

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 16th, 2024

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:04 AM. Directors P. DeBlock, J. Wright, B. Cheney, P. Ruskiewicz, and G. Constable were present along with K. Sumner (SWCD), E. King (SWCD), M. Held (SWCD), and E. Miller (Regional Affairs Coordinator for Senator Skoufis).

2024-12-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to approve November’s Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

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

CORRESPONDENCE

- Bank Statements
- Collateral Agreements
- Region 5 Monthly SWCC Report from Ben Luskin
- The Empire State Granger: November/December 2024 Issue
- Orange County Board of Ethics- Annual Statement of Financial Disclosure Form
- District’s Article RE: World Soil Day in Goshen Independent
 - Sumner informed the Board that the District submitted an article to the Goshen Independent for the purpose of improving the District’s outreach and education. Held found that World Soil Day is on 12/5/24, so the article pertained to soil. Sumner distributed copies of the article to the Board for reviewal.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Sumner noted that the District’s unobligated balance is not huge, but Sumner feels comfortable with the current balance of \$195,000.00. Sumner stated that no-till receipts are currently over budget which is a good thing, and he expects more funds will come in this year.

2024-12-2 Wright made the Motion, Ruskiewicz seconded, to file November’s Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

DISCUSSION OF DISTRICT VEHICLES

Wright asked Sumner what condition the District’s trucks are in. Sumner reported that the District’s 2006 Chevrolet Colorado is in fair condition and has around 111,000 miles on it. The Ford, which is used for towing equipment, is in good shape. However, the District’s 2003 Dodge needs some mechanical improvements before it is used for towing. Sumner predicts that the Dodge needs \$1,000.00 in brake work. Sumner acknowledges that with the incoming equipment it would be ideal for the District to have two trucks that have towing ability. The Dodge is a ¾ ton and the

Ford is a one-ton truck. Sumner noted that the District previously discussed selling the 2003 Dodge, but even with its age the engine is in good condition. Sumner feels that it is worth discussing reassigning money to the equipment replacement fund. Sumner noted that it could be risky relying on a twenty-year-old truck for towing. Constable asked whether the Department of Transportation sells their trucks? Cheney indicated that the DOT hardly does. Cheney advised that the District look for trucks and available grants in the meantime. Additionally, Cheney recommended that the District request funding for it in the 2026 Budget. Lower price private locally than with a State bid. It is a good idea to use State bids as the basis and request local bids as well. Constable shared that he heard that the automobile industry has reached the selling price limit and that there will be a crash in the truck market. Per Constable, the national truck inventory has exceeded three million.

REQUEST TO INCREASE FUNDING IN P4N PROJECT

Sumner wanted to speak with the Board prior to them approving the Bills to be Paid since there is a bill listed that would put the District over the current budget for the Phase 4 North Bench project. The initial contract for P4N was \$600,000 since the District had not yet received the supplemental \$150,000 from the County. The initial \$600,000 reflects the initial appropriation outlined in the District's 2024 budget. Sumner requests that the Board increase the amount of the P4N contract between us and Sunflower Valley Farms from \$600,000 to \$850,000. \$150,000 of this increase will be covered by the supplemental appropriation from the County. If the Board approves the contract revision between the District and Sunflower Valley Farm, then the District will also have Sunflower Valley Farm adjust their contract with CEC excavating to reflect the same amount. Although the District has funds in the unobligated account, Sumner suggests that the District take the additional \$100,000 out of the Part C money. The Part C account will be replenished in March 2025 which will be around \$220,000. Wright recalled that Sumner stated that P4N is a larger project than the previous phases. P4N construction spanned ¾ of a mile which was done in one shot. Sumner continued that P4N included a lengthy road construction that cost quite a lot.

2024-12-3 Constable made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to transfer \$100,000 from the 2024 Part C account and to increase the SWCD-Sunflower Valley Farm contract to \$850,000. Additionally, a corresponding increase in the contract between Sunflower Valley Farms and CEC Excavating will occur. All in favor.

Both Sumner and Wright signed the updated contracts that Sumner presented.

Sumner reported that the watershed along P4N received two inches of rain last week. Chip Lain told the Project contractor that the Wallkill River was a foot shy from flooding the Bench. Sumner monitored the rainfall at the site and on the USGS gauge and found that at the site the river went down a foot the day after it rained. It is still peaking at Oil City Road. It appears that as flood flows get closer to where the Bench work was done the river lowers quicker.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

2024-12-4 Wright made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor.

