

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 28, 2015

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:10 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton and P. DeBlock were present, along with R. Baglia (CCE) and K. Sumner, N. Meyer and C. DeGrootd (OCSWCD).

2015-12-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to approve November's Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS

- No actions.

CORRESPONDENCE

- Statements from the District's banks were received.
- Recall notice regarding the throttle position sensor on the District's 2008 Chevy Colorado. Sumner does not believe this affects our vehicle.
- Resolution from the County of Orange in support of the District's grant application to the NYS SWCC for an award of funds for the Flood Mitigation on the Wallkill River/Black Dirt Agricultural region.
- Resolution from the County of Orange adopting amendments to the Orange County Comprehensive Master Plan (Ag and Farmland Protection Plan) for Orange County.
- Letter from NYS Dept. of Environment Conservation re: Request for locations of winter turkey flocks in New York.
- American Chestnut Council seedling order form.
- Letter from Congressman Sean Patrick Maloney re: First, thanked the District for ongoing efforts to address flood concerns throughout the county. In 2007 Congress authorized a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers study to determine if there was a federal interest in pursuing large-scale flood mitigation efforts along the Wallkill River and Rondout Creek in Orange and Ulster Counties. The initial Reconnaissance Study conducted by the Army Corps found that it was in the federal interest to pursue such flood mitigation and recommended that the Army Corps, along with NYS and local partners, move forward with a Feasibility Study to examine potential flood mitigation efforts on the watershed. This undertaking never materialized. He is requesting the District's assistance in joining their office in engaging the Army Corps to determine a path forward that meets the needs of all involved. Sumner summarized for the Board some of the local concerns and reasons why the 50% local match for the Feasibility Study did not materialize when this matter was under discussion in the County several years ago. Maloney's staffers recently indicated to Sumner that they expected that much of the funding the District is expending on the current flood mitigation projects could count towards the local match for the Feasibility Study. This is encouraging, however there are still concerns about where the additional required local match would come from, the time frame of the Feasibility Study, and its focus in relation to agricultural flood control. The District will continue to monitor this matter and participate in discussions with potential partners.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

- Discussion took place regarding allocating some of the money in the Unobligated Fund into the 'Equipment Fund' or 'Ag Grant Contingency Fund' and renaming the 'Ag Grant Contingency Fund' to 'Contingency Fund'.

- **2015-12-2 Wright made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to rename 'Ag Grant Contingency Fund' to 'Contingency Fund'. All in favor.**
- **2015-12-3 Wright made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to transfer \$15,000.00 from the 'Unobligated Fund' to the 'Contingency Fund'. All in favor.**
- **2015-12-4 Keeton moved to accept the Financial Report, DeBlock seconded. All in favor.**
- A bill in the amount of \$134.71 for N. Meyer's dental insurance was added to the Bills to Be Paid for December. **2015-12-5 DeBlock made the Motion, Wright seconded, to accept the Bills to Be Paid. All in favor.**
- There was discussion regarding T. Vellenga's Ag NPS project. The engineer has already certified the projects that were cost-shared. Vellenga submitted additional bills plus engineering bills. The District has already reimbursed Vellenga ½ of his engineering expenses. Sumner proposed that the District pay the remaining ½ of engineering expenses to Vellenga, a total of \$4,139.62. **2015-12-6 Keeton made the motion, DeBlock seconded, to pay Vellenga \$4,139.62. All in favor.**
- Additional discussion regarding T. Vellenga's Ag NPS project construction bills. He already received \$128,498.50. New bills were submitted with \$60,025.66 eligible for reimbursement. **2015-12-7 DeBlock made the motion, Wright seconded, to pay Vellenga \$60,025.66. All in favor.**
- November's Grant Update report was reviewed.

