

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
August 18th, 2025

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:06 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Constable, B. Cheney, and P. DeBlock were present along with K. Sumner (SWCD), E. King (SWCD), M. Held (SWCD), and O. Vélez-Juarbe (NRCS.)

2025-8-1 Cheney made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to approve July’s Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS – Some bills were paid and are indicated on the Bills for Board Approval. The District paid United Ag & Turf \$501.35 for the existing balance on the District’s account for parts sales.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Bank Statements
- Collateral Agreements
- Region 5 Monthly SWCC Report from Ben Luskin
- CCE Invitation to Bountiful Harvest Celebration
- Bavoso Law: Request for Reviewal of Second Commercial Solar Facility
- NYACD: Call for Resolutions from BOD
 - Sumner previously suggested that State Committee provide more engineering support to better help the Districts. Per Sumner, field offices used to do much of their own engineering/design work, but now rely on the overwhelmed State or NRCS engineers or the private sector. Wright asked the Board whether they wanted to submit a resolution for this topic. Cheney views it as an opportunity to get people talking about it. Sumner acknowledged that the resolution passage process is arduous, and his time is limited. The BOD will support Sumner’s proposal should he decide to move forward, but it does not seem likely.

Discussion of Barton & Loguidice: The District enlisted the services of B&L to prepare a design template for a secondary fuel containment project. Charges have been significant over the course of a year for their services on this design. Sumner is surprised as to why it is taking so long and will contact the District’s lead engineer, Wendell, to discuss this further. Cheney asked if the District received a price estimate and scope plan at the beginning. Sumner noted that the cap on the entire agreement is \$15k. Sumner expressed regret as to how much it is costing the District and how long it is taking, but is expecting that subsequent fuel storage designs will be able to use the initial one to keep down design time and allow us to ‘recoup’ some of the initial design costs. Given his engineering background, Cheney offered to get involved in the discussion of the engineering delivery system if Sumner would like him to. Cheney recommended that the District ask for a companion letter to invoices to explain the services provided. The District is due to update the agreement letter with B&L and will request that stipulation to be added.

- Ag & Markets: Orange County Ag District Ruling

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD AUGUST 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- Erie County SWCD: Conservation Connections
- The Upper Delaware: Summer '25 Edition
- ShelterPoint: Term Life Insurance Benefits
- The Empire State Granger: July/August '25
- News from Hudsonia: Spring 2025

CORRESPONDENCE OUTGOING FROM OCSWCD

- Four Corners Solar Review (Town of Warwick) The District's billing for this was \$1,275 and the voucher was sent on 8/7. Cheney believes that the District will have it shortly.
- Response to Bavoso Law (Item "E" Above)
 - Bavoso Law Letter: Sumner explained his response to Bavoso law about the request for review of a solar facility on floodplain bench. Sumner explained that the applicant would need a licensed engineer to apply to the Town for a floodplain development permit & prepare a report. This report is needed to show any possible impacts the construction may have on the floodplain bench.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Sumner informed the Board that most of the salary expenses for the summer intern's hours will be covered by the AEM Round 18 contract. The standard hourly staff time for an AEM contract is \$51, but with an intern the reimbursement rate is their actual employment rate. Sumner predicts that our staff time costs will exceed the allotted contract staff time that is eligible for reimbursement before the contract end date. Per Sumner, once Held receives her CCA certification, etc., the District can request more money for staff time in the respective contract. This will make it more feasible financially to assign the intern to work mainly related to AEM. Sumner explained that the unobligated balance, which is currently in the red, is not necessarily a bad sign. Sumner noted that a lot of the dedicated fund money is assigned to fixed expenses such as staff salaries. The District has not received the 3rd quarter county appropriation. Additionally, the no-till receipts are down from last year.

2025-8-2 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to file July's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

2025-8-3 Constable made the Motion, Wright seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor.

