

ONTARIO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
October 16, 2024
Minutes

Meeting held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension (District Office)

PRESENT

DIRECTORS: Chairman Sam Casella, Vice Chairman Jim Malyj, Ken Livermore, Ed Jackson, Dale Stell, Amanda Amadon (4:32pm), Mark Venuti (4:52pm)

ABSENT:

STAFF: Megan Webster, Diana Thorn, Tucker Kautz

USDA

FSA: Joann Rogers

NRCS: Dan Weykman

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 from September 18, 2024. The following motion was offered:

Motion that the minutes of September 18, 2024 be accepted as submitted.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Dale Stell.

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

Resolution #20241016-01

BILLS

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

Motion to approve the bills as submitted and Abstract #10 in the amount of \$120,700.53.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Jim Malyj.

Ken Livermore reviewed and signed the bills earlier today.

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

Resolution #20241016-02

TREASURER'S REPORT

Diana reviewed the Treasurer's Report with the Board, which includes the financial statements for September 30, 2024. Megan has reviewed and signed payrolls #19 and #20; the September bank

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

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

Motion made by Jim Malyj, seconded by Ken Livermore.

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

Resolution #20241016-03

Amanda Amadon arrived at 4:32pm

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Ed Jackson

1. Ed shared that Megan presented about SWCDs at a recent watershed group meeting and did very well. The presentation was well received and he heard many positive comments.
2. Ed stated that he appreciates when Tad and Tyler list the number of inspections they have scheduled in the Staff Notes.
3. Ed asked if signs are required for certain projects. Megan explained that any NYS DEC grant contract includes signage requirements.
4. Ed stated that he saw mention of the possibility of OCSWCD being housed in the new Horticulture Building at FLCC in The Laker Magazine.

FSA

Joann Rogers

County Committee (COC): The next COC meeting is on Tuesday, 10/22/2024 at 9AM

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting; deadline for 2025 fruit trees, strawberries and rhubarb type crops is **11/20/2024:**
[noninsured crop disaster assistance program-nap-fact sheet.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)

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 storms Ontario County has a disaster declaration for the tornado. We request 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 3.500% to 3.875% 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 5.125% 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. Farm Loan staff: Abbey Combs (abbey.combs@usda.gov), Farm Loan Officer; and Kim Weykman (Kimberly.weykman@usda.gov), and Denise Buisch (denise.buisch@usda.gov) assists with new farm loan inquiries; Abbey and Kim can be reached at 585-394-0525 ext. 2 and Denise can be reached 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 is crop reporting fall small grain of wheat, rye, triticale with a reporting deadline date of 11/15/2024. We also are able to report cover crops.

Fact sheet: [FSA: Crop Acreage Reporting \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/programs/fsa/crop-reporting)

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 Analysts: Courtney Kautz, and Sarah Potter. We are in the process of hiring a County Program Analyst.

We encourage participation from all types and sizes of farm operations, whether you are an Urban or Rural producer/farmer.

NRCS

Dan Weykman

➤ **All Programs**

- FY25 Application deadline is November 1, 2024.
 - ~25 so far
 - High Tunnels & Forestry popular
 - Farm Bill 2024/25?? Could impact timelines and funding levels.

➤ **EQIP**

- Existing Contracts:
 - Payments:
 - ~\$3365– Brush Management/Forestry
- FY 24 Area Wide Stats (15 WNY Counties):
 - 291 contracts. 33% more than obligated in 2023.
 - 57,368 acres in contracts
 - 2,608 acres of brush management
 - 9,138 Acres cover crop & cover crop enhancements
 - 9 agrichemical handling facilities
 - 2,013 acres of Forest Stand improvement and FSI enhancements
 - 11,091 acres of nutrient management & enhancements
 - 46 High Tunnels
 - 29 Waste Storage Facilities
 - 117 acres of wildlife planting and enhancements

➤ **CSP**

- Calendar Year 2024 Payments will be made over coming weeks
- Some chose to receive after January 1, 2025
- 17 Total contracts active
- 1 Renewal Application to handle
- All contracts will now have \$4000/year minimum payment

➤ **Food Security Act Determinations**

- All wetland determination requests are now being completed by 2 Area (15 counties) staff, 80%+ of their job duties
- Backlog of both HEL & WC remain, slowly progressing

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

➤ **Outreach**

- 3 Staff attended/assisted at Fun on the Farm
- 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.