STAFF REPORTS

- Meyer
 - Meyer has been working on AEM Tiers 1, 2 and 5.
 - Meyer worked on the Climate Resilient Farming Grant proposal.
 - Meyer has been certifying cover crop for Ag NPS Grant participants.
 - There was additional work completed under the Walkkill River Maintenance Agreement. Discussion followed.
 - Meyer has been moving along two secondary fuel containment projects for Ag NPS
 - Meyer has been monitoring the Pochuck Ledge Project progress.
- DeGroot
 - DeGroot has been busy working on the end of the year financial reports.
- Sumner
 - Sumner and Meyer have been going out and checking on the Pochuck Ledge project construction usually twice a day.
 - Sumner and Meyer attended the "Future of the Walkkill" conference on December 2nd in Montgomery, NY.
 - Last month Sumner mentioned a call he received from a local organic vegetable farmer, who uses land in the Chester muck area, regarding a development going in on Route 94 towards Blooming Grove. This development drains into the black dirt and the farmer has concerns over what may get into the water. He requested Sumner to come and inspect it. Sumner suggested to him that he contact the Ag and Farmland Protection Board (AFPB). Sumner also told the farmer that if the farmer was able to set up a meeting between the Village and the Developer that he (Sumner) would participate. As far as Sumner is aware, this farmer has not met with the AFPB.
 - The District's Green Innovations Grant for the City of Middletown parking lot was not approved.

- There was a brief discussion regarding a local beef farm that had neighbor complaints. No action taken.
- Tantillos, an orchard operation in Ulster County, expressed an interest in leasing the biomass Pelletizing equipment owner by the LHLIRC&D. The issue is that they only want to insure it up to \$25,000.00, way less than the value of the machine. Sumner recommended to the RC&D that they insist on a higher insured value or look for another leaser of the equipment.
- The District received certification from the engineer, B&L, that Item #1 Pochuck Rock Ledge Removal Project is 75% complete and item #2 is 10% complete. \$103,293.50 is due to the contractor. A reimbursement request was submitted. **2015-12-8 Keeton made the motion, seconded by Wright, to pay the contractor \$103,293.50 once we receive reimbursement from Housing Trust Fund and NGS Construction's prevailing wage payroll. All in favor.**

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

- R. Baglia of Cornell Cooperative Extension
 - There is a class on Solar Leases on January 8, 2016 from 11:00 – 1:00 PM at the Gerald J. Skoda Extension Education Center in Liberty, NY.
 - The Nursery and Greenhouse Growers School will be on Wednesday, January 27, 2016 8:30-3:45 PM at Cornell Cooperative Extension.
 - The Stormwater Series starts on February 21st. It's the 1st of five classes.
 - The Chamber of Commerce luncheon is today.

OLD BUSINESS

- Walkkill Flood Project
 - Meyer presented a slide show of the Pochuck Ledge Removal Project. Discussion followed.
 - The District received a bill from the Town of Goshen in the amount of \$3,252.28 for work their consultants performed in review of the District's Floodplain Development Permit application for Walkkill River Flood/Celery Avenue Rock Ledge Project. A brief discussion followed. Sumner reported that he informed the Town Building Inspector (Floodplain Development officer) that the Board was unlikely to pay the bill without knowing the status of the permit application, and asked for information on the status. No response was received. Sumner also reminded the Board that, at a 11/4/2015 meeting with the County Attorney's office, the County Attorney agreed to write to the Town imploring them to take action on the permit application which was submitted in February, 2015. The Board recommended that Sumner forward the Goshen bill to the County Attorney's office and request assistance in resolving this matter.
 - Sumner drafted a new B&L contract for \$50,000.00 with an updated Work Plan. The contract has a term of November 1st, 2015 to October 31st, 2016. B&L reviewed it and are prepared to sign. **2015-12-9 DeBlock made the motion, Keeton seconded, to approve the B&L contract with a limit of \$50,000.00. All in favor.**
 - Sumner passed around a copy of the packet he provided to Senator Bonacic's office on the Pochuck Creek Rock Ledge Removal Project Construction.
- Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Grant Proposal - There was previous discussion on the District submitting a proposal for the Walkkill flood project for the Climate Resilient Farming Grant. \$1.4 million is available to support projects that mitigate environmental impact of agriculture-related activities and increase the resiliency of farms throughout the state. Possible sources for the required 25% minimum local match had been briefly discussed. The grant proposal was submitted on December 11. The proposal asks for \$75,000 in NYS funding. After Sumner

attended two County Legislature committee meetings, the County of Orange did agree to provide a 25% match.

NEW BUSINESS

- Reasonable Accommodation, a USDA training module, was distributed to the Directors in advance and discussed during the Board meeting.

The **NEXT MEETING** is scheduled for Tuesday, January 19, 2016 at 9:00 AM.

2015-12-10 Meeting adjourns at 11:44 AM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroot
Secretary to the Board