

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 19, 2022

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:07 AM. Directors P. DeBlock, P. Ruszkiewicz, G. Constable, B. Cheney and J. Wright were present along with K. Sumner and C. DeGroodt (SWCD) and E. Schellenberg (CCE).

2022-12-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz 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

- The bank statements and collateral agreements were available for review.
- Ben Luskin, NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC), sent us a written report of general updates on NYS SWCC activities.
- Information on New York Association of Conservation Districts 2023 Legislative Days was received. It will be held on Tuesday, March 7, 2023.
- An update from the New York Association of Conservation Districts on the Draft District Law Changes was received.
- The District received the signed easement from the County for the parcel that they own in the Pellets Island Maintenance Expansion area.
- The Ag and Farmland Protection Board Meeting Agenda was received. The meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, December 21, 2022. The meat processing plant is not listed on it.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

The District's M&T Rewards credit card has an expenditure on it for Pinelands Nursery. Sumner explained it was for trees for the Wallkill bench.

2022-12-2 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to file November's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

There was discussion on how much fall cover crop was planted.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

2022-12-3 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor.

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

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

E. Schellenberg (CCE) – (Schellenberg was joined via Zoom and the connection was breaking up) - The New England Vegetable & Fruit Conference was held December 13-15.

On December 14th and 15th CCE is holding a Chainsaw Safety and Logging Techniques training.

They are working on finishing the end of the year stuff over the next several weeks.

P. DeBlock (FSA) – There are two programs coming out to help anyone with 2020 and 2021 revenue losses, similar to CFAP. One is the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase 2, the other is Pandemic Assistance Revenue Program (PARP). There will be additional assistance coming for different disasters, such as the Livestock Forage Program.

Open House will be on January 18th, 2023. Brochures will go out in the mail to farmers.

STAFF REPORTS

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

C. DeGroodt (SWCD) – DeGroodt emailed her staff report prior to the meeting.

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

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

AEM Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects) – These projects have to be completed by the end of 2023. Three of the four farm projects in this program are not currently active. 1-The O’Dell project is complete. 2-The Dean Ford project is on hold. 3-DeStafeno project is on hold. 4-The Ewanciw project has a design completed, but there is no schedule for construction.

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project – All Soil Health tests have been completed and the results were received. The Southway Project will hopefully be complete by April 2023. Status of the Minkus Project is unknown.

Flood Plain Bench Phase 3, Area 2 – The final payment is on list of bills to be paid. Final amount is \$138,474.00. Most of this is covered by the DASNY Grant. Approx. \$39,000.00 is not covered. Sumner recommends we pay this out of the 2022 Wallkill Flood Project from the County appropriation dedicated fund.

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – The District continues to follow up with the remaining five parcels that have not signed easements. Arrangements were made to have the recording fees waived at the County Clerk’s office. Easements covering 13 of 19 parcels have been formally filed with the County Clerk. Physical Services Committee approved the easement for the County-owned parcel.

Flood Plain Bench - The Annual Vegetative Report was sent to the New York State DEC. The District is still seeking a landowner access license for Bastek for Phase 4. We are in the process of updating JAP package with documents that have been revised since May.

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CRF 6 – The Plan of Work was submitted and approved.

Legoland EBP (\$50,000) - The NYS DEC verbally gave approval to use \$35,000.00 on a boundary survey for the Sugarloaf Mountain Project. However, they need a formal written request to issue written approval. Sumner asked Kyle from the Orange County Land Trust to prepare the request draft and is waiting to receive this.

The Open Space Institute is working with West Point to install a foot bridge on the Schunemunk Trail. Cadets participating in an engineering course would do the design and installation. They would like \$15,000 to use on materials for the bridge. Sumner had told Simon Gruber if he can get the Moodna Coalition to endorse this project, that Sumner would bring it to our Board for approval, which they did at November's Board Meeting. If Simon writes up the request and the Board had no objections, Simon can give the letter to Sumner and Sumner will submit it to the NYS DEC. Sumner is waiting to receive the letter from Gruber.

