

**ONTARIO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**Board of Directors Meeting**  
**July 17, 2024**  
**Minutes**

**Meeting held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension (District Office)**

**PRESENT**

**DIRECTORS:** Chairman Sam Casella, Vice Chairman Jim Malyj, Ken Livermore, Mark Venuti, Dale Stell, Amanda Amadon (4:34).

**ABSENT:** Ed Jackson

**STAFF:** Megan Webster, Diana Thorn, Tad Gerace

**USDA**

**FSA:** Joann Rogers

**NRCS:** None

**CALL TO ORDER REGULAR MEETING**

Chairman Casella called the regular meeting to order at 4:32pm and Jim led the pledge to the flag.

**MINUTES**

Chairman Casella asked for any comments, changes, or corrections to the minutes from June 19, 2024. The following motion was offered:

**Motion that the minutes of June 19, 2024 be accepted as submitted.**

**Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ken Livermore.**

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

*Resolution #20240717-01*

**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 a budget amendment moving \$3,533.87 from the HSA line to the Vehicle line to cover the purchase of the 2024 Chevy Colorado.**

**Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.**

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

*Resolution #20240717-02*

**Motion to approve the bills as submitted and Abstract #7 in the amount of \$371,303.84.**

**Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ken Livermore.**

**Ken Livermore reviewed and signed the bills earlier today.**

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

*Resolution #20240717-03*

*Amanda Amadon arrived at 4:34*

## **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Diana reviewed the Treasurer's Report with the Board, which includes the financial statements for June 30, 2024. Megan has reviewed and signed payrolls #13 and #14; the June bank statements; and the reconciliation reports from QuickBooks. All bank accounts are reconciled successfully through June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Diana shared that the District Savings Certificate of Deposit #2 matured and was rolled over with \$104,924.73.

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

**Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.**

**All in favor, motion approved.**

*Resolution #20240717-04*

## **PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR**

**Jim Malyj** – The Farm Bureau hosted 60 people from Kentucky for a tour of farms from Albany to Buffalo. This tour went very well. Jim was able to share information about several District programs and the participants were very impressed with all that is happening on farms in New York State.

## **FSA**

*Joann Rogers*

**County Committee (COC):** The next COC meeting is on Tuesday, 07/30/2024 at 9AM; Local Administrative Area (LAA)# 1: Naples-South Bristol, Bristol-Richmond-Canadice, East & West Bloomfield and Canandaigua is up for elections this year. FSA-669A, Nomination forms will be accepted from 06/17/24 to 08/01/24. For more information visit: [County Committee Elections \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/countycommittees/elections) or [2024 County Committee Elections - Nomination Packet \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/countycommittees/elections/nomination)

**Conservation Reserve Program (CRP):** Continuous CRP: is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits; inquiries can be directed to Courtney Kautz or Joann Rogers; [Conservation Reserve Program \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservationreserveprogram); Fact sheet: [Conservation Reserve Program: CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT PERIOD \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservationreserveprogram/continuous-enrollment-period)

**Disaster Programs:** FSA offers a variety of disaster programs that assist with honeybee losses, livestock losses, milk losses, tree and vine losses, and feed losses. With the recent storm on 07/15/2024 Ontario County FSA is working on a STORM report; please have producers contact the office if they have any weather related losses to report.

## **Farm Program Loans:**

- **Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):** interest rates range from 4.3750% to 4.625% 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 \(usda.gov\)](#)

**Farm Loan:** has a variety of loans available and funding is still available. **Farm Loan staff:** Abbey Combs, Farm Loan Officer; and Kim Weykman, Program Technician. Denise Buisch assists with new farm loan inquiries and can be reached by email at [denise.buisch@usda.gov](mailto:denise.buisch@usda.gov) or by telephone at 315-946-9912 ext. 112.

**Farm Record:** if new producers are interested in getting their farm records established please have them contact the office to make an appointment to get these established; here is a factsheet for your reference: [farmersgov-getstarted-factsheet-06-15-2021.pdf](#)

**Crop Reporting:** the office was very busy with crop reporting with the deadline of 07/15/2024.  
Fact sheet: [FSA: Crop Acreage Reporting \(usda.gov\)](#)

**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 at 585-394-0525 ext. 2.

In addition to myself there are Program Technicians: Courtney Kautz, and Sarah Potter. We encourage participation from all types and sizes of farm operations, whether you are an Urban or Rural producer/farmer.