CONTRACT REPORT UPDATE

Per usual, any updates to the contracts report for the month of July are identified in red ink. Sumner reported that two of the three CRF Round 7 projects are substantially complete. For Crist Orchards, the main deliverables were two wells and for Shuback farms it is the Boom irrigation farm equipment. Sumner must do an irrigation water management plan for Shuback farms & DeBuck's Sod Farm, which requires information from the farms.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

NRCS: Vélez-Juarbe reported that his team, which encompasses the lower Hudson Valley, finished obligating contracts. The sum of the obligations totaled \$2.5 million, of which \$1.1 million was allotted by the Middletown office for new contracts in 2025. These projects consist primarily of high tunnels, irrigation, and forestry plans.

CCE: Although Schellenberg was not present, Sumner shared an update on his behalf. Schellenberg continues to work on procuring a corn planter for the District through the CIG grant. He received a new quote from Kinsey that is more in line with the initial quote, mid \$50k, as compared to the second quote of \$73,807. Sumner asked Schellenberg to find out how much it would cost to add row cleaners to a planter. Sumner does not know if the grant will cover the cost of the row cleaners. Sumner recommends that the District decide whether to purchase another Kinze corn planters with the funding from Senator Skoufis & CIG, or a different brand/make. Leonard DeBuck asked Sumner how CCE's CIG fall cover crop reimbursement differs from the District's. Farmers that will participate in the no-till demo of CIG will receive fall cover crop reimbursement. Sumner reminded the Board that the CIG includes a research portion that entails data being sent to Cornell for review.

There were no representatives from SWCC, FSA, or WCC present at the meeting.

STAFF REPORTS

*Sumner, King, and Held emailed their written staff reports to the Board prior to the meeting for review.

M. Held (SWCD)-

Held informed the Board that she is pregnant with a projected due date in March '26.

Fall '25 Cover Crop: Held received a few applications from farmers for the local cover crop program which has a submission deadline of 9/10. A newsletter regarding the program was distributed in FSA's May '25 newsletter.

CRF Rnd 6- Held is compiling the various cover crop sign offs & is halfway through the RUSLE runs of one year of the CRF Round 6 grant. Held noted that Jurain helped with the CASH testing associated with the submission. Held is scheduled to take the international and northeastern regional portions of the CCA exam on 8/20.

District Vehicle Purchase- As outlined in her report, Held stated that the truck bidding period ended and the District received several bids. The District requested models from 2024-2026 and include the delivery fee in the total cost. Held informed the Board of the notable bids and their corresponding prices, as well as the SPEC sheet, which can be found in her Board report. Held indicated the outlier bids for the Board's review. Held shared her purchase recommendation with the Board, which is the G&H Auto Group Mohawk Chevy: 2026 Chevy Silverado 3500: \$49,573.28 (built to SPEC). She prefers this bid because although the Ferrario Ford: 2024 Dodge Ram 3500 is the cheapest at \$44,409.85 (in stock), it is the oldest model and there is not a guarantee that the truck will be available by the time the bid is selected. Sumner supports Held's recommendation, but his only question for the Board is whether the District should see if a local Chevy dealership can match G&H's bid. Held confirmed that none of the local dealers in Orange County are on the State bid list. Sumner noted that the length of the warranty on the 2024 could be shorter than the 2026's. Cheney advises that if a local dealership provides a different make and model, but it matches the District's SPECs then it should be considered. Sumner agreed and expressed an interest in not having this purchase be drawn out over several months. Cheney recommended that Held request the local dealerships submit a bid in writing by a certain date and time. Since the State bid request form is an open form, Held will have the local dealerships fill out the same form.

2025-8-4 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to purchase the G&H 2026 Chevy Silverado 3500, barring any more cost affordable offers from a local dealer for a truck that matches the District's SPECs. All in favor.

E. King (SWCD)-

Phone/Internet Providers- King reported that the District internet has been working slowly for a while, but it has really worsened in the past few weeks. King spoke with a representative from the District's current internet & phone provider, Warwick Valley Telephone, to report this issue. WVT cannot upgrade the District's current 5 5 Mbps plan

and the District was advised to look for coverage elsewhere. Apparently, the District isn't even operating at the 5 Mbps, but rather 3 Mbps. King feels that it will be very beneficial for the District to upgrade our internet and phone provider, given the staff's unanimous experience with slow internet. King provided quotes from Spectrum & Optimum in her written report. King recommended Spectrum given their quote of \$120/month for a year for 500 Mbps. The District's current monthly bill averages \$165 with tax included. King spoke with Jonathan who is the District's IT contact and made him aware of our current situation and our need for his services soon. Per King, Spectrum will waive the installation fee of \$80 for phone and internet. King mentioned that Spectrum would not provide new phones. King and Held advocated that the District purchase new phones that will offer modern features. Sumner would like the new phones to be installed by the Spectrum technicians when they are installing everything else.