GRANT REPORT UPDATE

Sumner indicated any updates to the grants report for the month of November are highlighted in red ink. DeBlock asked if Rick Minkus planted 300 acres of cover crop. Sumner explained that the District paid Minkus the initial cap of 175 acres, but that Minkus submitted additional fields after the fact. The District told Minkus that they will speak with the Board to determine if there are additional funds for the 125 acres. DeBlock remarked that it is great that Black Dirt farmers participated in the cover crop program. Sumner added that there were additional Black Dirt farmers that planted cover crop, but did not request reimbursement funding from us.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

Senator Skoufis' Office: Miller encouraged the Board and the District to contact her should they have any concerns or questions that she may help with. Miller noted that there is not a lot to report on given the delays with the holiday season. She has been at her position for just under six months. Miller has been working a lot with the Orange County Farm Bureau, specifically Jason Touw, who is doing research on muck soil and its ability to support buildings OR say people's ability to build on muck soil. The OC Farm Bureau aims to limit what can be built on muck soil and to keep it in agricultural production. Additionally, Miller has been attending the Delaware Basin Commission quarterly meetings. Sumner reported that he has been in contact with Senator Skoufis' office and the NYS Ag & Markets regarding the equipment funding award. Sumner asked Miller if she can check on the status of the formal agreement since Sumner has been unable to receive a timeline. The District is hoping to order the equipment in January 2025, since the dealers need several months lead time to have it available for renting come the spring 2025 planting season. Miller told Sumner that she will speak with William Alexander who is the Grants and Operations Manager for Senator Skoufis' office to determine the status of the contract. Miller assured Sumner that she will relay his answer once she hears back from him. Sumner updated the Board on the Black Dirt fill situation. A Black Dirt farmer contacted Sumner to tell him that he was contacted by the EPA to discuss wetland violations. Sumner does not know how the EPA is deciding who to issue violations to. Sumner noted that there are some expansive fills on the Black Dirt that could be violations if proper permits were not obtained.

****Although there were no representatives from NRCS at the meeting, M. Martire provided a written update to King prior to the meeting. Martire's written report was shared with the Board of Directors and is pasted below.**

NRCS:

Nothing much to report on the NRCS front. We're busy ranking and processing FY25 applications. There is an application deadline for the Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP) in mid-March. This is more of a reward program for participants who've already addressed most of their resource concerns through EQIP or are more advanced in their conservation efforts. If there are any farms or forestland owners in the county that may be a good fit, you can send them our way. Let me know if any NRCS questions come up and I can make sure to get an answer for the next meeting or sooner if needed.

FSA: DeBlock had no updates to report from FSA.

There were no representatives from NYSC, CCE 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 thanked the Board for allowing her to attend the Certified Crop Advisor training in Syracuse which helped prepare her to start studying for the CCA exam in February. Held noted that there are two parts to the CCA exam. Additionally, Held took the Civil Service exam on 12/7 and feels that she did well. Held believes that she was the only one who took the test. Held does not know when she will receive the results. Held noted that there were a lot of questions that could have multiple answers. Held continued that she has been following up with the farmers who expressed interest in using the roller crimper to confirm that their cover crop is planted and germinated. On 11/27, Held, King, and Sumner planted trees on the floodplain bench for P4N. Held detailed the local cost share program figures related to the cover crop program. Per Held, the total that the District has paid is about \$3,400 over budget. However, Held does not expect any additional payment for the remainder of 2024. CRF grant update has been going out to check the cover crop growth. Held reported that Jason Touw's late cover crop did not germinate to the required standards, so the District has been withholding payment until there is sufficient growth to record. Held predicts that the District will need to ask Ben Luskin if they can issue payment in March to see how it grows. Held noted that the farmers who were paid have had their cover crop plantings checked. Held continued that the Ag NPS Round 30 is accepting applications at this time. There are four farms that the District will submit

