

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
April 18, 2022

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:04 AM. Directors J. Wright, P. DeBlock, G. Constable, B. Cheney and P. Ruszkiewicz were present along with B. Diehl (NRCS), K. Sumner, T. Ferry and C. DeGroodt (SWCD).

2022-4-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Wright seconded, to approve March's Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS – Some bills were paid and are listed on Bills for Board Approval.

CORRESPONDENCE

- The bank statements and collateral agreements were available for review.
- Ben Luskin, NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC), sent us a written report of general updates on NYS SWCC activities.
- The District received a New York Association of Conservation Districts general update.
- A National Association of Conservation Districts dues request was received. No action taken.
- A New York State Conservation District Employees Association (NYSCDEA) 2022 NYS Fair Booth invoice in the amount of \$100 was received. **2022-4-2 DeBlock made the Motion, Wright seconded, to pay the \$100 to the NYSCDEA for the 2022 Fair Booth. All in favor.**
- Various newsletters were passed around.
- Sumner received a letter from Alpine Environmental Consultants regarding a soil based zoning issue. In the past, a lot of towns have used soil maps to determine allowable lot size and whether a home or septic can be placed on those soils. A local producer wants to create two building lots on his farm, and he wants to put them in the woods instead of using up active farmland. The soil map shows it to be shallow bedrock soil. Alpine dug deep test pits to confirm that they have three feet of available soil above the bedrock. In the past, if the applicant's consultant contested the soil map, the town would want verification from the SWCD office before they would allow them to revise it. The District would always try to get a certified soil scientist to do that work. Since NRCS does not provide support for their soil survey document, we would hire a private consulting soil scientist and he would revise the mapping, he would bill us and then we would bill the applicant. If the Board is in agreement, Sumner would write a letter stating that based on the depth of the soil, that would put it into a different soil mapping category, a soil type where septic systems are allowed. There would not be a formal revision to the soil map. If the town accepts this, it will save a lot of time and expense. Discussion followed. The Board gave approval for Sumner to write the letter.
- The District received a copy of the County re-appointments/appointments to the SWCD Board of Directors.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

There was a brief discussion on the some of our receivables. **2022-4-3 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to file March's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.**

GRANT REPORT UPDATE – The Grant Report is updated monthly to reflect changes. Report was reviewed by the Directors. Starting next month, the District will list the Climate Resilient Farming Grant on the report.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

A bill in the amount of \$100.00 to be paid to the NYSCDEA for the 2022 NYS Fair Booth was added on to the list to be paid. **2022-4-4 DeBlock made the Motion, Wright seconded, to accept the Bills to be Paid. All in favor.**

STAFF REPORTS

Written staff reports were emailed to Board Members prior to the Meeting for review.

C. DeGroodt (SWCD) – DeGroodt mentioned that she has not heard back from the school in Warwick that wanted to attend the regional Envirothon.

T. Ferry (SWCD) – Photos of last week's Wallkill Maintenance Inspection with the NYS DEC were passed around. There is a large tree down near Pine Island Turf Nursery. There was also some access road damage in the black dirt. One photo showed the floodplain bench a week after we received a lot of rain. Sumner said we will ask the NYS DEC if they can list the access road damage on the inspection report and that way we can possibly assist with repairs.

Ferry also mentioned that he saw some beaver activity around Phase 1.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

P. DeBlock (FSA) – The are doing webinars on Grassland CRP.

FSA is hiring for the positions of Program Technician and Loss Adjusters.

B. Diehl (NRCS) – The ranking deadline for the EQIP program was March 18th and they are waiting to find out which projects were approved for funding.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Brian Steinmuller, Assistant State Director, sent out a memo regarding the Environmental Protection Fund (EPF) which increased from \$300 million to \$400 million dollars. The Climate Resilient Farming Program (CRF) increased to \$16 million dollars. With the increases in the EPF and the CRF budgets, Sumner mentioned the possibility of hiring another staff person and that the District should start to formulate long-term projects.

AEM/AEM Round 16 - Our final close-out payment was received. The final payment to a participant is on today's list of bills.

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project – A time extension to the end of 2023 was approved, but the project managers would like to get all of the projects completed by the end of this year. Two construction projects are

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pending, as well as “after” Comprehensive Assessments of Soil Health (CASH) for all six participants that are now planned for fall, 2022.

Walkkill Floodplain Bench Phase 4 (CRF 5) – We are waiting on Barton & Loguidice for a design/construction plan before the Joint Application for Permit can be completed and submitted. Discussion followed. Director Cheney offered to call B&L and inquire about the plan.

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program Expansion – Tom Barry, Orange County Surveyor, provided a sample map and deed description for one of the twenty parcels for Sumner and the District’s attorney to review. He will do them all as time allows. We are still waiting for updated title searches.

Ag NPS RD 27 – The District is waiting on contract paperwork but we have started design and construction plans.

Legoland – There is nothing new to report.

Pulaski Culverts – There is nothing new to report.

Chester Ag Center/Pumping Plant – There is nothing new to report.