2025-8-5 Cheney made the Motion, Constable seconded, to accept the proposal from Spectrum for providing services associated with phone and internet, as well as to authorize staff to secure new phones. All in favor.

Fix Tier 6 Movement: King learned of the fix Tier 6 movement at the CDEA meeting she attended on 8/13. Many Districts are asking their Boards to lend their support towards the NYSLRS Fix Tier 6 Movement to help retain quality employees from moving to the private sector. This movement applies not only to Soil & Water Districts, but all professions whose employees are enrolled in NYSLRS. The movement aims to change the parameters of Tier 6 to align more closely with that of Tier 4. King included the recommendations from CDEA & NYACD in her written report for the Board's reference. Cheney noted that as the District employees' responsibilities are lessened, the District's responsibilities increase since the NYSLRS contributions fall on them. King stated that the District can sign onto the letter of support that was distributed or create a personalized one.

2025-8-6 Cheney made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to adopt the letter that was provided to the District with the Chairman of the Board, John Wright, & Sumner's signature. All in favor.

NY MuniTrust- King & Sumner met with a County attorney on 7/23 to confirm whether there is a District law that bars Soil & Water from investing with NY MuniTrust. The meeting was more of an introductory meeting for the attorney as to what the District does. King has provided him with requested documents pertaining to District & State grant policies. King emailed Michelle Lens, the Senior VP, at NY MuniTrust late last week to provide an update and to learn whether she had answers for previously asked questions. Cheney encouraged King to keep in contact with both parties and keep the Board posted.

Performance Measures- The District must satisfy performance measures to qualify for Part C funding. One of those requirements dictates that at least 3 Directors attend either a State, regional, or national meeting/function. Per the performance measure evaluation worksheet, virtual attendance is allowed. King recorded in her report that NYACD is having their monthly meeting via Zoom on 8/27 at 7 p.m. DeBlock stated that she will attend and asked King to send the Board the information regarding the NYACD meeting.

K. Sumner (SWCD)- Sumner provided the following reports and discussions to augment and add to his written staff report. Review "Old and New Business" for further information.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Floodplain Bench- Sumner reported that Jurain completed the tree inventory reports for all phases of the Bench project. Sumner feels that it is not worth it for the District replant certain areas of the bench that have unfavourable growing conditions. However, the District intends on using the Part B funding to purchase plants, such as live posts or sycamores, to fortify certain areas of the Bench that have better soil conditions. Additionally, the four piezometers have been installed. Sumner reminded the Board that from April to October, these sites are supposed to be monitored biweekly. The District aims to gather a couple readings from now until the end of September. Jurain also

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checked two rain garden projects that the District facilitated years ago. Two rain gardens were built at Newburgh Town Hall, and one looks okay, but the other is infested with tree of heaven and spotted lanternflies. The District helped build rain gardens in 2016 at the City of Newburgh Water Treatment Plant which look immaculate and are clearly well maintained.

Conservation Easement- The District is waiting on the Basteks to tell them who the members of the partnership are before issuing a check to them. Thereafter a meeting will be needed to certify that the members are all in agreement with the terms of the CE. Sumner reported that Greenfarmland LLC has not responded to his written correspondence. Sumner acknowledged that construction occurred prior to the CE being secured.

Celery Avenue Grant- Sumner does not have an update yet on the status of the District's application for funding through the Department of State, DOS. The District has not received the construction permits yet from NYS DEC or the two towns. Cheney suggested that the District contact Senator Skoufis and Assemblyman Brabenec's offices to remind them of their needed support. Sumner learned that the vegetable growers were going to send a letter of support for the project to their offices, but he does not know where that stands.