applications for. Held noted that the farms include Mike Moraczewski (windbreak project), Michele Callisto (mixing facility), Tom Owens (fuel tank storage), and Devon Simpson (bedded pack barn). Held reminded the Board that Simpson's was originally submitted for funding through the CRF Round 8 grant, but was not approved due to the competition. Held will be updating the farmer's Tier 3 farm plans which is needed prior to submitting the applications. Sumner noted that the District supplied a substantial amount of cash, almost \$50k, for Simpson's application to the CRF Round 8 grant to boost his ranking. Sumner stated that the District has been trying to increase their cash contribution for the Ag NPS grants to help the farmer's ranking. For example, for Ag NPS Rnd 29, the District contributed 15% to the project costs. Sumner acknowledged that he will have to make a decision on this since he stated at the November Board meeting he did not want to commit more of our Part C funds at this time until we have a better handle on future projects to which we committed local funding. Sumner justified this decision based on the financial report and wanted to avoid overextending the District's funds. Sumner noted that the District is in good shape financially with the P4N construction, but the District still needs to pay the easement purchases. Sumner will have a better understanding of the District's standing and the unobligated fund balance once the December '24 financial report is done. Sumner acknowledged that there will not be a lot of time to get Board approval for these submissions since applications are due in February. Therefore, the Board will need to decide how much money to allow the District to commit out of their own budget to help the ranking of the new grant proposals. Held reported that the soil samples needed for Jessy Raap's CNMP will be collected well before February 2025 which will supply the technical service provider with the necessary information that she needs. Held met with a representative from Orange & Rockland to discuss a potential pollinator garden collaboration. Held noted that O&R has a large funding source for implementing largescale pollinator gardens and not really with homeowners. Held realized that if the District offered pollinator gardens to homeowners that it would need to be kept small. Held is waiting to hear back on how a collaboration with them would go. Held is still waiting on an email from them to find out about collaborating with them on a project.

E. King (SWCD)- King had no updates to her written report.

K. Sumner (SWCD)- Review "Old and New Business" for further information.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Walkkill Flood Projects- Sumer informed the Board that he spoke with the District's attorney, Richard Hoyt, regarding the land title work. Pine Island Turf Nursery's attorney has not returned Hoyt's calls, but the District wants to move forward with the easement, if given Board approval. Sumner reminded the Board that there is minimal risk involved, but hypothetically if PITN fell behind on their mortgage payments and somebody else bought the property then the new owners would not be subject to the easement. Sumner stated that Botti is PITN's attorney and Farm Credit's attorney. The landowner, Chip Lain, is asking Sumner when he can expect payment for the land easements. The delay is related to waiting on Botti, PITN's attorney, to return Hoyt's calls. Sumner asked the Board for approval so the District can finalize the land easement language, send it to Hoyt for reviewal, and then issue the payments. The Board was OK with proceeding with the easement without a 'release' from Farm Credit on the land involved in the easement, based on Hoyt and Sumer's opinion that the risk was minimal.

Bench Project- Sumner reported that the Bench project is nearly complete. Sumner shared a drone aerial photo of the floodplain bench from this morning with the Board that was taken by a landowner. Sumner noted, CEC Excavating worked this past weekend and planted 130 trees yesterday morning.

Sign Off Issue- Sumner updated the Board that Held is still working on compiling the required materials to ensure sign off approval from either NRCS or Ben Luskin. Sumner feels that the amount of work involved is not worth it for the modest payments that we are making to cover crop practices. Per Sumner, NRCS requires that a soil loss equation be run on every soil type in the field. Sumner finds that mandate to be excessive and it is more practical to run a soil loss test on the most predominant soil in the field. This will not affect how much the farmer receives per acre.

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD DECEMBER 2024 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Sumner noted that there is still a looming possibility of paying for reimbursements taken from the CRF grant. Sumner expects there will be answers to that question in 2025.

Wallkill Maintenance Agreement- Sumner expressed frustration towards the attorneys that made changes to the agreement without consulting the District first. The agreement now states that the funds will be carried over with the towns and the County making their full contribution each year. However, the County still handles the funds. Sumner was not aware that the changes made to the 2009 revision included replacing the Department of Public Works Commissioner with the Soil & Water District manager. This means that the District is now the formal administrator of the contract and has the authority to approve vouchers and increase the fund amount with the approval of the partners. Sumner feels that it is inefficient for the District to have this formal role, but still needs to submit reimbursement requests to the County. Sumner continued that so long as the County is responding to the reimbursement requests in a timely fashion, then he feels it is workable though not ideal. Sumner wants the District to be in close communication with the County regarding the fund balance so that the District can spend wisely. Cheney suggested that Sumner, two Board of Directors, and the County commissioner of finance meet to discuss suggested improvements. This way the District starts the conversation and will see what the County's response is. Cheney is hopeful that an agreement can be made that would allow the money to be allocated to the District at the beginning of the year. Hypothetically, these funds would be kept in a separate account, which would allow the District to demonstrate our stewardship of the money to the County. If this were to occur, Cheney predicts that the District would receive the funds in February or March.

