

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
August 15, 2022

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:05 AM. Directors J. Wright, P. DeBlock, P. Ruszkiewicz and B. Cheney were present along with K. Sumner and C. DeGroot (SWCD) and B. Luskin (NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets).

2022-8-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, to approve July'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.
- The New York Association of Conservation Districts (NYACD) general update was passed around.
- New York State Envirothon information was available for review. Team registration fees will increase to \$600.00 next year.
- The District was sent a Notice of Acceptance of Clovewood Final Environmental Impact Statement (FEIS) from the Village of South Blooming Grove.
- The District received the New York Association of Conservation Districts information on the NYACD 2022 Annual Training and Meeting to be held on Tuesday, October 18th – Thursday, October 20th in Cazenovia, NY.

(G. Constable joined the meeting at 9:07 AM)

FINANCIAL REPORTS

2022-8-2 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to file July's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

2022-8-3 DeBlock made the Motion, Wright seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor. Sumner mentioned that #10 on the list is a bill from Pine Island Turf Nursery. This will be paid after we receive the funds from DASNY. The reimbursement request has already been submitted.

GRANT REPORT UPDATE – The Grant Report is updated monthly to reflect changes.

Sumner recommended that we remove Erwin Demberg from the District's Soil Health Incentive Program, as Sumner has attempted to contact him numerous times and has not received a response.

2022-8-4 Wright made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to remove Erwin Demberg from the District's Soil Health Incentive Program. All in favor.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

P. DeBlock (FSA) – FSA's new program technician is doing a good job.

The USDA has a Livestock Forage Disaster Program which can provide payments to producers who qualify. Currently, the Hudson Valley area is in a D1 and D2 (severe) drought.

They also have an Emergency Relief Program (ERP) – which covers NAP and insurable crops.

B. Luskin (NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets) – The Governor pushed off the in-person meeting suspension until August 28th. This does not affect Orange County SWCD.

Greenfield Farms in Onondaga County received the AEM Leopold Conservation Award. The farm received \$10,000.00 and the Onondaga County SWCD received \$1,000.00 for being the applicant.

The State Committee Annual Report, a summary of all the state's SWCD Districts accomplishments, is posted on their website.

The District's 2023 Annual Plan of Work is due November 1st, 2022.

The State Committee will not be holding an August meeting.

Cornell Field Days are on August 18, 2022 and the Long Island Soil Health Field Day is on Aug 31st.

Sumner mentioned the possibility of using the next round of CRF for a Master Drainage Plan in the Chester Ag pumping plant area. Cheney stated that he believes the County added the project to American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding and that by October they should find out if they are able to move forward with the pumping plant or not.

STAFF REPORTS

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

C. DeGroodt (SWCD) – DeGroodt had nothing to add to her report, which was emailed prior to the meeting.

K. Sumner (SWCD) – See "Old and New Business".

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

AEM/Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects) - We are waiting for an advance payment. The Van Aken farm withdrew. Kocot was removed in expectation that he will be funded via CRF Round 6. It is proposed to replace these two projects with O'Dell farm project .

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project – We are expecting a final roof design from Barton & Loguidice for the Southway compost facility.

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD AUGUST 2022 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Flood Plain Bench Phase 4 – One of two landowners signed the Access Agreement. The second owner is in support of the project but we still need a signed agreement.

Flood Plain Bench Phase 3, Area 2 – Work is progressing well with excavation 1/3 to ½ complete. They are running two trucks on the farm road which has cracking and some soft spots due to the drought. Sumner recommended to the Board that the District contribute towards maintaining the road. It may cost approximately \$5,000-\$10,000 towards material and the farm can place it wherever they want. Discussion followed. The Board is in favor of this.

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – This project is progressing with assistance from Attorney Richard Hoyt and County Surveyor Tom Barry. Barry is approximately 80-90% complete with mapping and description work.

The District's Budget Hearing on August 10th went well. It appears that the County will approve our appropriation request. The new Director of Operations seemed very engaged. Porr asked the District to give everyone a background on Soil and Water. There was a good discussion, the District stressed commercial agriculture support, including the slaughterhouse proposal. Sumner let them know that Tom Barry, the County Surveyor, has been a great help to the District. Discussion followed.

