

ONTARIO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
December 21, 2022
Minutes

*****Meeting held in-person at the Cornell Cooperative Extension (District Office) and remote via Go to Meeting*****

PRESENT:

DIRECTORS: Chairman Sam Casella (in-person), Vice Chairman Ken Livermore (in-person), Jim Malyj (in-person), Rich Russell (in-person), Mark Venuti (in-person), Amanda Amadon (in-person)

STAFF: Megan Webster (in-person), Diana Thorn (in-person)

USDA

FSA: None

NRCS: JoBeth Bellanca (remote)

OTHER: Pete Frank

ABSENT: Ed Jackson

CALL TO ORDER REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Casella called the regular meeting to order at 4:33pm 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 November 16, 2022 be accepted as submitted.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-01

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 #12 in the amount of \$50,834.94.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

Ken Livermore reviewed and signed the bills earlier today.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-02

TREASURER'S REPORT

Diana reviewed her Treasurer's Report with the Board, which includes the financial statements for November 30, 2022. Megan has reviewed and signed payrolls #23; #24, and #25; the November

bank statements; and the reconciliation reports from QuickBooks. All bank accounts are reconciled successfully through November 30th.

Diana reported that the District Savings Certificate of Deposit matured and was rolled over for 60 days per your Resolution #20210617-03. Diana recommended that the Board consider transferring money from the District Savings Account to the District Savings Certificate of Deposit when it matures again in February because the savings account is earning .25% and the C/D is earning 3.5%.

Motion to approve moving \$200,000.00 from the District Savings account to the District Savings Certificate of Deposit account in February when it matures.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Rich Russell.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-03

The draft 2023 Operating Budget was reviewed.

Motion to approve the 2023 Operating Budget as submitted.

Motion made by Rich Russell, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-04

Diana suggested that the Board approve paying the HSA employer contributions so that she can issue the checks at the beginning of the year.

Motion to approve payment of the 2023 Health Savings Account Employer Contributions.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-05

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

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Jim Malyj.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-06

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Pete Frank:

1. Pete stated that he works for GreenGuys Mechanical which is a local heat pump installation and service provider. He also stated that his sister purchased a property in Middlesex that will likely need septic system work. He has reviewed our website and would like to learn more about the District. He stated that he chose to attend the meeting as a way to learn more about what we do.

Rich Russell:

1. Rich reported that beginning in January the Ontario County Board of Supervisors will have a new Chair. Todd Campbell (Supervisor, Town of West Bloomfield) will take the role of Chairman. Rich suggested that we consider inviting Todd to a meeting to introduce ourselves and share information.

USDA/FSA

Report submitted via email by Joann Rogers

2023 crop year (NAP): The Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program is available for most crops that are not available through conventional crop insurance. The deadline for honey and maple sap is 12/31/2022; for specifics contact the office.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): we have continuous CRP ongoing for water resource concerns, such as filter strips, grass waterways, fencing animals out of water ways and other pasture related projects.

2023 ARC & PLC (Agriculture Risk Coverage & Price Loss Coverage) enrollment is open until 03/15/2023: ARC is an income support program that provides payment when crop revenue declines below a specified guarantee level & PLC provides income support payments when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price.

2023 DMC (Dairy Margin Coverage) sign up was extended until 01/31/2023; DMC offers protection to dairy producers when the difference between the all-milk price and the average feed price (the margin) falls below a certain dollar amount selected by the producer.

County Committee (COC)/ELECTION: The next COC meeting is on Tuesday, January 24, 2023; if interested in attending the COC meeting please contact the office at 585-394-0525 ext. 2. Local Administrative Area (LAA) 2 consisting of Victor-Farmington, Manchester and Phelps that was up for election this year has announced William (Billy) Rockefeller has been re-elected to serve another term.

Farm Program Loans:

- **Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):** interest rates range from 4.000% 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
- **Market Assistance Loans (MAL's)** are short-term commodity loans with interest rate of 5.625% for grain stored in bins.

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.

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.

The USDA Canandaigua Service Center building is open to visitors but we encourage appointments to be prepared for your visit, as your time is valuable. Please call FSA at 585-394-0525 ext. 2 to make arrangements for any FSA programs.

USDA/NRCS

Report submitted via email from Dan Weykman – JoBeth Bellanca presented

EQIP

- Existing Contracts:
 - Pd approx. \$4750 for Forest stand improvement - thinning
 - Landmark (as of 12/20): waiting for system error to be resolved so payment can be made.

- 2023—Officially 27 applications: Forestry, High Tunnel, Cropland (zone till & cover crops), Pollinators, Farmstead
 - High tunnels—Fast tracking with ‘Act Now’ program method (4 eligible, 2 to be approved in January, hopefully)
 - Continuing to make field visits and develop plans for ranking.

- **AMA**
 - No current contracts or applications.
 - Investigating ‘Urban’ contacts or other outreach avenues (community gardens, etc.)

- **CSP**
 - Existing: 2022 payments: ~\$45k to go out Jan 1, 2023.
 - 2023: 2 applications; signup deadline January 27, 2023.

- **Food Security Act Determinations**
 - Ongoing. On-site wetland visits suspended for 2022, scheduled for spring 2023.

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

JoBeth apologized for the delay in the payment to Landmark Farms as she knows that our process is delayed because of the NRCS delay. Megan reported that we are prepared to close out the CAFO-Landmark grant as soon as we receive the NRCS 1245, final PE sign off, and the last remaining cancelled check.