Ag NPS Rnd 27- Sumner reminded the Board that the contract for Ag NPS Round 27 expires March 1st, 2025. Sumner reported that there is at least one farm in Round 27, Winslow Therapeutic, that is making progress, but has more work that they would like to accomplish. For this reason, the District is asking for a formal time extension from State Soil & Water Committee. However, SSWC requires that the District obtain a resolution or Board motion from the Board of Directors with their approval. Additionally, the SWCC will ask for commitment from the other landowners about completing their projects. Sumner is unsure whether the other landowners will complete their projects, but he assumes that they will sign the commitment since there is no consequence if they do not finish their projects.

2024-12-5 Cheney made the Motion, Constable seconded, to approve the District's request for a one-year time extension for Winslow Therapeutic's project in Ag NPS Rnd 27. All in favor.

Wallkill Wildlife Refuge Collab- Sumner met with the Wallkill Wildlife Refuge and a representative with the Federal DOT to discuss the five million dollars that is supposedly available and intended to be used for the Wallkill's remediation. Sumner learned that there has been activity regarding that decision, but Sumner has not received updates. Sumner established a line of communication with the assistant manager of the Refuge who is now overseeing the activity. Sumner reported that the Federal DOT changed their design for the streambank stabilization from sheet piling to gabion baskets. Sumner feels that this practice is a poor choice for a stream bank, since sediments in the river flow can break down the wires in the gabion baskets. Sumner does not understand why they would not use riprap instead. Cheney believes that they chose to use gabion baskets for financial benefits. Sumner noted that the two parties on the call seem amenable to a more natural practice for the streambank stabilization. Sumner shared sample engineer plans that the District has used on similar projects with the two parties. These plans outline using riprap on the lower half of the slope and bioengineering on the upper half. Sumner was told that the Refuge will present these to their environmental specialist to help determine if this is permissible. Even if the Refuge works with the District on the streambank repair, it is unclear whether they will collaborate with the District on a more comprehensive project such as the floodplain bench project. Sumner feels that he has done his due diligence and is resigned to waiting on the next step from the Refuge and Federal DOT.

O'Dell Tire Removal- Sumner reported that the O'Dell's presented two bills totaling \$904 as part of their request for assistance pertaining to their tire removal. The O'Dell's had a couple hundred tires removed by Tire King in Sussex County, NJ. Sumner believes that O'Dell's request is well within the District's current available discretionary funding.

Sumner recalled that the Board previously approved a reimbursement of 50% of the total payment after the initial project. Sumner clarified that this is the third inquiry, but only the second time funding was issued after the initial project. Constable remarked how the initial project was over five years ago.

2024-12-6 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, Constable seconded, to issue a 50% reimbursement for the O'Dell's total cost, \$904, associated with the tire removal. All in favor.

Dedicated Fund Summary Adjustment- Sumner noted that the equipment replacement fund has a balance of around \$4,000. Sumner explained that if the District were more reliant on purchasing new equipment with our own funds, then the account would need to be replenished more often. However, the District is fortunate to have received money from other sources such as the County, Agricultural Farmland Protection Board, and Senator Skoufis for equipment replacement. The District made the roller crimper advance payment of \$8,437.50 on 11/4/24. The \$8,437.50 was split with a large amount sourcing from State grants. Sumner suggested that the District replenish the equipment replacement fund to \$10,000. This is a paper transfer, but otherwise these funds are still in our main bank account. By doing so, the District is helping to show that we are not carrying a large unobligated balance. If need be, the District can always borrow back from the equipment replacement fund if there are more immediate expenses.

2024-12-7 DeBlock made the Motion, Constable seconded, to replenish the Equipment Replacement Fund to \$10,000. All in favor.

Retirement Liability Fund- Sumner noted that depending on the District's unobligated fund balance at the end of December 2024, he will make additional recommendations to the Board. Specifically, to increase the retirement liability fund. By doing so, Sumner hopes to prevent the District from having to withdrawal a large amount from the District's general fund. Instead, this money will be sourced from the retirement liability fund. Additionally, Sumner recommended that the contingency fund as well as others should be adjusted.

Sexual Harassment Prevention Training- Sumner reported to the Board that all staff members, Constable, and Wright completed the sexual harassment prevention training. The county legislators, Cheney & Ruskiewicz, already took the sexual harassment prevention training to satisfy the County's mandate. The questionnaires that accompanied the training were answered as well. There were no questions or concerns regarding the District's sexual harassment policy.