2026 Budget Hearing- The County suggested the District reassign the \$450,000 for the Celery Avenue funding and put it in State revenue. If the District's DOS application is approved, then the \$450k would be State revenue. Cheney explained that if the District's DOS application was denied then the District could submit a request to the County legislature. Cheney noted that overall, the County strives to reduce the cost of the property tax for residents. Once the District's 2026 budget is approved by the County legislature in the fall, the Board will need to make a motion to approve the 2026 COL salary increase prior to 1/1/26.

AEM Round 18 Projects- Both the Demberg & Simpson projects in AEM Round 18 have made no progress. Even though there is still time for the projects to be finished, the District would rather avoid that risk given their lack of action. In addition to starting construction, the State grants division wants a more detailed bid proposal for Simpson's project, which he has not yet provided to the District. Sumner reflected that LO managed projects are much more difficult to keep construction moving forward when there is an active farm. Unless the Board feels otherwise, Sumner is okay with giving Simpson & Demberg another month to start their projects. There are potential projects that could be used as a replacement for these two projects. The District allocated ~\$17,000 to DeBuck Sod Farm to help them purchase irrigation equipment. If there are unused AEM T4 funds, the District could allocate more to DeBuck since the current amount was determined by what was available rather than by the full expected costs of the project.

Walkkill Maintenance Agreement- The District has not received any funds from the County for either the transfer of funds or the reimbursement for the two bills the District submitted. Sumner received an email from the Town of Wawayanda clerk with a copy of a signed revised MA amendment. The District was unaware of these proposed revisions to the last amendment. Sumner suspects that this is related to the County incorrectly billing the towns for the lesser amount rather than the full amount. Cheney asked Sumner if he would want him to coordinate a meeting between the various parties in the County, Sumner and the BOD, which Sumner agreed to. Cheney will call the County DPW today to gather more information regarding the status of the reimbursement. Sumner read excerpts from his report regarding the language used in the revised amendment about the makeup of the advisory board. Sumner believes the wording to be inappropriate.

Ag NPS Rnd 27- Winslow Therapeutic sent out a contractor proposal for a new trail that is going to be installed. There is a contractor that they prefer working with, but his busy schedule is delaying project advancements. The stream crossing that was put in last September needs railings, but they have not been installed yet.

Ag NPS Rnd 29- The Brady farm project was completed, and hay bale barriers were added to keep the gulleys from redeveloping before the grass was established. Sumner commented that the contractor did a great job of putting them in which would have helped them even further. Unfortunately, both the hay bales and stakes were scattered

about by cows that were allowed into the field. Sumner does not know how well the grass will fare now with the barriers gone. The District paid the contractors to move the hay bales out of the field and put them elsewhere.

Miller Farm Conservation Easement- Sumner reported that the Town is still figuring out how they can best enforce the LO's violation of the CE. The District provided technical assistance by collecting soil samples on the Miller Farm with Mark Hoyt to compare the native soil to what was brought in. It appears that much of the soil being imported originated at a site where 20-foot cuts were being made to create a pad for a warehouse. There are a couple of areas where the owner reported filling was finished, and they put topsoil on top. The LO and his consultant accompanied them on their walk around the property. Sumner does not understand how a 10-12 deep fill can be argued as a grade adjustment to the land.

The same day the soil samples were collected, Rob Schreibeis called Sumner to discuss what the District's business was there. Sumner met with the County Executive, Steve Neuhaus, after the Budget hearing about the Miller Farm easement situation. He was very supportive that it is our job to get involved in addressing the situation.

Sumner is strongly recommending to the Town that they try to get NRCS to respond to the LO's request to create a conservation plan. Hoyt contacted the NRCS easement manager who stated that based on the apparent violation, NRCS cannot prepare a conservation plan until some remediation is done. Vélez-Juarbe elaborated that once remediation is done, then NRCS can draft a conservation plan based on what crops the LO will plant. Per the easement, NYS Ag & Markets is the official appeals agency and should determine if this is a violation. However, Ag & Markets are saying that they have no legal standing. However, the Town is not asking them to enforce it, but rather document the violation so the Town may enforce it. Sumner reported that the Army CORP of Engineers & NYS DEC are investigating potential wetland violations at the site. Even if these potential violations are not pursued, the Town still has plenty of evidence to show the CE violation.

