

**MINUTES**  
**ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**November 17, 2014**

The Meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:08 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton, P. Ruszkiewicz and P. DeBlock were present, along with K. Sumner, C. DeGrootd and K. Brown (OCSWCD) and R. Baglia (CCE).

DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Keeton, to approve October's Board Meeting **MINUTES** as amended. All in favor.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

The District received a Notice from the Orange County Department of Human Resources that we could request a 'Certification of Eligibles' list upon request for our Conservation District Technician vacant position. Sumner requested the list and there was one name on it. He believes that there has to be three names on the list so we would not be required to hire this person, but he is going to request this person's resume.

Joseph J. Martens from the NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) sent the District a letter congratulating us. Our application was chosen to receive NYS DEC Water Quality Improvement Project (WQIP) funding. We are approved to receive \$47,000.00 for our Campbell Plaza Monhagen Brook Improvement Project which will reduce the amount of sediment, nutrients and urban runoff entering Monhagen Brook. Sumner already responded to the DEC stating we want to pursue this project in which the District will stabilize a 1,800 ft. section of Monhagen Brook near the downstream limit of the brook in the City of Middletown and in the vicinity of Campbell Plaza. With the cooperation of the City of Middletown, the District will implement streambank stabilization measures including plantings and hydroseeding. The District will also install one stormwater filtering practice which will be located next to the Brook. To satisfy the match requirements, we have to donate some of our staff time. There are various partners listed on this grant, Cornell Cooperative Extension being one of them.

The Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting Agenda for November was passed around as well as their October Minutes.

Sumner discussed a response that was sent to Brian A. Orzel, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Project Manager, prepared by Wendell Buckman, P.E. at Barton and Loguidice (B&L). Brian reviewed a permit application for the Pochuck Creek Rock Ledge Project in which a portion of the Pochuck Creek Rock Ledge will be removed. Buckman also prepared a report that discusses the Celery Avenue ledge project. This report specifically addresses such issues as the subsidence issue with Celery Avenue, streambank stability and groundwater/water table impacts, which were concerns that the Town of Goshen had expressed. If the Board is agreeable, the District will distribute this report to our flood committee.

The No-Till receipts are up this year in part because one producer used one of our machines to plant soybeans and also because the District now has two seeders and two corn planters. Our unobligated fund account is higher than normal for this time of year, therefore sometime between now and January we would like to allocate some of these funds to other fund accounts such as 'Equipment Repair' or the 'Ag Contingency Fund'.

Wright questioned if R. O'Dell could be paid quarterly versus monthly. The District will have to look into this.

J. Heller joined the Meeting at 9:30 AM.

DeBlock made the Motion to approve October's Financial Report, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

DeBlock made the Motion to pay November's bills, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

**J. Heller (NRCS)** – As Heller had to leave the Meeting early, he requested to give his report. NRCS's application season is coming to a close at the end of this week.

Heller stated that he would like to answer any questions related to the Working Agreement. NRCS was seeking the District's signature on this Agreement. The District sent an Attachment to the Agreement to NRCS and then never heard back. The District Board is concerned about signing a document that references an Attachment that has not been reviewed by NRCS. Heller recommended that the Chairman speak to his supervisor, Machel Simmons who is the Assistant State Conservationist or the State Conservationist. A brief discussion followed. No action taken.

J. Heller excused himself from the meeting at 9:50 AM.

The October Grants Report was reviewed by the Board. The NYS NPS Ag Grant Round 15 is now closed and can be removed from this report.

Brown presented the Board with information/prices on two computer monitors for review. A Motion was made by Wright to authorize the purchase a monitor in the amount of approximately \$160, seconded by DeBlock. All in favor.

## **STAFF REPORTS**

**C. DeGroot (SWCD)** - DeGroot has been working on Soil Group Worksheets, the Newburgh Rain Garden project and preparing reimbursement requests for the Newburgh project and the Wallkill Flood project.

DeGroot asked the Directors for clearer directions on how they would like the Board Meeting Minutes written. The consensus is that the Minutes can be briefer and if more detail needs to be added later the Board can make that decision. A brief discussion followed. The Board stated that if anyone, other than a Board Member, attending the Meeting wanted Minutes revised, it will be brought to the attention of the Board first and that they would make the decision whether or not to accept revisions.

**K. Brown (SWCD)** - On October 30th Brown and Sumner attended a Wallkill Flood Control Meeting.

On November 3rd she assisted with the Wallkill Maintenance Meeting. Brown proceeded to read what was included on the Maintenance Report that was handed out to the towns. To date, a total of 34 sites (dead or down trees) have been removed or had stumps cut at the bank. Brown stated that the NYS DEC has been mowing the Maintenance stretch.

Brown and Sumner gave a brief update on the culverts and the expansion of the Maintenance Agreement: **Culverts** - Since the Maintenance Group was agreeable to using some of the leftover Maintenance money this year to do some culvert work, Vellenga's Lawn Care went out to look at three culverts that are threatening the maintenance road. Sumner feels that this work will not be able to be completed by the end of this year. Brown said that the NYS DEC stated we can work as their agent. Discussion followed regarding the prices for new culverts and the condition of the current culverts.