Salary Table Increase- Sumner reminded the Board that adjustments to the staff's salary table are made at the Board of Director's meeting in January. However, Sumner asked the Board to discuss the salary table adjustment now, so that the District can avoid having to write a retroactive check. Sumner informed the Board that when the District submitted their 2025 county appropriation request, a 3% salary increase was assumed.

2024-12-8 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to increase the 2025 District Employee Salary Table by 3% to be concurrent with District's 2025 budget. All in favor.

Annual Reorganizational Meeting- The District's annual reorganizational meeting will be held at the Board of Director's meeting in January 2025. The reviewal of the District's policies and the election of officers will occur at this meeting.

Next meeting date: January 21st

ADJOURNMENT

2024-12-9 DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Ruskiewicz, to adjourn the meeting at 10:09 AM. All in favor.

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD DECEMBER 2024 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes Prepared By:

Emily King, Secretary to the Board

Report to Board KMS

December, 2024

Wallkill Flood Projects –

No progress on the title work for Phase 4 Bench easements from last month. Phase 4 South landowner has been inquiring about when they can expect payment, but I am waiting on attorney work.

Floodplain Bench Phase 4 North

Last delivery of trees is scheduled for today, excavation and tree planting work expected to be completed this week. There will be some additional tasks to complete including installing drainage under the new road and relocating a culvert at the upstream end of the project. This is 'extra' work not in the original bid/contract. Along with other extra work discussed previously, I have estimated the amount needed to add to the original contract. Contract revision documents will be presented at the meeting for Board approval.

Two awards from AFPB for trees - \$1,500 each

Other Flood Control Items

Working on annual 'vegetative analysis' required by NYSDEC floodplain bench permit

Celery Avenue ledge lowering project – No word on DEC/ACoE permits. Floodplain Development Permit applications for Goshen and Wawayanda have been submitted.

Carbon Farming Project – Still waiting on final payment of \$4,268.32 on Southway project (same status as last month).

AEM Round 18 –No significant activity to report since last month.

CRF Round 7 – Still waiting on fully executed contract so we can request initial grant payments..

'Sign Offs' on Soil Health Practices –See Mary's report

Revision of Wallkill Maintenance Agreement – I attended the 11/25 meeting of the County Legislature Physical Services Committee where the Agreement amendment to allow for carry over of unspent funds was approved by the Committee. In preparing for the meeting, I reviewed materials posted on the Legislature's website, including the previous amendment to the Agreement in 2009 that made Soil and Water the 'Administrator' for the Agreement. I had never been provided with this 1st amendment to review the wording (nor was I consulted when it was drafted). I previously thought the amendment simply allowed for Soil and Water to assist the County DPW in administration of the Agreement, but it literally substitutes the 'Soil and Water District Manager' wherever DPW Commissioner was used in the original Agreement. Although I don't necessarily find this objectionable, it was never clarified to me. And it creates an unusual situation where Soil and Water has been given full administrative oversight yet DPW continues to collect, hold and disperse monies for the Fund. As long as reimbursement procedures are timely and there is regular communication about the fund balance, this is not an unworkable situation. However, it becomes potentially more problematic with the second amendment allowing for carryover of monies in the Fund. I believe the intent of the Agreement parties was for 'leftover' funds to be transferred to Soil and Water for their use in 'flood mitigation/river maintenance' activities. There is no mention of this in the Amendment, so I suspect it would

be deemed 'not permissible' by County officials without further amendment of the Agreement. Overall, I believe the intent of the Agreement partners is met by this second Amendment. But I believe it would have made the whole process more efficient if the second amendment included a provision for leftover funds at the end of the year to be transferred to Soil and Water. Or even more efficient if the County and Town deposits were transferred to Soil and Water at the beginning of each year. If Soil and Water is now the official Administrator of the Agreement, as established by the first amendment to the agreement in 2009, with the Conservation District Manager given such authorities as approving vouchers and calling for increases in the Fund (with approval of a majority of the Agreement partners), then it would seem logical for Soil and Water to physically maintain the Fund. I make these observations not only because of concern for efficiency, but also because of frustration that Soil and Water was largely left out of the amendment process after our initial outreach to assist in beginning the process at the County. As long as we can establish an efficient line of communication with the appropriate County DPW staff so that we can closely monitor the Fund balance, and reimbursement procedures are not burdensome, we should be able to work with the current arrangements as established in the second Agreement amendment to allow for more river maintenance work as intended by the Agreement partners. However, perhaps the County Law Department should recognize that while we are not attorneys, we could still possibly have useful input in the review of Agreement amendments that directly involve and affect us before they are finalized. At a minimum, we should be formally presented with final versions that affect us. I would not have even known the wording of the 2009 amendment or the current amendment if I did not pull them off the Legislature website.