The District contacted the County Land Trust to find out what resources are available for the Town to use. Sumner acknowledged that the Town has a serious undertaking afoot, especially with the precedent it could set. Sumner feels that if the Town has the support of the District, Ag & Markets, and NRCS it will greatly help the cause. There is a tentative Teams meeting scheduled with the parties on 8/21. Cheney advised that it be made clear that the District is a technical resource, not an enforcing agency.

2024 Audit Report- Sumner distributed the District's 2024 audit report which was prepared by PKF O'Connor Davies with the Board. Cheney asked King to share a digital copy of the 2024 audit report with the Board so that they can make an informed ruling at September's meeting.

Next meeting date: September 15th

ADJOURNMENT

2025-8-7 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 11:25 AM. All in favor.

Minutes Prepared By:

Emily King, Secretary to the Board

August, 2025

Wallkill Flood Projects –

Floodplain Bench

Summer intern Bradley completed tree inventories on all completed phases of the Bench. Progress was also made on procedures to collect bi-weekly data from the four piezometers installed in various areas of the bench. This monitoring activity was one of the conditions of the permit for the work from the ACoE. Formal data collection has not yet started, but we hope to start formal readings soon and continue for the remainder of the designated monitoring period (April-September).

Easements Status - We are waiting for the Bastek partnership to provide details of the Partnership as requested in the Title work, before the Conservation easement for Phase 4 North can proceed. Two mailings have been made to Green Farmland (Phase 3) attempting to progress the Easement for those areas. No response has been received.

Celery Avenue ledge lowering project – Still no word on the DEC permit, or on Wawayanda/Goshen floodplain permits (same status as last month). No word on NYSDOS grant application for \$450,000. (Same status as last month.)

Carbon Farming Project – Still waiting on final payment of \$4,268.32 on Southway project.

AEM Round 18 –There has been no additional progress on Tier 4 Implementation projects since last month. Some soil testing work has been done, with some assistance from intern. We are charging most of the intern’s time to the AEM contract. We are reimbursed at his actual salary, not at the \$51/hr rate established for regular staff. We expect to fully utilize the staff time allocation in the Contract before the end of the contract period (12/31/2025).

CRF Round 7 - Limited activity this month. Shuback provided some videos and pictures of their new boom irrigation equipment that was partially funded by the CRF grant in operation.

‘Sign Offs’ on Soil Health Practices –

Revision of Wallkill Maintenance Agreement –Still waiting on transfer of funds or reimbursement of expenses submitted months ago. Wawayanda sent me a copy of a recent additional revision of the MA Amendment that was intended to enact the full annual contribution of each partner. The new revision appears to address the specific procedures for the 2025 funding cycle given the incorrect billing of the partners earlier this year. Unfortunately, yet again, no one told us that payments would be delayed as this new version of MA Amendment is circulated to the partners. Nor were we given the opportunity to review it. It appears to me that there is a deficiency in the wording of the designation of the Advisory Board membership.

4. The language of Paragraph 5. of the Agreement is deleted in its entirety and replaced with the following:
 5. There shall be an Advisory Board consisting of the Commissioner, the Supervisor of each of the Towns that are a party to the Agreement, and the Orange County Commissioner of Public Works, or their duly authorized designee.

AgNPS Round 27 -

Weiboldt – waiting on B&L for fuel storage design and waiting on Jeff Wilson for Compost facility design

Soudant – Contractor selected. Waiting for pre-construction meeting to be scheduled.

Winslow –New horse trail design reviewed by B&L. Seeking contractor proposals. Waiting on contractor who installed stream crossing last September to install railing.

Contract end date – March, 2026.

AgNPS Round 29 –. Brady Critical Area Planting project update – checked project for status of vegetation establishment. Cows had been let in the field and they basically destroyed the hay bale barriers we had established to protect against erosion until vegetation was fully established. Even though the vegetation was not fully established, I asked the contractor to remove the bales since they were doing more harm than good after being moved by the cows. I am hoping the treated areas will get fully vegetated before they rill out again, since if they don't, how to approach the cost of additional repairs will be problematic.