New Hire – The District received an inquiry from a local person who used to operate a dairy farm but he would not be available until March 2023. Discussion followed.

Sumner mentioned that Ron O'Dell offered to help move field equipment in the spring if at that time we do not yet have a technician.

Meat Processing Facility – At the last Ag Board meeting, Mary Ann Johnson from Hudson Valley Agrobusiness Development Corp., reported that there is a facility, called Catskill Quality Meats, opening in Sullivan County (outside of Jeffersonville) in January that will have the capacity to process fifty animals a day. The facility will do beef and pork with a connected facility that will do poultry. The Ag & Farmland Board rescinded their prior Motion to fund the study, and made a Motion to re-allocate \$10,000.00 to facilitate connecting Orange County producers and processors, with the Sullivan County facility in mind. Sumner stated that the Agenda for the next Ag and Farmland Protection Board meeting does not have the Meat Processing Facility on it to be discussed.

2022 Soil Health Incentive Program (SHIP) – There was \$28,895.00 appropriated by the Board for Cover Crop in the District's 2022 SHIP program. \$21,585.90 was paid out this year for fall cover crop which leaves a balance of \$7,309.00. A total of 555 acres were planted with cover crop, 246 acres of those through the Climate Resilient Farming Program.

District's Annual Audit – The District has not received any guidance from the County's Finance Department. The District requested a proposal for an audit from KKB&N, the company that assisted us with Quickbooks, but they said they did not wish to submit a proposal.

The New York State DEC is writing a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) for the Wallkill River, which is impaired by Phosphorus (it used to be sediment). Sumner and Wedemeyer, the Manager from Ulster SWCD, had a meeting with them. Discussion followed.

The bill seeking to extend regulation to all streams was vetoed by the NY Governor for a third time.

There was discussion on proposed changes to the Soil and Water District Law which are efforts to re-orient our activities in a fashion that they believe will benefit disadvantaged communities. The State Committee would lose their Grange representative, keep Farm Bureau, change their "At-Large" position to a farm that represents underserved communities. Their Urban and Suburban seat would change to someone who would represent the disadvantaged. These are just some of the items they are trying to have inserted into the District Law. Sumner will give another update on this next month. Discussion followed. Cheney suggested sending out letters now to state officials expressing our concerns. DeBlock said she would like to present one to the Grange. Sumner will send the email regarding the proposed changes to the Directors and draft up a letter for next month's board meeting that can

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be sent out to state legislators. Ruszkiewicz stated that a Resolution would need to be submitted by January 13, 2023 for the Annual Association of Towns meeting.

Performance Measures Part C 2021 has a balance of \$52,000. Part C 2022 has a balance of ~\$122,000. The amount that will be available for 2023 is \$180,000.00.

There was a discussion regarding the end-of-the year bonuses given to Sumner and DeGroodt. Cheney suggested speaking to Langdon at the County's Human Resources Department. No action taken.

The District's IT contract with The Computer Shop was briefly discussed. We pay them \$95/month. DeGroodt contacted the County's IT department and after discussing the services we get from The Computer Shop, we will see if we can have updates to our server changed from every month, to every other month and get a written report from The Computer Shop.

Performance Measures Update – Everything looks fine for this year.

CRF 6 – Discussion about the purchase of the new 12' seeder.

NEXT MEETING DATE - The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, January 23, 2023 at 9:00 AM.**

ADJOURNMENT

2022-12-4 The Meeting was Adjourned at 10:45 AM on a Motion by Cheney, seconded by Ruszkiewicz. All in favor.