Motion to approve final payment not to exceed the contracted amount of \$375,000 on the CAFO Landmark grant once all paperwork is received.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon abstained)

Resolution #20221221-07

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was going around the room.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Megan Webster, District Manager Report

Employee Handbook

Megan reported that language was clarified in two sections of the Employee Handbook. First, the section regarding the floating holiday was clarified to clearly state that the floating holiday must be used within the calendar year and does not carry over to the next year. Second, the section on the federal pay scale was clarified to clearly state that longevity steps earned on the employee’s

anniversary will begin being paid in January of the following budget year. No policy changes were made.

Employee Evaluations

Megan shared that employee evaluations have been completed and shared with the Board. No questions or comments were raised.

Meeting with County Administrator

Megan reports that she will be meeting with the County Administrator and Deputy Administrator in the coming year. She plans to discuss district operations, services provided, and services received. Incoming Board of Supervisors Chairman Todd Campbell will also be invited. Discussion was had about agenda items for this meeting and Megan will be preparing a list. The Board will be notified of the meeting date and time so that any available Directors can attend.

Vehicle

The 2018 Ford Escape was sold on Auctions International for \$15,100.00. The buyer has picked up the vehicle and Diana has turned in the plates. We are now waiting on the check from Auctions International.

NYS DEC General Permit

The District is still waiting to hear from NYS DEC on the General Permit renewal. The Town of Richmond recently contacted Megan requesting that she review possible work in the Honeoye Outlet and a tributary to the Outlet which could utilize the GP. Megan did a walk through with Tom Fleig, Richmond Highway Supervisor, and provided a report to Supervisor Marshall. Additional survey work will be needed before a design can be completed and a permit submitted. A mussel survey will also be required. Megan stated that the District is not currently able to assist with the survey work due to staffing issues.

Grants & Projects Updates

AgNPS Round 28

Tucker met with Tamberlane Farm and their engineer to discuss the project and plan for implementation. Ag & Markets has received the Plan of Work and is working on the contract.

CRF Round 6

Ag & Markets has received the Plan of Work and is working on the contract. We will be meeting with EL-VI Farms and their engineer soon to discuss implementation.

Tucker and Megan met with Ag & Markets to review a CRF Round 6 application that was not funded. Overall it was a good application. Possible minor points to include in a future submission were discussed. The ranking system and the difficulties raised with the inclusion of greenhouse gas reduction on a water management project were also discussed.

CRF Round 7

Ag & Markets shared general updates for the CRF program at the recent Manager's Meeting. RFP materials were discussed at yesterday's SWCC meeting and the RFP should be released in early 2023. Tucker has been meeting with farms regarding upcoming projects that we would like to submit. This round will include waste management technologies and precision feed management.

GLRI HWA/2022 Part B Project

Megan reported that treatment in Grimes Glen is complete for 2022. 68 trees were treated. The 2022 Part B funds were expended and the closeout report is waiting on final reporting forms to be released

by Ag & Markets. Additional treatments will begin in spring 2023. Megan will attend the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid Managers Meeting hosted by the Hemlock Initiative January 18th and 19th at Letchworth State Park.

Motion to approve Megan attending the HWA meeting at Letchworth in January and any related expenses.

Motion made by Rich Russell, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-08

FOLLOWUP

Megan reported that the project on Whitney Road has started. The pipe is installed. The basin installation completion is weather dependent.

GLC Cover Crops

Tucker will be working with the farms on certifying the crops and closing out the projects for the Great Lakes Commission Cover Crop grant.

Village of Naples EBP (Environmental Benefits Project)

The Village of Naples is still waiting to hear from the NYS DEC central office on final project approval. If approved, the funds will be used on HWA treatment at Grimes Glen.

Canandaigua Lake Watershed Association

Megan, Tucker, and Tom Eskildsen from Yates County SWCD met with the CLWA Board to discuss agricultural practices and District operations in the Canandaigua Lake watershed and to discuss how we can all work together. The Districts will provide outreach in the form of Facebook posts and articles for the CLWA newsletter focusing on agricultural education as well as partner on upcoming workshops. Overall, CLWA is pleased with the level of communication and coordination with the SWCDs.

Megan, Tucker and Tom also met with Kevin Olvaney to discuss the Canandaigua Lake 9E plan and any changes/additions needed. The 9E plan will serve as the template for activities in the watershed and will help direct funding.

Class C Stream Bill

Megan reported that Governor Kathy Hochul vetoed the Class C Stream Bill. Senator Pete Harckham who represents Dutchess, Putnam, and Westchester Counties has stated that he intends to continue to push the bill. Megan shared that she believes additional education is needed for legislators to better understand what the current permitting requirements are, what protections are already in place for class c streams, and how SWCDs work with partners like NYS DEC and the US Army Corps of Engineers on permitting for projects. Additional permitting work would slow projects down and have a negative impact on outcomes. Megan shared a draft thank you letter for Governor Hochul. The Board recommended that she send the letter.

Bird Sanctuary creation

Megan and Tad are working with Sara Britting who is working to establish a memorial birding habitat area along a section of the Ontario Pathways trail in memory of her sister. An earlier meeting discussed site locations and project scope. More recently, an easement has been donated by the Hemminger family and Sara reached out for support with habitat establishment/enhancement and potential funding sources to match her sister's bequest. Megan and Tad will provide technical support for invasive species management and native plant establishment to enhance the habitat.

Upcoming Events

Motion to approve payment of expenses related to a Staff / Board educational lunch.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-09

Realtor Workshop February 9th

Legislative Day February 28th

Soil Health Workshop March 1st

Proposed changes to NYS Soil & Water Conservation District Law by the Watershed Health Coalition

Discussion was had regarding the Watershed Health Coalition's proposed changes to the NYS Conservation District Law. Many groups and organizations have publically opposed the proposed changes. Chairman Casella reported that NYACD is taking this seriously and is working to educate legislators and committees.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:02 pm.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20221221-10

Diana Thorn, Secretary/Treasurer to the Board