Other Items

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Equipment Planning

Skoufis Equipment Funding – Waiting for contract from A&M (Same status as last month.)

CIG Grant –.

Miller Farm Easement Violations

I am continuing to try to assist the Town of Montgomery with violations at the protected Miller Farm on Rockafellow Lane. CASH soil samples were collected, and map studies/reports were prepared. We had the opportunity to discuss this matter directly with the County Executive after our budget hearing. He is fully in support of us assisting the Town with addressing violations at this site. I will report more at the meeting.

County Budget Process – Budget Hearing with County Executive's office was 8/14. Our request for \$450,000 for Celery Avenue ledge project was discussed. They advise to move this amount to 'State Revenue' (based on NYSDOS grant application). If the grant is not awarded, the County would work with us to appropriate the funds by other means (ie – Legislative Request).

Technical review of solar proposal for Town of Warwick completed – available for director review.

Received inquiry from Town of Deerpark attorney re: solar in floodplain. My reply is available for director review.

I had our intern inspect a couple of Green Infrastructure projects we installed at Newburgh Town Hall and Newburgh water treatment plant. Also had him do a tree inventory at 2015 Trees for Tribes project near Middletown Maple Avenue School (Monhagen Brook).

Secretary to the Board Update

In regards to working with D&A, I have uploaded all the financial reports, etc. from the start of this year through July. I am waiting to hear back from them as to the status of our QuickBooks account.

After corresponding with PFK O'Connor Davies, I submitted the District's signed management letter to the firm. On 8/1, I received a digital copy of PKF's 2024 audit report of the District. I requested a hard copy of the report as well which I will share with the Board. I emailed a digital copy of our report to Mariya Kitcmanuk who is the County's budget analyst.

In preparation for the County budget hearing, I researched the difference in the COL increases between CSEA & the District from 2019-2025. For CSEA, the average yearly COL increase was 3.18% & for the District it was 2.14%. In both 2021 & 2022, District staff did **not** receive a COL increase at all. I think it is important to note that per the [agreement](#) CSEA & the County signed in 2024, CSEA employees are due for a 4% COL increase in 2026, 4.5% increase in 2027, and 4% in 2028. I collected this information to bolster the District's COL increase for 2025. Additionally, Sumner found that for the six Conservation District Technicians who were employed between 2008 to 2022, the average retention period was 2.9 years. By offering more attractive salaries, the District feels it will lengthen employee tenure.

Kevin and I met with Cedric Cooper, the County attorney, to discuss any existing District laws that bar us from enrolling County or State funds in NY MuniTrust. However, the meeting ended up being more of an introductory session as to the history of the District and our goals. Cooper assured us that he will research our question and keep us informed. I have emailed him both our investment policy and an excerpt from our State grant contract that confirms all interest earned on State funding must be returned to the State.

The District's internet has been working slowly for a while, but it has really worsened in the past few weeks. I spoke with our current internet & phone provider, Warwick Valley Telephone, to report this issue two weeks ago. While on the call, the WVT representative informed me that WVT no longer services new customers in our area. She confirmed that they cannot offer us an upgrade from our current 5mbps, megabits per second, and that we should look elsewhere for coverage. Apparently, the District isn't even operating at the 5 Mbps, but rather 3 Mbps.

Our current monthly bill at WVT averages \$165 with tax included. The internet is \$49.95 a month and a \$2.99 charge for the monthly lease of the modem. The remaining cost stems from the telephone service, of which we are paying for seven lines, which I did not realize.

I spoke with Jonathan who is our IT contact and made him aware of our current situation and our need for his services soon. He recommended that I look for providers such as Spectrum, Optimum, or Frontier who will offer at least 300 Mbps or Fiber. I received

quotes from Spectrum & Optimum which I will attach at the end of my report. I am waiting on a call back from Frontier for their phone coverage.