Minutes Prepared By:

Christine DeGroodt, Secretary to the Board

Report to Board KMS

December, 2022

AEM/AEM Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects) Deadline for Completion – 12/31/2023

O'Dell project is completed and ready for certification/reimbursement

Dean Ford – contractor prefers to wait until freeze up to start construction

DeStafeno- on hold due to participant concern over materials costs

Ewanciw – Design complete, no schedule for construction

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project [contract extended to 4/2023]

Southway Compost Facility – Final design delivered, seeking contractor proposals.

Minkus controlled drainage project – no schedule for construction.

Final Soil Health tests have been collected, and results received.

Floodplain Bench

Phase 4 (CRF 5)

Still seeking Landowner Access License for Bastek. Updating JAP package with docs that have been revised since May, 2022 submission. Goal is to officially submit before Holidays.

Received Floodplain Permit response letter from Minisink.

Phase 3, Area 2

Final payment has been calculated. Last reimbursement request to DASNY has been submitted. The amount of the final payment that exceeds the remaining DASNY agreement balance is \$39,174.50. This is in line with what I expected the final costs to be. I recommend we pay the excess from the '2022 Wallkill Flood From County Appropriation' dedicated fund. The current balance of this fund is \$44,327.93. I expect that there will be some additional repair and maintenance expenses associated with the project, such as repairs to the farm road (Iris Road) as the soil stockpiles are removed. Also, at some point it is expected that there will additional expenses associated with placing conservation easements on Phase 3 Area 2.

Other Flood Mitigation

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – Continuing to follow up with remaining 5 parcels that have not signed the easement. Arrangements were made to have the recording fees waived at the County Clerk's office. Easements covering 13 of 19 parcels have been formally filed with the County Clerk. Physical Services Committee approved the easement for the County-owned parcel, and County Surveyor Tom Barry reports that the fully executed easement paperwork is in the mail to us.

Round 27 ANPSACP

Brady construction complete, certification/reimbursements in progress.

CRF 6 Work Plan submitted and approved by AEA Ben.

Other

Legoland EBP – Waiting on formal letters from both OCLT and Moodna Coalition to forward to DEC obtain written approval for use of funds (Sugar Loaf Mountain project, footbridge at Schenemunk).

Pulaski Culverts – received email from OCDPW requesting permission to provide B&L report to their ‘on call’ hydraulics consultant.

New Hire – received inquiry from local person who used to operate a dairy farm. Currently a corrections officer but may want to apply for our position.

Meat Processing Facility – Haven’t done much on this since announcement of Sullivan County facility, other than share this information with local farmers.

2022 Soil Health Incentive Program (SHIP)

We have been checking and certifying cover crop fields for payment. See Bills for Board approval.

Annual Audit – Unable to get guidance from County Finance department by email on getting our audit done by a different firm than who does the County. Requested proposal from KKB&N (Middletown). They have replied that they do not wish to submit a proposal.

Wallkill TMDL meeting at DEC, New Paltz 12/5

Streams bill vetoed

Need to re-visit bonus approvals from last month

Discussions and meetings continue on the changes to NYS Soil and Water Law proposed by a Coalition that does not include Soil and Water

C. DeGroodt

Board Meeting Activities November 19, 2022 – December 15, 2022

- We have \$708 cash awards on the rewards credit cards.
- **AEM Round 17** - Worked on the AEM Round 17 time spreadsheet and ledger.
- Submitted a reimbursement request to DASNY/SAM Grant.
- Placed an order for year 2022 tax forms.
- Calls have been coming in for Soil Group Worksheets.
- **CRF 6** –Worked on some of the cover crop payments to participants. Revised and re-submitted our Plan of Work.
- To the Government Center to record some of the Maintenance Expansion easements. Made calls and sent emails to try and have the remaining easements signed.
- **District's SHIP Program** – BMP Payment documentation prepared for some of the participants.
- **MISC/MONTHLY:** Payroll, taxes, mail, phones, walk-ins, office supplies ordered, type minutes/board meeting documents/financials, pay bills, computer backup, bank deposits, etc.