Mark Venuti arrived at 4:52pm

STAFF REPORT

Tucker Kautz

15 years in Soil & Water

Tucker began by sharing that 10/16/24 marks the completion of 15 years as a SWCD technician to the day. He has spent all 15 years as an AEM Technician. Tucker told everyone that there have been major program changes and opportunities for SWCDs. Most of these changes have occurred in the last 10 years.

Base AEM

In 2009 - \$40,000 a year base AEM Program

25% Tier 1-2, 60% Tier-3 Planning, 10% Outreach/ Education, 5% Tier 4 implementation, and 0% Tier 5.

Now in 2024 – our base AEM is \$130,000 per year (\$260,000 two-year contracts)

55% Tier 4 Implementation and 5B Updates, 15% Tier 3 Planning, 25% Education Outreach, 5% Tier 1-2.

Additionally, we have \$200,000 every 2 years for Tier 4 implementation projects

Ontario County SWCD has one of the most mature (Tier4-5) AEM programs in the State and

Ontario County SWCD has one of the highest level AEM outreach and education programs in the State.

Tucker shared that he is extremely proud of our AEM program. He reported that because of our successes, the State has given us an exemption allowing us to claim up to 30% education and outreach to continue to build relationships with the Mennonite farms in our County. Tucker has made great progress with this subcommunity and has partnered with Yates County SWCD to continue to develop relationships and improve farm conservation through the use of recognized BMPs throughout the area.

Ag NPS –

In 2009 – \$7-\$8 million per year

1-2 Applications per year

Now in 2024 – \$13-\$14 Million Per Year

2-4 Applications Per Year

Climate Resilient Farming Program

In 2015 (Round 1) – \$4-\$5 million per year

1 application per year

Now in 2024 (Round 8) – \$28 Million

3-5 Applications per year

Ontario SWCDs current 2024 award of 4 applications and almost \$5 million is one of largest in CRF history

CAFO ENMP Program

2024 is the first year 2024- \$14 Million

4-5 Applications (Currently about 8 Million in application value)

Eastern Finger Lakes Coalition Funding

New for 2025- \$700,000(Proposed) per year for 5 years.

Federal GLC Funds

\$300,000, matched with AEM Tech Time

Federal NFWF Funds

\$200,000 matched with AEM Tech Time

+Another \$50,000+ in local and watershed-based funding each year

Tucker stated that in 15 years, he has witnessed a tremendous shift from SWCDs serving as primarily local technical service providers to seeing SWCDs taking significant lead roles in all aspects of conservation project management and state/federal/local program Implementation. He reported that our programs have become very popular with farms lined up around the corner to participate in current programs. There are over 50 active or in-que farm projects on the white board in his office right now.

The Ontario County SWCD staff is trusted & competent – we have great relationships with our farmers. This shift has completely restructured all of Tucker’s priorities/duties towards implementation and project management, much more so in the last 5 years. In recent years all of the OCSWCD staff have had to take on significant new project and/or program management roles to help realize the desired outcomes to the Local/State/Federal programs we are now expected to deliver.

Megan thanked Tucker for his efforts. She stated that Tucker’s energy, dedication, and knowledge are huge benefits to the District and to the County.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Casella thanked Tucker for his hard work.

CORRESPONDENCE

None

GENERAL BUSINESS

Megan Webster, District Manager Report

Board of Supervisors Tour

Megan reported that the tour went well and we have received very positive feedback. She thanked everyone who attended.

University of Rochester Hydrology and Water Resources Class

Megan continues to work with the University of Rochester’s Bond Scholars Summer Internship Program regarding an intern. She recently learned that the District would be expected to pay the intern in addition to the stipend provided by the UR. Megan will continue to research this option.

Amanda Amadon left at 5:31pm

Grant and Project Updates

Tire Recycling

Megan shared that she recently met with the Ontario County Department of Sustainability and Solid Waste to review the residential tire recycling program. After this review, it was decided that the County will take back responsibility for paying for the containers, hauling, and recycling. The District will continue to provide outreach support and staffing the day of the event.

Base AEM

Megan shared that we are closing out the second project for Wesche, and starting work at Hickory Lane.

CRF Round 8

Megan shared that 4 of our 5 applications were awarded funds.

1. Gorham-Ivy Lake Cover & Flare Project – 3 manure storages and cover and flares systems on 2 farms. Award = \$3,169,388.
2. Canandaigua Lake Upland Water Management – Structural erosion control practices on 3 farms. Award = \$109,320.
3. Northern Watersheds Upland Water Management - Structural erosion control practices on 3 farms. Award = \$233,290.
4. Fox Ranch Afforestation Project – Tree and shrub establishment on 10 acres. Award = \$31,505.

Unfortunately, the composting barnyard project we submitted was not awarded funding in this round.