On 8/13, I virtually attended the Conservation District Employees' Association, CDEA, Managers'. A variety of topics were discussed ranging from State legislation, giant hogweed control, NYS Retirement, etc. Many Districts are asking their Boards to lend their support towards the NYSLRS [Fix Tier 6](#) Movement to help retain quality employees from moving to the private sector. This movement applies not only to Soil & Water Districts, but all professions whose employees are enrolled in NYSLRS. The movement aims to change the parameters of Tier 6 to align more closely with that of Tier 4. I pasted the recommendations from CDEA & NYACD below for reference.

- *A return to full retirement at 55 years of age with 30 years of service*
- *Members contribute a smaller percentage of their salary for 10 years, and then contributions stop.*
- *A return to the 55-year age requirement with 30 years of service for later tiers*

District Directors can use the letter as is or personalize the letter with how higher retirement tiers adversely impact their District's employees. Once approved by the Board, the District can mail the letter to local and State legislators. CDEA will continue to keep the Districts informed of additional steps that can be taken. I will attach this sample letter at the end of my report as well in case the Board would like to read it.

Additionally, the CDEA meeting encouraged District Directors to draft and submit resolutions on priority topics that impact Soil & Water Districts. These resolutions will be considered at the NYACD's Annual Business Meeting on 9/23 in East Syracuse. If interested, the resolutions can be emailed to NYACD's Executive Director by 9/1 or supplied in person.

Held and I have begun to take inventory as to what performance measures the District still needs to satisfy in order to qualify for Part C funding. The District needs at least 3 Directors to have attended either a State, regional, or national meeting/function. Per the performance measure evaluation worksheet, virtual attendance is allowed. If a Director is interested, the next NYACD meeting is on 8/27 at 7 p.m. via Zoom. I confirmed with the Executive Director of NYACD that their meetings are typically on the last Wednesday of the month, unless indicated otherwise.

I emailed Michelle Lens, the Senior Vice President, at NY MuniTrust on 8/14 to tell her that we met with the County attorney. I asked her whether she received an answer for the two questions I emailed her back on 7/9. As a refresher, I asked her whether the District's investment balance needs to always remain above \$50k. Additionally, I asked her for resolution templates from MuniTrust that the Board can use when recording the opening of the account. Once I have an answer from her I will let the Board know.

Lastly, I updated the various grant ledgers, as well as the receipts, disbursements, and payroll Excel spreadsheet. I updated the online bank accounts to reflect the total listed

on July's dedicated fund summary. I added Jurain's hours to both our normal time log and the AEM Round 18 ledger which correctly reflects his rate of pay.

As always, please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you!

Best,

Emily

OCSWCD Technician Update

Mary C. Held

8/15/2025

Intro:

I'm scheduled to take a portion of the CCA region and CCA international exams on Wednesday.

In other news, I am pregnant and working through the first trimester as best as I can. I'll spare the board the gory details but so far, most of the news has been good, though I am being closely monitored by the doctors.

We had an inquiry from Brennan Sobiech about water chestnut remediation. I reached out to SWCC about it and they basically said some counties have programs for it, some don't. Currently, we don't have anything to help him besides some resources on how to deal with it, but I think he's looking for government assistance in paying for it. If another grant comes out focused on invasives control, we could consider taking the project on. Otherwise, at the moment, we don't really have anything for him other than information on how to manage it himself. I referred him to the DEC until I get a little more information on how some other districts manage their water chestnut invasives control programs.

Equipment:

Roller Crimper Demo Project (no update since last meeting):

O'Dell, Mike – crimped
Rowe, Chuck – withdrew interest
Ronne, Alex – crimped in late May / early June
Conklin, Sue – withdrew interest
Touw, Jason – crimped week of 6/9
Johnson, Phil – withdrew interest

Equipment:

Seeder: minor repairs to 2022 Great Plains seeder I assisted Ron O'Dell with.

We've put new tires on one of the corn planters, and both pieces of equipment are at O'Dell's for maintenance and safekeeping. Ron O'Dell is going to be out of town until September, which leaves us to rely on Mikey until he's back.

LCSP:

No update: We've had a couple of applications for fall cover crops, otherwise no action. Applications are due later this fall in September.

CRF Update:

Round 6:

Phil Johnson BMP Payment has been included in bills to be paid.

In other news, all this week I've been running Rusle2 on all our CRF6 farmers, which has been tedious but at least one step closer to having all the materials we need to get the cover crop signed off on.