AEM Round 17 – There is planning in progress. James DeStafeno is seeking vendor proposals for his proposed barnyard project. A Resolution was presented for Board approval listing the five farms we are submitting for this round for Tier 4 implementation projects. Sumner read the list of names and the projects and reviewed the project budgets with the Board. **2022-4-5 DeBlock made the Motion, Constable seconded, to submit the Resolution approving the projects on the five farms for AEM Round 17 Tier 4. All in favor.**

Ag NPS RD 28 – No action taken. The District is not submitting a proposal for Ag NPS RD 28.

Letters to the Orange County Assessors informing them of our price increase for Soil Group Worksheets were sent out.

Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – Nothing new to report.

Other

Sumner was contacted by Brian Richards from Cornell University, who asked the District to assist with a pesticide/groundwater study, to seek out participating landowners. Sumner made a few calls for potential participants and provided their contact information and maps to Richards.

A farmer from the Town of Crawford inquired about financial assistance in removing approximately 300 tires from his farm. He participated in the 2019 collection but had kept some of the tires. The District is still looking into a reduced rate to dispose of his tires.

Sumner has been assisting a Town of Chester farmer with ACoE permitting issues regarding a pond he wants to build. Discussion followed.

Sumner provided information to the Orange County Water Authority for inclusion in the County’s MS4 Annual Report.

Director Training Plans were distributed and discussed. District Law Training should be once every three years but due to covid, if not completed it will not affect our funding. Sexual Harassment training should be completed annually. Discussion followed.

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NEXT MEETING DATE - The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, May 16, 2022 at 9:00 AM.**

ADJOURNMENT

2022-4-6 The Meeting was Adjourned at 10:13 AM on a Motion by Wright, seconded by Cheney. All in favor.

Minutes Prepared By:

Christine DeGroodt, Secretary to the Board

Report to Board KMS

April, 2022

AEM/AEM Round 16 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects)

Final Payment Received. One Tier 4 participant is due a small final payment on his project.

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project [contract extended past 4/30/2022]

Time extension to end of 2023 approved, but Project managers want to get the project mostly complete by end of 2022. Two construction projects are pending, as well as 'after' Comprehensive Assessments of Soil Health (CASH) for all six participants that are now planned for fall, 2022.

Floodplain Bench

Phase 4 (CRF 5)

Still waiting on B&L for design/construction plan before JAP can be completed and submitted. I have been working on the draft JAP, updating from the work I did on it in Feb/March 2021.

Phase 3, Area 2

Anticipated start date – June. Contracts out for signatures.

Green Farmland offered opportunity to send trucks to Iris Road to receive soil. No answer from them yet.

Still waiting for License Agreement from Gurda, new owners of small portion of Project area.

Other Flood Mitigation

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – Tom Barry provided sample map and deed (easement) description for one of the twenty parcels for me and our attorney to review.

Round 27 ANPSACP

Progressing draft project designs/construction plans. Many projects on hold due to materials costs, and also due to wait for engineering review/assistance.

Other

Legoland EBP – Nothing new to report.

Pulaski Culverts – nothing new to report since last month

Chester Ag Center/Pump Plant – Nothing new to report since last month

Grant Proposals

Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) – Soil Health Track proposal complete. Submission deadline was 3/28, has been pushed to 5/16.

AEM Round 17 – Planning on DeStafeno project in progress. Landowner is seeking vendor proposals. May wait until next year if prices don't come down soon.

AgNPS Round 28 – No project(s) identified as good fit for Round 28.

Soil Group Worksheets – Letters sent to assessors noticing them about price increase.

IIJA – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – Nothing new to report since last month

Cornell Pesticide Study

I made calls for potential participants, and provided contact info and maps to Richards at Cornell.

Farm Tires

Assisted Town of Chester landowner/farmer with ACoE permitting issue regarding building a pond.

Provided information to OCWA for inclusion in County's MS4 Annual report

C. DeGroodt

Board Meeting Activities March 19, 2022 – April 15, 2022

- We have \$481 cash awards on the rewards credit cards
- I have been working with the auditor.
- Submitted a reimbursement request for the Wallkill Maintenance Project.
- Submitted our 1st Quarter NYS-45 and 941 income tax reports.
- Stormwater brochures gathered for Town of Woodbury. Researched where to get updated brochures.
- We have a school interested in attending the Envirothon. I have been working with the teacher and Envirothon coordinator. Waiting to hear back from the teacher as to whether or not they are still going to attend.

TF April Board Meeting Activity Summary

- Most soil group worksheets requests are done.
- New seeder has been out.
- Ron is busy getting more maintenance done on corn planters, we have needed a fair number of parts to clean up some newly found maintenance items.
- Attended the CNMP training remotely.
- Wallkill River Maintenance inspection, first one in 2 years due to covid. Inspection went well, except river was still fairly high from previous weeks storm.
 - 1 large tree down on Pine Island Turf's property, contractor will be going after that as soon as the water goes down.
 - Remaining two sections of river will need to be inspected in the next few weeks, we cut the inspection short due to mud/chance of getting stuck
- Worked on some AEM farm visits
- Sent out signature pages for AEM Tier 4 Implementation projects, and resolution.
- Worked on CRF grant proposal.