AG NPS Round 27 – We are waiting for a RD 27 contract. Luskin said we should see something in a week or so.

CRF Round 6 – The District is expected to receive funding. This project included funding for a 12 ft. seeder and a roller crimper.

Legoland EBP – The District received comments from the New York State DEC. They prefer to have funds spend on later items in the Orange County Land Trust (OCLT) proposal. Sumner forwarded their comments to the OCLT and is waiting to see how they want to handle this.

New Hire – Sumner spoke to one applicant from Oswego County and he is supposed to come to our office for an interview on August 16th. He interned for Oswego SWCD.

Meat Processing Facility – A survey was developed and officially released. It's posted in several locations, including the District's facebook page. Discussion followed.

Sumner met with the Natural Resources Conservation Service to discuss potential closer cooperation on projects. Wright mentioned that he was contacted by NRCS regarding Civil Rights Review questions.

Community Composting Project – It was mentioned at last month's meeting that Ermin Siljkovic, the Recycling Coordinator at the Orange County Department of Public Works/Division of Environmental Facilities and Services, had contacted Sumner regarding a Community Composting Project. It sounds like it will initially be a small scale project collecting food scraps from farmer markets and finding a place to process them, collecting around ten gallons a week. Sumner met with several members of a group working on the project at Dan Doyle's farm in Warwick. Discussion followed.

Sumner mentioned that Winslow is in AG NPS RD 27. A design is being worked on to build a stream crossing. It's a regulated stream and the NYS DEC wants a 'open span crossing'. They are seeking affordable bridge design ideas.

There was discussion on rebuilding the District's old corn planter instead of buying a new one. Pequea Planter gave the District an estimate of \$2,000-\$4,000. Discussion followed. The Directors were in agreement of this.

AEM Base Program Tier 4 Cost-Share Implementation Track Project - A Potential Conflict of Interest form and budget was passed out for Director review and discussion. Roland O'Dell, Jr., the District's part-time Technician, applied for funding for a spreader shed improvement project on the O'Dell Farm. Sumner completed a Potential Conflict of Interest form provided by NYSSWCC. It notes that Ron O'Dell has no role in selecting, planning or ranking projects. The Board reviewed the form and concurred with it. Sumner had developed a project ranking procedure to document that we are ranking projects based on natural resource concerns. The O'Dell Farm project ranked 9 points, which is comparable to the highest ranking projects from last year. Sumner described the project and proposes that the District allocate \$35,150.00 of NYS AEM Round 17 Tier 4 funding towards it. Sumner proposed, that the District as the sponsor, cover the engineering services, which is approximately \$3,000.00. Discussion followed. **2022-8-5 Cheney made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, to approve the O'Dell Farm project budget. All in favor.**

2022-8-6 Cheney made the Motion, Constable seconded, to approve the Resolution to remove Alex Kocot and Chris Van Aken from the AEM 17 Tier 4 Cost-Share Implementation Track Projects and replace them with the Roland O'Dell, Jr spreader shed improvement project. All in favor.

Soil Health Incentive Program (SHIP) Status Reflecting New Sign-ups and Changes Resulting from Expected CRF Award - A status and proposed changes document was passed out for Director review which includes new cover crop sign-ups. The District carried over \$3,895.00 from last year's SHIP program and earlier this year the Board allocated \$25,000.00 towards it. So the SHIP funding for this year is \$28,895.00. Discussion followed. With previous sign-ups now expected to be covered by CRF 6, the funding needed to cover all other cover crop sign-ups is \$16,100, which would leave an unobligated SHIP balance of \$12,795. **2022-8-7 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to approve the SHIP changes with the addition of the new cover crop sign-ups. All in favor.**

The 2021 Auditor's Report was passed out to Directors at last month's meeting. There was discussion on the possibility of changing auditing firms. The District has used KKB&N for quickbooks training and they are quick to answer accounting questions we have had. We would also be working with one auditor as compared to the several from PKF O'Connor Davies. Discussion followed. The District will contact the County's Finance Department to ask if it's possible for the District to change companies.