## **NRCS**

*Dan Weykman*

### ➤ **EQIP**

- Existing Contracts:
  - Payments:
    - \$82,257 – High Tunnels, Fence, Seeding/Mulching, Brush Management, Cover crops, Wildlife Habitat Seeding
  - FY 24 Applications:
- FY24:
  - Pre-approved & obligated:
    - 7 EQIP for \$209,915
      - High Tunnels, Forestry, Pollinator Habitat, Erosion Control
  - Pre-approved & contracts in progress
    - 13 EQIP for \$1,043,750
      - Waste Storage, Forestry, Erosion Control
  - IRA funding used for most. Some GLRI and regular EQIP

### ➤ **CSP**

- Existing Contracts:
  - Payments
    - Complete for this cycle
- FY24 Applications
  - **4 CSP for \$113,824**
    - Pollinators, Forestry, Pasture/Hayland practices
  - IRA funds used for all

- **Food Security Act Determinations**
  - All wetland determination requests are now being completed by 2 Area (15 counties) staff, 80%+ of their job duties
  - FY 2023 requests getting closer to complete. NY Soils Staff assisted over the winter with HEL backlog
  - \*\*Reminder—AD-1026 to be completed for cropland activities (tiling, clearing) with FSA staff for NRCS assessment.
  
- **Staffing**
  - Livingston-Ontario-Yates Field Team
    - Resource Conservationist: Dan Tighe, Geneseo
  - Statewide postings will be recurring, large push to fill IRA positions over next few years, 1-2 more on LOY field team potentially.
  
- **Outreach**
  - Feel free to reach out if any farm or partner group events are happening that may have interest in our programs or direct them to me.

## **STAFF REPORT**

*Tad Gerace*

Tad shared that the 2024 tree program went well. He stated that he appreciates the support from the Ontario County Fairgrounds management. They graciously allowed the use of the Dairy Barn and the new Carriage House for sale activities.

Tad reported that with the downturn in the housing market, the UPP numbers are lower this year. He shared that Farmington recently changed their code to require our inspection for deed transfer and that is going very well. Their code office is very supportive and helpful.

Tad stated that he is very busy with Round 4 of the Septic System Replacement Fund. The County sent out the letters, and the calls and applications are pouring into the District. Tad is working with Megan and Tyler to handle all of the inquiries.

Tad shared that he will be participating in the 2024 Conservation Field Days event in September. He will be presenting on wild birds.

Tad reported that he continues to supply the Backyard Conservation articles for the District's newsletter.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Casella thanked Tad for his efforts and good work.

## **CORRESPONDENCE**

Correspondence was going around the room.

## **GENERAL BUSINESS**

*Megan Webster, District Manager Report*

### **Policy Committee**

Megan shared that the Policy Committee reviewed a minor change to the current Annual Leave Policy in the Employee Handbook. Currently, there is no gain in Annual Leave between 20 and 30 years of service. Megan and the Policy Committee recommend modifying this to follow the pattern established between 12 and 20 years of service which is 1 additional day for every two years of service. This still ends with the cap of 30.5 days of Annual Leave earned at 30 years of service.

Megan also shared that the Policy Committee reviewed updated information learned about the Federal Pay Scale. Our current policy contains a longevity step earned every 5 years. The Federal system has the longevity step every three years. This change will continue to have 2-3 employees earning a step each year.

**Motion to approve the modification of the Annual Leave Policy to include 1 additional day of Annual Leave for every two years of service between 20 years of service and 30 years of service, AND to approve the modification to the Federal Pay Scale Policy to include a longevity step after every 3 years of service.**

**Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Jim Malyj.**

**All in favor, motion approved.**

*Resolution #20240717-05*

### **2024 Internal Board Audit**

The Audit Committee met today and completed the annual internal audit. No issues were identified.

### **2025 Operating Budget**

A DRAFT operating budget for 2025 was reviewed by the Budget Committee and presented to the full Board. This budget includes the proposed 3% increase to the County Appropriation as suggested by the County Administrator. Megan will present this budget to PEQ on Monday, July 22<sup>nd</sup>.

**Motion to approve the DRAFT 2025 Operating Budget.**

**Motion made by Amanda Amadon, seconded by Jim Malyj.**

**All in favor, motion approved.**

*Resolution #20240717-06*

### **2024 Board of Supervisors Tour**

Megan reported that she presented the idea to the PEQ Committee. They were in favor and confirmed that October 3<sup>rd</sup> would be a good day. Megan has reserved an RTS bus and the tour will begin with lunch in the County building followed by a tour of several project sites as was done last year. This year the focus will be on manure management/methane reduction projects.

### **Vehicle Update**

Megan shared that both the 2024 Silverado and the 2024 Colorado have been delivered and are licensed, registered, and insured. The 2020 Silverado will be sold on Auctions International as soon as possible.

