project in Richmond is moving forward and work is set to begin.

GLRI HWA

The work at Grimes Glen is complete. West Wildlife used all of the allocated funding. This included the Village of Naples EBP funds and matching funds from CLWA. The Briggs Gully treatment is set to begin. The contract went to Murphy Forest Management, LLC and Katie met with Kellen Murphy to walk the project site and determine the chemical treatment.

Staff attended the biocontrol release at Briggs Gully on the Finger Lakes Land Trust property. A number of partners were in attendance and there was positive media coverage.

This grant was written for \$50,000 for treatment of HWA on public lands in Grimes Glen, Briggs Gully and Harriet Hollister State Recreation Area. The State has funding for treatment at Harriet Hollister so the grant funds will be re-directed to the Finger Lakes Land Trust to purchase chemicals and to help the RMSC Cumming Nature Center treat the upper Briggs Gully.

Stream Restoration / Aquatic Connectivity Projects

Staff are working on various possible projects for stream restoration and aquatic connectivity work in the Towns of Naples and Canadice. Megan and Katie are meeting with Trout Unlimited to discuss an application for their funding. Staff are also considering WQIP, FOLLOWPA, and USFWS funding opportunities.

Environmental Project Funding

Recent discussions at OC Planning & Environmental Quality Committee meetings and at Partner Agency meetings have included discussions about funding for environmental projects that support local tourism destinations. It is difficult to find funding for these smaller projects and the funding opportunities that we do find often require matching funds. Discussion was had and it was decided that Megan will create a one-page informational sheet about this issue and meet with the Finger Lakes Visitor Center director to discuss possible ways that they can help.

Other

Vehicle

The order was submitted in time to make the April 2023 build cycle. We will wait to hear about delivery (hopefully in June or July).

New staff position

Megan is working with OC Human Resources on civil service requirements to update the Conservation District Technician job description. Megan also has a cover letter with our more specific supplemental job description ready to post. The job posting should be released soon.

Board meeting schedule

In January, the meeting schedule approved included a change to move the October meeting to October 25th to avoid a conflict with the NYACD annual meeting. The NYACD meeting has been moved for 2023 and we can now meet on our regularly scheduled third Wednesday in October. The October meeting will be October 18th.

Approvals

Motion to approve purchase of materials and supplies for the April 20th DEC 4 Hour Course.

Motion made by Amanda Amadon, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-09

Motion to approve purchase of a new computer if Megan's fails again, and/or a new computer and related tech equipment for the new office not to exceed \$1,500.00.

Motion made by Rich Russell, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-10

Proposed changes to District Law

Chairman Casella shared a letter written by Dustin Lewis, President of the NYS CDEA regarding the Watershed Health Coalition's proposed changes to NYS Soil & Water Conservation District Law. Chairman Casella proposed that the District Board draft a resolution that could be sent to the OC PEQ committee and eventually to the Board of Supervisors for adoption. Discussion was had and it was determined that this Board does not feel that such a resolution is necessary at this time. They agreed to revisit this issue at any time that something changes and such a resolution seems necessary.

Vice Chairman Malyj mentioned that the State budget may contain funding for communities at the end of the waste stream. Megan will reach out to the County for more information. He also mentioned that the Ontario County Farm Bureau is having a tour for elected officials. He mentioned someone from the District speaking. The District will not be a dues paying member of the Farm Bureau but we are happy to work in partnership and speak at the event if invited.

Next meeting: May 17, 2023

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:26pm.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20230419-11

Diana Thorn, Secretary/Treasurer to the Board