Roller Crimper Project Update -10 foot roller crimper has been ordered.

The AgNPS Round 29 – No recent project activity.

AgNPS Round 27 – I would like the Board to consider a time extension. We'll need a motion in the minutes if we decide to request it from NYSSWCC.

AgNPS Round 30 – The RFP for this round is out, proposals due by February 24, 2025. This is not ideal timing, since we have numerous reports that have to be submitted to NYSSWCC by February 15. We anticipate submitting two proposals. 1) The Simpson Compost bedded Pack Barn that failed to receive funding through CRF 8 (Delaware Watershed); and 2) A Wallkill watershed proposal with 4 to 6 farms expected to be included.

Other Items

Gas Purchase From Wawayanda – No updates from last month.

O'Dell PDR – nothing new to report

Skoufis Equipment Funding – Still no formal agreement in place. I have followed up with both Ag & Markets and Skoufis' office but do not have an indication of when to expect it.

Possible Collaboration with Wallkill River National Wildlife Refuge – I had a meeting with USFWS and USDOT. From what I could gather, they changed from sheet piling to gabion baskets to address their Wallkill River bank erosion issue. They seemed interested in working with us and coming up with a 'softer' approach to the bank stabilization. Unclear if they would extend the collaboration to a flood mitigation

project like the floodplain bench concept. Sent them sample streambank stabilization plans we have installed. Waiting to hear back from them.

Tires – The O’Dell farm has submitted copies of their bills for tire removal. We agreed last month to consider their request for reimbursement of these costs once their expenses were presented to us.

End-of-Year Dedicated Funds Adjustments – We had a little over \$4,000 in our Equipment Replacement Fund before spending \$8,437 on the roller crimper advance payment. The R/C purchase will be partially paid for through CRF 6. The \$8,437 will be split as follows: \$5,624 from NYS funds, \$2,813 from local funds. I suggest we replenish the ERF to \$10,000 from the general fund. Depending on our unobligated balance at the end of December, I would like to consider increasing the Retirement Liability Fund, and possibly the Contingency fund.

DWSP2 – I am continuing to participate on the Town of Montgomery and Village of Warwick Drinking Water Source Protection plan committees.

Met with Sidle Agency to do annual policies review. Small premium increase expected for 2025.

Information and Education – We completed an Annual Report and updated the OCSWCD Brochure. These activities will help us satisfy Performance Measures Part C Report and increase our outreach efforts. We suggest distributing hard copies of the AR to select groups/individuals such as County Legislators. A ‘mass email’ distribution to office clients and others will also be done.

We also prepared a ‘World Soil Day’ article (December 5th) which was published by the Goshen Independent Republican.

Emily King

Secretary to the Board Update

12/16/24

I really appreciated the opportunity to attend the 2024 Administrative Conference. I took logging and tracking grants, conscious leadership, and records managements 101 course. I was able to meet with fellow District clerks at a forum to address questions and possible areas of improvement in our filing/recording practices.

Additionally, I reached out to several companies that manufacture irrigation equipment to request quotes. The District needs three quotes for Shuback Farm's irrigation project which is funded through Climate Resilient Farming Round 7. I contacted Rain-Flo Irrigation, Nolt's Produce Supplies, Lee Rain Irrigation, Empire Drip Supply, and CFS Irrigation Supply. I received a quote from Rain-Flo Irrigation which I shared with Kevin Shuback. I am waiting on a quote from Lee Rain Irrigation in New Jersey, but otherwise I have not heard back from the other companies besides Nolt's who do not manufacture a Hosereel Mounted Linear Irrigation Boom. Once we have the quote from Lee Rain we will have satisfied the three quotes requirement since Shuback has received a quote.

I spoke with a representative from the NYS Local Retirement System RE: payment of the District's 2025 Annual Invoice. The representative advised that I send the check via certified mail to have the proof of mailing and delivery at our disposal. I confirmed that the check was delivered to the intended location on 11/25 and was deposited on 11/26.