## **Grant and Project Updates**

### **AgNPS 24**

F & W Farms has submitted their paperwork and staff are closing out this project. Additionally, staff are working on the final closeout of this grant.

### **Ag NPS 27**

This grant is held by Yates County. Construction is underway on the Brahms project.

### **Ag NPS 28**

Construction is ongoing for the J Minns Waste Storage Project with this project being on schedule. We anticipate that the liner will be installed this week.

Staff are working on the final closeout of the Tamberlane project. The pasture walk at this site went very well. Thank you to the Farm Bureau and the Cornell Cooperative Extension of Ontario County for supporting this event.

### **NYS Grown and Certified Round 3**

The closeout package has been submitted for the waste transfer project at Fa-Ba Farms.

### **CRF Round 7**

The District continues to wait on executed contracts before work can begin.

### **CRF Round 8**

The District submitted a total of 5 applications for this round. Megan attended the recent SWCC meeting virtually and learned that Round 8 has \$29M available with \$48.62 requested in applications. This will be a very competitive round. The Adaptation and Resiliency Track and the Agricultural Forest Management Track were both under prescribed. The Cover and Flare Track 1B had \$7M available with \$10.2M requested in three applications. We should receive information on the ranking of our projects in September.

### **NFWF SOGL**

We continue to wait on the contract.

### **GLC SNRP**

The project on Middle Rd with Rockefeller Bros, LLC has been completed and paid. Seneca County also has a completed project that has been paid. Once we have the canceled checks from these two projects, we will voucher for reimbursement.

### **NYSDEC Watershed Grant**

We received the final designs from MRB. The Request for Bids has been published. We will be opening the bids on August 7<sup>th</sup> at 1pm.

### **FLLOWPA**

District staff is preparing for construction on Armstrong Rd. Tucker is working with the contractor.

Megan submitted plans for SFY 2024/2025. We would like to continue to focus on Ag BMPs and water management projects. It is anticipated that additional funds will be available this year which will be very helpful considering the number of qualifying projects we currently have.

### **WQIP 18**

Megan reported that the Town of Bristol is working on Egypt Rd currently. We are working on closing out the Ganyard Hill portion of the project.

### **WQIP 19**

Megan reported that two sealed bids were received for the Naples Creek/Eelpot Creek project. They were opened at the appointed time and the lowest bid was submitted by Lil Dave Excavating at \$42,000 for the project.

**Motion to approve acceptance of the bid from Lil Dave Excavating and awarding the contract for the project to this bidder.**

**Motion made by Dale Stell, seconded by Jim Malyj.**

**All in favor, motion approved.**

*Resolution #20240717-07*

### **WQIP Round 20**

Katie continues to work on multiple applications for this round. Applications are due July 31<sup>st</sup>.

### **Upcoming events**

National Envirothon -

Megan, Katie, and Alaina will be volunteering in various capacities for this event to be held the first week of August.

Both Megan and Chairman Casella encouraged any Directors that are available to assist with the event. They need additional volunteers for the event which is being held at Hobart William Smith College.

Ag BMP Training Workshop –

Megan applied for and was awarded CDEA funds for this event which will take place on August 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup>. Thank you to the Town of Geneva for allowing us to use space in the Town Hall for trainings. We are in the process of securing hotel accommodations and tour transportation at this time.

**Motion to approve spending up to the \$8,000.00 award on workshop related expenses to be reimbursed by CDEA.**

**Motion made by Jim Malyj, seconded by Dale Stell.**

**All in favor, motion approved.**

*Resolution #20240717-08*

### **Approvals**

**Motion to approve registration fees and attendance for staff at the Manure Expo.**

**Motion made by Amanda Amadon, seconded Mark Venuti.**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

*Resolution #20240717- 09*

**Motion to approve purchase of education materials not to exceed \$100.00.**

**Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded Mark Venuti.**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

*Resolution #20240717- 10*

**Motion to approve the purchase of glossy photo folders for outreach events not to exceed \$1,500.00.**

**Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded Amanda Amadon.**

**All in favor, motion carried.**

*Resolution #20240717- 11*

Tire Recycling Event – Town of Richmond – July 20<sup>th</sup>

Registration for this event closed early because the event filled up. The next event is September 7<sup>th</sup> at the Town of Farmington.

Next meeting: August 21, 2024.

#### **ADJOURNMENT**

**Motion to adjourn at 5:33pm.**

**Motion made by Dale Stell, seconded by Ken Livermore.**

**All in favor, motion approved.**

*Resolution #20240717-12*

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**Diana Thorn Secretary-Treasurer**