NEXT MEETING DATE - The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, September 19, 2022 at 9:00 AM.**

ADJOURNMENT

2022-8-8 The Meeting was Adjourned at 10:58 AM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Ruszkiewicz. All in favor.

Minutes Prepared By:

Christine DeGroodt, Secretary to the Board

C. DeGroodt

Board Meeting Activities July 15, 2022 – August 12, 2022

- We have \$556 cash awards on the rewards credit cards.
- Attended budget hearing.
- Worked on the Wallkill Maintenance Expansion paperwork.
- Voucher submitted for AEM Year 17.
- Submitted two reimbursement requests to DASNY/SAM Grant.
- Completed a few Soil Group Worksheets.
- Started preparing paperwork/contracts for SHIP participants.

Report to Board KMS

August, 2022

AEM/AEM Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects)

Van Aken farm withdrew. I am proposing to replace it and Kocot farm with O'Dell farm project. Kocot expected to be funded through CRF 6.

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project [contract extended to 2023]

Expecting final roof design from B&L for Southway compost facility soon. Will be offered to Southway, unless he finds another design with needed approval sign-off.

Still waiting on Minkus controlled drainage project.

Floodplain Bench

Phase 4 (CRF 5)

Got one of two landowners to sign Access License, still trying to catch up with other. We believe DEC technical staff are reviewing the project, though there is still some information needed from our engineers to complete the permit application.

Phase 3, Area 2

Work progressing well. Excavation 1/3 to 1/2 done. Seed has been ordered and received, trees ordered for planned early October planting. Requesting Board approval for second reimbursement payment to Pine Island Turf Nursery (project sponsor) - \$118,200. Working on DASNY payment.

Other Flood Mitigation

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – Project is progressing with assistance from Attorney Hoyt and County Surveyor Tom Barry. Hope to be sending out easements for landowner signature within a couple weeks.

Round 27 ANPSACP

Waiting for contract documents (start date for contract – November, 2021).

CRF 6 We are expecting to be funded. This project included funding for 12 ft seeder and roller crimper. It will cover incentive payments that we currently have scheduled through AEM 17 and our local SHIP, so this will allow us to consider new projects (O'Dell).

Other

Legoland EBP – Received DEC comments. They prefer to have funds spent more on later items in OCLT proposal. Forwarded comments to OCLT, waiting for Kyle to return from vacation to discuss further.

Pulaski Culverts – nothing new to report since last month

New Hire – Spoke to one applicant by phone. He is scheduled to visit (from Oswego County) 8/16.

Meat Processing Facility – Survey officially released. Trying to promote and engaging farmers to fill out.

Streams Bill – letter sent to governor. Still no action.

Met with several members of group working on community composting project at Dan Doyle farm in Warwick. Unclear where that project will go. It appears they are having difficulty getting volunteers to monitor food scrap drop-offs at farmers markets and deliver the scraps to composting facility.

County executive office Budget Hearing on 8/10, 10AM went well. It appears they will approve our appropriation request. New Director of Operations seemed very engaged. Porr asked us to give her (and other attendees) background on Soil and Water. We had a good discussion, we stressed commercial agriculture support, including discussion of slaughterhouse proposal. DeBlock attended, and assisted with answering questions from the group.

Had meeting with NRCS to discuss potential closer cooperation on projects.

Winslow bridge – Working on design of Rd 27 project to build a stream crossing. Regulated stream – DEC wants a 'clear span'. Seeking affordable bridge design ideas.

Considering 'top-to-bottom' re-build of older planter vs new purchase.

Documents to Review Before Considering O'Dell project Approval

1. Review 'Conflict of Interest' form
2. Review Project Ranking form
3. Review/vote on AEM 17 Tier 4 Project Implementation Worksheet

Present Updated Soil Health Incentive Program Status Reflecting New Sign-ups and Changes Resulting from Expected CRF 6 award