I finished working on my training plans and shared them with Sumner who provided me with suggested edits. I heeded Sumner's advice and made the appropriate corrections.

Sumner, Held, and I met to review what areas of the District's 2024 Performance Measures need to be satisfied. In order to fulfill the media reports item from the 2024 performance standard, the three of us decided to submit an article to a local newspaper. The subject of the article pertained to World Soil Day, which occurred on 12/5/24. My portion of the article covered web soil survey and the valuable information it offers regarding the basic physical and chemical properties of soil. I contacted the editor of the Goshen Independent and coordinated the publication of the article in their 12/4 issue. Held purchased a few copies of the issue for the Board to read.

On 11/27 I assisted Held, Sumner, and CEC's workers with planting container trees on the floodplain along the Walkkill River for the Phase 4 North project. I really enjoyed working outside and was happy that I could help with this project.

I received a few phone calls regarding soil group worksheets, collected the needed information, and shared it with Held to assist her in the process. Also, I watched and completed the NYS Sexual Harassment Prevention training.

I accompanied Held to help her collect soil samples from fields at Top Notch Farm that Jessy Raap uses. These samples are needed for Jessy Raap's Certified Nutrient

Management Plan. Per Held, there are thirteen more fields that need soil samples taken from.

I conferred with Sumner and filled out the NYS Statutory Disability & Paid Family Leave bill for 2024. I prepared a detailed Excel workbook which explains how I determined the values for submission. Once I receive Board approval to pay the balance, I will mail the check.

The District received several payments via direct deposit to our main checking account in November. The District received \$5,424.75 on 11/6 from Orange County DPW for expenses associated with the Wallkill Maintenance Project. Additionally, the District received the first payment of \$1,500.00 from the Orange County Agricultural Farmland Protection Board on 11/29 to account for the purchase of trees for P4N. The second payment from the AFPB was received on 12/4 in the amount of \$1,500.00.

I ordered fifty copies of the newly created District brochure, with Sumner's approval, from Staples. The delivery should arrive towards the end of December. I oversaw the formatting and printing of the District's 2024 Annual Report. I made enough copies to distribute to the Board of Directors, County Legislators, and members of the AFPB.

Finally, 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 November's. I provided a detailed report of the dedicated fund summary for November's financial report.

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

Thank you,

Emily

OCSWCD Technician Update

Mary C. Held

12/13/2024

I procured the minutes from the last board meeting for the first time.

I attended CCA training in Syracuse on November 19th and 20th. I obtained my study materials for taking the CCA exam in February and stayed for the ‘advanced’ training courses, which were largely presentations explaining recent agricultural changes, impacts, statistics, and plans for the future. I also attended another remote training on Dec 10th and 11th which was structured similarly.

I took the civil service exam on Dec 7th 2024. I also completed the sexual harassment prevention training in early December.

Soil group worksheet requests are starting to come in a little more steadily, which I have largely taken over.

Equipment:

Roller Crimper Project:

No updates other than I have been going around checking on the progress of some of the later plantings. Chuck Rowe’s late plantings have come up sufficiently to pay out in my opinion. Jason Touw, who is in the CRF6 program and willing to partake in the roller crimper demo, also had late plantings which have not been paid out. Likewise, Phil Johnson had a late planting and his crop has not yet come up.

Cover crops are being planted in preparation for spring crimping.

Rowe, Chuck: Late cover crop germinated and has supplied sufficient cover to be paid out – see bills to be paid.

Ronne, Alex: Checked, paid.

Conklin, Sue: Late cover crop not germinated.

Touw, Jason: Cover Crop Planted, germination rate very low.

Johnson, Phil: Late cover crop not germinated.

O’Dell, Mike: Checked, paid.

Wallkill River Phase 4 North:

Emily, Kevin, and I planted trees at the Wallkill floodplain bench on November 27th.