**Expansion of Maintenance Agreement** - It was recommended at the Maintenance Group Meeting that the District hire a title searcher to get the easement issue figured out. A Request for Proposals (RFP) was sent to three title companies that Mike Sweeton, Town of Warwick Supervisor, suggested. The District asked them to return the proposals within a few weeks and we have not received any responses.

Brown assisted with the Newburgh Rain Garden planting. She passed out pictures of the rain garden along with photos of some of the farm projects the District worked on (Smiley erosion control project and Stap Farm barnyard water management system).

At the last Board Meeting the Board requested price quotes for rebuilding one of the District's existing seeders and also a price for a new seeder. Phillip Johnson quoted a price of \$4,500-\$4,800 for a rebuild on the 7' seeder. Pine Plains quoted \$31,304 for a new 7' and \$38,541 for a 10'. Great Plains in Kansas quoted \$2,000 on parts and labor would be \$1,000-\$1,500 for a rebuild. Sumner suggested getting a price quote for a rebuild from Pine Plains and report back at the next Board Meeting.

Brown sent out a request for price quotes on utility vehicles and trailers, which will be purchased with the RSR funds. She read the quotes to the Board (see attached spreadsheet). Wright recommended getting prices from Marshall Machinery in PA.

B. Steinmuller, Assistant Director, Soil and Water Conservation Committee, joined the Meeting at 10:10 AM.

Brown requested to attend the Employees Association Meeting in Syracuse in December. She has served six years and her term is up in March '15. DeBlock made the Motion to allow Brown to attend, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

Introductions were made to B. Steinmuller.

Steinmuller gave District Law Training to the Directors and staff.

### **SWCD STAFF REPORTS Cont.**

**K. Sumner (SWCD)** – Sumner and DeGroodt attended the Legislative Budget Hearing on October 27<sup>th</sup>. The District's 2015 Proposed Budget was approved.

Newburgh Rain Garden Update – Sumner met with the Town of Newburgh Maintenance Supervisor and the Parks Commissioner and showed them the project. A couple of town guys assisted with the planting towards the end of the day. Sumner plans on sending something to the Town Supervisor's Secretary requesting that she distribute the rain garden information to Town employees which describes the work at the site and the purpose of the rain gardens.

Sumner and Brown are planning to attend the State Committee Meeting tomorrow. They have a call in to T. Vellenga to see if he will be attending as his NYS NPS Ag Grant Round 20 project will be discussed.

Pellet Project Update – Not a lot can be done until the final NYSERDA grant payment of \$10,000.00 funds are received.

Toby, the person that drives the rig and operates the pellet mill, is interested in working for the District in the spring to move the no-till equipment. No action taken.

### **INTERAGENCY REPORTS**

**R. Baglia (CCE)** – Maire Ullrich is teaching a Farm Asset Planning Series on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and the 14<sup>th</sup>. The date for Session #3 is to be determined.

Jenn Simpson is teaching a milk pricing program on November 20<sup>th</sup>.

There is a Good Ag Practices Program (GAPS) training on December 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

The Create Your Own Holiday Wreath class is on December 5<sup>th</sup> at the Extension office.

Their Annual Meeting and dinner is December 8<sup>th</sup>.

The Cornell Local Roads class will be on November 19<sup>th</sup> for stormwater management for highway personnel.

On January 27<sup>th</sup> they have their Nursery Greenhouse School.

There will be five classes in their Stormwater Series this year. The first one is on February 4, 2015 and after this there will be one a month for 4 months.

The Farm Toy Show will be next Saturday, November 22, 2014.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

There is a pre-application meeting scheduled on December 3, 2014 with the NYS DEC regarding the Floodplain Bench Project.

Pat Ferracane, NYS DEC, is retiring next week.

Sumner distributed the B&L response letter on the Pochuck Project and the engineer's report on Celery Avenue to the Army Corp. A brief discussion followed regarding B&L's staff time and their bills.

RSR Project – Sumner mentioned that we have to complete three projects for this grant.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

A Motion was made by Wright, seconded by Keeton, to authorize Sumner to request time extensions for two NYS NPS Ag Grants (Rounds 17 Wallkill and Moodna). All in favor.

There was a brief discussion on the District's Health Insurance. Keeton made the Motion, seconded by Wright, to adopt the updated Health Insurance Policy presented to the Board at the June monthly meeting which will allow family plans for all employees. The employee's contribution will depend on their length of service. All in favor.

The District's Draft Vision and Dental Plans were discussed. A Motion was made by Keeton, seconded by Wright to pay the employee premium that was set up in the 2015 Budget. All in favor.

Leave Donation Policy – There was a brief discussion regarding the District adopting a Leave Donation Policy. This will be discussed at next month's meeting. No action taken.

DeBlock made the Motion to go into Executive Session at 12:12 PM to discuss the employment history of one or more particular employees, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

The Board reconvened from Executive Session at 1 PM. The Board reviewed performance appraisals prepared by Sumner for DeGroot and Brown, and also reviewed self-appraisals DeGroot and Brown prepared. Keeton made the motion that the Board concurred with and approved the performance appraisals as prepared by Sumner. The motion was seconded by Ruskiewicz. All in favor. Sumner presented the Board with his self-appraisal. The Board will discuss Sumner's performance appraisal at the December meeting.

The **NEXT MEETING** is scheduled for Monday, December 15, 2014 at 9:00 AM.

The **MEETING** was adjourned at 1:15 PM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Ruskiewicz. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroot  
Secretary to the Board