Bradley and I have been updating the soil testing needs of the CRF6 farmers. As stated last meeting, soil testing and compost testing need to be completed before the closeout of this grant. We expect this to be further completed in the fall.

Round 7: No updates from the technician.

AGNPS Update:

Round 27: Contract End Date: March 2025 (was extended)

- No update since last meeting.

Round 29:

- No update.

AEM Update:

Round 18 Tier 4 Projects:

Steven Demberg: Emailed asking for a follow up on project progress. Demberg indicated that construction is still imminent and will reach out to us when further progress is made.

- Emailed again 6/13/2025 requesting update
- Email correspondence indicated that construction is still imminent.
- Emailed 7/17 to ask about animal numbers.
- Called 7/18, no answer
- Emailed 8/15 (currently don't have a project that might replace his or Devon Simpson's)

Alex Ronne: (no update) Selected Chris Vellenga for his project.

AEM Activities:

- Tier 2s in progress:
- Tier 2s completed:

- Roebuck Farm
- Sun Sprout Farm, G&C update
- R&G Produce, G&C Update
- Finding Home Farm, G&C Update
- Tier 3s being put together
 - Alex Ronne – grazing plan
 - Marc Suffern – grazing plan
 - John King – laneway / erosion control project

CCA Plan:

- I am scheduled to take the Pest Management portion of the CCA International and Regional exams Wednesday at 5:30pm and 7:30pm.

Truck purchase

I have compiled all our truck bids that we received. The bid went out on 8/8 and closed on 8/14 at 4:30pm. We received a total of 11 bids. The request for bids was sent to 148 recipients State-wide.

I sub-categorized the bids we received in 2025 Chevrolet, 2026 Chevrolet, Dodge Ram, and Ford. Generally, an in-stock vehicle costs more than having a vehicle built. There are two outliers – one bid submitted was a Ford F-150, and one was a year within the requested range but the only of its type AND indicated that because it was in stock, may not be on the lot by the time the bid is chosen.

In brief:

2025 Chevrolet:

DeNooyer Chevy: 2025 Chevy Silverado 3500: \$50,966.63 (In stock)

G&H Auto Group Mohawk Chevy: 2025 Chevy Silverado 3500: \$62,574.90 (in stock)

2026 Chevrolet:

G&H Auto Group Mohawk Chevy: 2026 Chevy Silverado 3500: \$49,573.28 (built)

DeNooyer Chevy: 2026 Silverado 3500: \$49,711.46 (built)

North Shore Chevy of Smithtown: 2026 Chevy Silverado 3500HD: \$57,497.70 (built)

Dodge Ram:

Ferrario Ford: 2024 Dodge Ram 3500 Tradesman: \$44,409.85 (in stock)(oldest truck bid, also indicated that truck may not be available by the time bid is selected.)**

Falls Dodge: 2026 Dodge Ram 3500 Tradesman: \$49,743.36 (built)

Howell & Pierson Main Motorcar: 2026 Dodge Ram 3500 Tradesman: \$50,639.47 (built)

Ford:

Van Bortel Ford, Inc: 2026 Ford F-350 XL: \$50.144.05 (built)

Friendly Ford: 2025 Ford F-350 XL STX: \$60,123.34 (in stock)

Scorpio Motos Greenwich Ford: 2025 Ford F-150 XL Trim: \$42,999.98 (built) **(Does not meet capacity or additional specs according to sheet provided to bidders).

Of the makes, in ascending cost order:

Ferrario Ford: 2024 Dodge Ram 3500 Tradesman: \$44,409.85 (in stock)**(oldest truck bid, also indicated that truck may not be available by the time bid is selected.)

G&H Auto Group Mohawk Chevy: 2026 Chevy Silverado 3500: \$49,573.28 (built)

Falls Dodge: 2026 Dodge Ram 3500 Tradesman: \$49,743.36 (built)

Van Bortel Ford, Inc: 2026 Ford F-350 XL: \$50.144.05 (built)

DeNooyer Chevy: 2025 Chevy Silverado 3500: \$50,966.63 (In stock) *does not have 360 tow camera