CAFO ENMP

Megan shared that staff are working with 5 farms to submit single farm applications for enhanced nutrient management projects. Applications are due October 28th.

NYSDEC Watershed Grant

The Castle Creek water management project involves funding through this grant as well as FLOWPA and Seneca Lake Pure Waters SNRP funding. The excavation work that was bid out has been completed. This project is expected to manage 1.3 million gallons of water and it will be featured in an upcoming newsletter.

Motion to approve payment to Zimmerman Excavating per the awarded contract not to exceed \$67,317.00.

Motion made by Dale Stell, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-04

GLC SNRP 2023

Megan stated that this \$300,000 grant includes \$98,000 for Seneca County SWCD and \$98,000 for Yates County for implementation projects. Staff will begin work on an interim report and reimbursement voucher.

Motion to approve payment to Yates County SWCD for the Tomion Farm Project totaling \$18,322.66.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Jim Malyj.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-05

Motion to approve payment to Seneca County SWCD for the Dey Farm Project totaling \$26,110.95.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-06

FOLLOWPA

Two FOLLOWPA projects were recently finished. Closeout paperwork is in process.

Motion to approve payment to Ontario County DPW for hydroseeding materials.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Dale Stell.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-07

Motion to approve payment to Lance Young for excavation work on the Armstrong Rd project not to exceed \$19,000.00.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-08

WQIP 18

Megan reported that the Town of Bristol has submitted the closeout paperwork for the Ganyard Hill Rd project.

Motion to approve payment to the Town of Bristol for Fleximat materials totaling \$34,160.49.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Dale Stell.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-09

WQIP 19

Megan reported that the contracts for this round are under final review. We hope to have executed contracts in the next few weeks. Work on County Road 6 is completed and the Eelpot Aquatic Connectivity project should begin in the next week.

FLX 2 Cover Crop Grant and GLC Cover Crop Grant (administered by Yates County)

Jenny has contracted for the remaining acreage in these two cover crop grants.

Motion to approve payment to Schum Acres, Bruce Reed, and J DeBoover Farms for cover crops per the contracts.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Jim Malyj.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-10

Regenerate NY

Megan shared that Katie submitted an additional application for the Baker Family Partnership to continue work on their land. This was the last application we were able to submit as the funds have now been exhausted and the application system has been closed.

Approvals

CCA Training

Motion to approve registration fees for Tucker, Katie and Jenny to attend the upcoming annual CCA training.

Motion made by Jim Malyj, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-11

Promotional Materials

Motion to approve the purchase of logo travel mugs to promote the District.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-12

Finger Lakes Connected Learning Ecosystems Grant

Megan shared that Alaina was awarded a Finger Lakes Connected Learning Ecosystems Grant to purchase microscopes for her education/outreach programming.

Motion to approve purchase of microscopes per the Finger Lakes Connected Learning Ecosystems Grant Award not to exceed \$1,500.00.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Dale Stell.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-13

Office Coffee Maker

Motion to approve the purchase of a Keurig Coffee Maker for the office.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-14

Upcoming events at the District Office

Motion to approve the purchase of materials and supplies for the upcoming Stormwater Training, DEC Endorsed 4 Hour Course, and the Water Workshop.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-15

Managers Meeting

Motion to approve any related costs for Megan and Jim Malyj to attend the upcoming Managers Meeting.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-16

Upcoming events

10/22/24 – OWSC Stormwater Training

11/21/24 – Water Workshop (formerly the Realtor Workshop)

11/26/24 – NYSDEC 4 Hour Course

Personnel Committee Recommendations

Ed Jackson offered the following motions at the recommendation of the Personnel Committee:

Motion to approve closing the District office and making November 29th a holiday for District employees.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-17

Motion to approve giving District employees two paid days off during the week of December 25th at the Manager's discretion in recognition of everyone's hard work.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Dale Stell.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-18

Chairman Casella thanked the Board for approving the expenses related to him attending the NYACD Annual Meeting.

Motion to approve entering Executive Session to discuss promotion opportunities for particular positions.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Dale Stell.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-19

Motion to approve ending the Executive Session and returning to the regular meeting.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-20

Motion to approve the creation of additional Senior District Technician positions through Civil Service.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-21

Motion to approve merit-based increases for Megan, Diana, Tucker, and Katie beginning with the 2025 operating budget.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Ed Jackson.

All in favor, motion approved. (Amanda Amadon no longer present)

Resolution #20241016-22

Next meeting: November 20, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:18pm.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Sam Casella.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20241016-23

Diana Thorn Secretary-Treasurer