

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
August 21, 2017

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:02 AM. Directors J. Wright, P. DeBlock, M. Kemnitz and P. Ruskiewicz were present, along with K. Sumner and C. DeGroodt (OCSWCD) and J. Mahoney (Orange County Attorney).

2017-8-1 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, seconded by DeBlock, to go into Executive Session at 9:04 AM to discuss pending litigation. All in favor. 2017-8-2 The Board came out of executive session at 9:52 AM on a motion by Kemnitz, seconded by DeBlock. All in favor.

2017-8-3 Wright made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to approve July's Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS – None

There was discussion on the Dam Removal Project at Browns Pond Lake. The award notice that the grant was approved was received last Friday from the NYS DEC. The information was passed on to Chris Eachus the dam owner as well as the consultants we worked with to develop the proposal. They still want the District to enter into a Work Plan. However the Rowe's had previously stated that if the focus is on keeping the dam then they would still like the District to be the sponsor, if not then they would not be in favor of us being the sponsor. The Work Plan needs to be submitted to the NYS DEC before the next Board Meeting. The Board did not take any formal action on accepting or rejecting the award.

Wallkill Black dirt flood control Phase II North Update – Sumner briefed the Board on the financial issues he is trying to manage. We have received multiple time extensions on the Housing Trust Fund award. The current end date of this grant is the end of this year. The current unspent balance from the original \$2 million award is approximately \$230,000. All of this could be used by the end of the year for the phase 2 work, but we also have \$200,000 in Climate resilient Farming (CRF) and County funding that is designated for the phase 2 North project. The accepted construction bid for the work is \$260,000 and there will be additional associated expenses, but likely not in the amount that would use both the CRF award and the remaining HTF balance. Sumner is trying to determine a way to close out the HTF award without requesting another time extension while still completing the CRF project. Since we don't have adequate funding or time to start and complete another flood project beyond the phase 2 North project, this will be a challenge. Discussion followed on moving upstream.

There was a newspaper article about the Millenium Pipeline issue. A letter that Sumner had written was cited in the article. Discussion followed that the District needs to give careful thought to what role we play in trying to help resolve issues between the farmer and the pipeline company.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Bank account statements from the District's banks were available for review.
- NYS DEC Brown's Pond Dam Removal project awards letter.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

- **2017-8-4 DeBlock moved to file the July 2017 Financial Report for audit review, Ruskiewicz seconded. All in favor.**
- **2017-8-5 DeBlock made the Motion, Ruskiewicz seconded, to accept the Bills to Be Paid. All in favor.**

STAFF REPORTS

- Sumner

- Sumner told the Board that Noah Meyer resigned for the District Technician position.

(P. Ruskiewicz and M. Kemnitz left the Meeting at 10:32 AM)

Sumner reported time spent on the following activities not covered elsewhere in the meeting: RC&D teleconference – future of the RC&D, SENY 2017 Stormwater Conference planning, Cornell/WRI/NYSDEC visit to Wallkill flood control project, Monhagen Watershed planning initiative, Sue Dembek project design (EQIP funded construction, AEM funded staff time), no-till equipment update.

CORRESPONDENCE CONT.

- Donald Stedge Wallkill Flood Black Dirt Region Floodplain Bench Phase 2 North proposal for surveying services.
- Audit report – hold until next Board Meeting.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

- None

OLD BUSINESS

- Albany staff came to the District office to complete the Round 17 Wallkill close-out.
- The NYS DEC 4-Hour Contractor Training was on August 11, 2017 at Cornell Cooperative Extension.
- There was a brief discussion on boulder field upstream on the Wallkill. Sumner looked at the site with Vellenga's Lawn Care. Preliminarily, it appeared that the boulder field could be lowered without great expense if engineering reports support a flood control benefit.
- Sumner reported on the status of the phase 2 North flood control work. Everything going well.
- Sumner asked if there had been any response to or follow up on the letter to NYSDEC from the AFPB regarding more aggressive tree cutting. No one knew of any activity.
- Sumner reminded the Board that payment was sent to the Town of Goshen on 4/18 for Celery Ave. project permit review fees and, as of today, four months later, we have received no indication from Goshen about the status of the permit application.
- Sumner reminded the Board of the complexity of the Conservation Easement requirements associated with the flood project work. Easements (and land purchases) for phase 1 have still not been completed, arrangements are in progress for phase 2. This aspect of the flood work is complicated, expensive and time-consuming.

NEW BUSINESS

- The District's Budget Hearing is on Thursday August 24th.
- The District did not get approved for the AG NPS Round 23 grant funding.
- The Ag & Farmland Protection Board luncheon for Orange County Legislators is August 23rd. Wright and Ruskiewicz are expecting to attend. The Board left it up to Sumner to decide if he should attend.
- Meyer left with a leave balance. DeGroot will check the leave balance submitted by Meyer against Meyer's timesheets before a final payroll check is prepared.

The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, September 18, 2017 at 9:00 AM.**

Meeting adjourns at 11:20 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroot, Secretary to the Board