Local Cost Share Program:

Please see the below update on Local Cost Share Farmers cover crop plantings:

| <i>single species</i> | <i>projected</i> | <i>planted</i> | <i>paid</i> | <i>note</i> | <i>Checked?</i> |
|-----------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| Tom Owens | 300 | 175 | 175 | Paid | Checked, photos in file |

| | | | | | |
|---------------|-------|--------|--------|---------------|------------------------------|
| Mark Hoyt | 175 | 16 | 16 | Paid | checked, photos in file |
| Mike O'Dell | 150 | 73.79 | 73.79 | Paid | Checked, photos in file |
| Chuck Rowe | 175 | 176.55 | 176.55 | late planting | checked, in bills to be paid |
| Brad Meres | 30 | 7 | 0 | late planting | not checked, not paid |
| Jessy Raap | 15 | 2.89 | 2.89 | late planting | checked, in bills to be paid |
| Sue Conklin | 15 | 15 | 0 | late planting | not checked, not paid |
| Troy Vellenga | 17.8 | 17.7 | 17.7 | paid | Checked, photos in file |
| Tom Minkus | 0 | 178.7 | 178.7 | paid | checked, photos in file |
| John King | | 0.5 | 0.5 | paid | checked, photos in file |
| R&G Produce | 0 | 174.66 | 174.66 | paid | checked, photos in file |
| Total: | 877.8 | 837.79 | 815.79 | | |

\$ x \$70.00 x \$70.00 x \$70.00
 \$ \$ \$
 61,446.00 58,645.30 57,105.30

| <i>Multi species</i> | <i>projected</i> | <i>planted</i> | <i>Paid</i> | <i>Notes</i> |
|----------------------|------------------|----------------|-------------|-------------------------|
| John King | 3 | 3.13 | Paid | checked, photos in file |
| Alex Ronne | 75 | 71.56 | Paid | checked, photos in file |
| Total: | 78 | 74.69 | | |

x \$85.00
 = \$6,348.65

Total Paid (including this payment for C. Rowe and J. Raap): \$63,453.95

CRF Update:

Round 6:

I have been attempting to run RUSLE2 from the notes Oscar gave me last month. Familiarizing myself with this software is a learning curve but I think I'm getting the hang of it.

(recap) OCTOBER PAYMENTS:

Russell Smiley:

11.61 single species
 10.51 multispecies
 22.12 acres total
Total: \$1,706.05

Alex Kocot:

96.01 single species

43.77 multispecies
139.78 acres total
Total: \$10,441.15

Bob Stap:

16.47 single species
Total: \$1,152.90

Phil Johnson:

Planted roughly 40 acres cover crop in later November, has not come up yet.

Jason Touw:

41.63 single species – only 23.31 acres planted before plant-by date (see BMP payment)
1.95 multi species – late and partially NRCS payout, not included in BMP payment
43.58 total acres
Total: \$3,079.85
Total Paid: 23.31 acres x \$70/ac = \$1,701.70

- The rest of the payment will be withheld until ample growth is made.

NOVEMBER: no updates/payments. Checked cover crop on paid-out fields to see how growth was coming in Smiley and Stap both had ample growth on cover crop fields that were paid out.

DECEMBER: Jason Touw:

The cover crop that Jason Touw planted late is still relatively insufficient in terms of providing ground coverage for the winter. I recommend holding off on paying him until we get word from the State about if they will consider extreme circumstances (drought) this year like they did last year with the heavy rainfall.

Round 7: No updates.

AGNPS Update:

Round 27: Contract End Date: March 2025

- I have not heard anything back from anyone who may or may not want to continue working on their projects.

Round 29:

- No update.

Round 30:

- The grant round has finally come out with requests for proposals. There are a few farms we are wanting to put into the grant round.
 - o Mike Moraczewski (windbreak)

- Michele Callisto (mixing facility)
 - Tom Owens (fuel tank storage)
 - Devon Simpson (bedded pack barn) – previously, Devon was submitted through CRF8 but his project was not funded due to the competition.
- Tier 3A plans are being checked and procured for individuals lacking. The support paperwork for these farms will be supplied by the time we are ready to submit our proposals.

AEM Update:

Round 18: No updates from the technician on the scheduled projects.

CNMP Update for Jessy Raap:

Emily and I started soil sampling for Jessy Raap on Top Notch Farms. We have roughly 13 more fields left and plan to do these in the coming weeks on warmer/drier days.

Pollinator Project:

I had a meeting with O&R to discuss a potential collaboration. From what it appears to be, O&R has a program that will cover 100% of the cost of implementing pollinator habitats for local groups with larger spaces and municipalities. They've covered projects such as the Goshen library, a plot at West Point, and a 'how to grow a pollinator garden' seminar in Otisville. They mentioned that they typically work with "groups" as opposed to just individuals, but when it came down to homeowners for smaller plots, they provided a seed package with gardening instructions and technical assistance.

I am still waiting to hear back from them about what they think a collaboration would look like between our agencies, but I think that will be the road to travel.