

**MINUTES**  
**ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**February 18<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:04 AM. Directors P. DeBlock, J. Wright, B. Cheney, P. Ruszkiewicz, and G. Constable were present along with K. Sumner (SWCD), E. King (SWCD), M. Held (SWCD), E. Schellenberg (CCE), and M. Martire (NRCS.)

**2025-2-1 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to approve January’s Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.**

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

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- Bank Statements
- Collateral Agreements
- Region 5 Monthly SWCC Report from Ben Luskin
- Letter from NYACD Detailing Their Mission & Vision Statements
- Letter from NYACD Executive Director RE: Lobbyist Hiring
  - Sumner informed the Board that the Conservation District’s Employee Association has made inquiries about hiring a lobbyist. However, NYACD feels that they already serve as a lobbyist for the Association. The NYACD schedules yearly meetings with Districts and their legislators. It appears to Sumner that the NYACD was surprised by their request. The letter that the District received detailed the functions of the Directors Association.
- Nuggets & Nibbles: Winter 2025 Edition
- M&T Bank Account Analysis Statement
- Schuyler County SWCD: 2024 Annual Report
- Ernst Conservation Seeds: 2025 Spring Savings Opportunity
- Schumacher’s Nursery & Berry Farm, Inc.: Availability List
- M&T Bank: 2024 1099-INT Forms
- Erie County SWCD: Winter 2025 Edition
- ShelterPoint Group Term Life Insurance Policy

## ORANGE COUNTY SWCD FEBRUARY 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- News from Hudsonia: Winter 2024-2025
- Chemung County Soil & Water: 2024 Annual Report
- Notice from NYS Dpt of Taxation & Finance RE: '25 Quarterly Taxes
- Selective Insurance Policy Reinstatement
  - Sumner noted that King paid the bill well in advance of its due date, but there was a delay in delivery. To avoid this occurring in the future, the District will pay their bills from Selective online from now on.

### **FINANCIAL REPORTS**

Sumner reported that the District did not receive a lot of receipts in January and as a result, the District is waiting with anticipation for the first quarter County Appropriation. Additionally, Sumner wants to discuss a substantial final payment that the District owes to Sunflower Valley Farms for Phase 4 North. Fortunately, Sumner spoke with the project contractor who is okay with the District paying the bill in two installments. Sumner clarified that the District currently has enough funds to pay the entire bill, but it would leave the District with limited funds. Once the District receives the first quarter County Appropriation & funding from the State, the second half of the payment will be made.

**2025-2-2 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to file January's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.**

### **BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL**

Sumner reminded the Board that they approved raising the rent for the O'Dell's equipment space from \$200 to \$400 at January's meeting. The rent increase accounts for the additional space the District will use at the O'Dell's. Sumner expects that the District will be using the added rental space when the new equipment arrives in the upcoming months. The Board clarified that the \$400 rent payments to the O'Dell's will begin in April 2025.

### **Roller Crimper Delivery**

Sumner reported that the roller crimper will be delivered in the next month or so. Wright confirmed with Sumner that Phil Johnson offered to pick up and deliver the roller crimper to the O'Dell's. Per Sumner, the District would pay less for Johnson to deliver the equipment compared to I&J. Sumner noted that the District paid I&J Manufacturing for delivery, so the District will need to be reimbursed if Johnson picks it up. If the District ends up relying on I&J for delivery, then it will have to be scheduled in March since only Ronnie is authorized to unload it.

### **NYACD 2025 Assessment Invoice**

Sumner noted that the District typically pays half of the Assessment Invoice for the NYS Association of Conservation Districts now, which is \$750, and reevaluate paying the remaining half later in the year. Sumner asked the Director of the Association to provide the District with a summary of dues paid by other districts in 2024 to serve as a reference point. Sumner confirmed with the Board that they are okay with paying the dues as stated on the Bills to be Paid, to which they agreed. Cheney asked Ruskiewicz if he knew whether NYACD is affiliated with the NYS Association of Counties. Cheney noted that the Association of Counties has staff on hand that provide lobbying work. Ruskiewicz was unsure if there was any involvement between the two organizations. Cheney recommended that Sumner ask NYACD Director if the Association of Counties can help to support what the conservation districts due on a statewide basis

**2025-2-3 Wright made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor.**

**GRANT REPORT UPDATE**

Any updates to the grants report for the month of January are highlighted in red ink. Sumner noted that there is not a lot of project activity to report this time of year. The District is working towards adding the current fund balance for some of these grants to track which ones have a positive balance. Sumner reported that he, Cheney, and Ruszkiewicz met with the County Commissioner of Finance and the County Budget Department to finalize the procedures to transfer Wallkill Maintenance funds from the County to the District (as opposed to the previous arrangement where the District had to request reimbursement from the County). Per the General Municipal Law, which is set by NYS, the District can only pay one contractor \$35,000 a year for the same kind of work. Sumner commented that the District has not issued a request for proposals for the Wallkill Maintenance work in a long time. Per Sumner, the last time the District issued a request for bid for the Wallkill Maintenance it was for a rate bid, which Sumner feels can be complicated. The complication arises from the uncertainty as to what equipment will be used, mobilization issues and if they are included in the hourly rate bid. Lastly, there is the question as to whether an additional fee is applied if the project is restarted. Sumner acknowledged that the current contractor is very familiar with the project which makes the District more inclined to continue employing said contractor. Sumner added that with the support of the towns, they will not be concerned about spending the full maintenance agreement fund each year. The District has not received confirmation from DPW about the amount of funds that will be reimbursed. The District is referring to DPW's reimbursement to the District from 2024.

Additionally, the District is still waiting on confirmation that the four towns have made their payments for the Wallkill Maintenance Agreement. Sumner clarified that the current contractor's invoices are based on the time and materials used. Cheney asked whether a bid can be selected based on whether its in the best interest of the Soil & Water District. Sumner has a list of project sites along the Wallkill that need work which he recorded in his 2024 inspection site report. Sumner is confident that CEC can pull all the identified trees out of the river for less than \$35,000. Per Sumner, the contractor would be working on it now, if it were not for the poor weather conditions. Once the weather improves, Sumner imagines that the contractor will start working on the sites identified in the inspection report. Sumner stated that CEC Excavating can work until the project costs reach \$35,000. If he were selected via a rate bid, then he would have no payment limit. The \$35,000 is project directed, which means its what you expect the project cost to be. If the project is expected to be over \$35,000 then we would need to follow municipal bidding requirements per GML. If the District thinks that we will spend more than \$35,000 on all the projects, then the District must make a decision upfront to stay in compliance with GML. The funding conditions become uncertain when the District broadens the parameters of what is done with the funding. For example, if the project was road maintenance or culvert replacement, then Sumner thinks it is reasonable to call it a different project. Sumner's expectation to the agreement change, is that it gives the District more money to do work outside of just tree removal without going over the \$35,000 limit.

**INTERAGENCY REPORTS**

**CCE:** Schellenberg reported that the fate of the soil health demonstration, as part of the Conservation Innovation Grant, is unknown at this point. CCE sent the CIG contact the contract with their executive director's signature on it. They received CEC's email, but have not sent them a copy of the signed contract yet. Schellenberg does not have an updated timeline currently. The Orange & Rockland grant, which is private, is not experiencing any governmental delay. There is a lot of uncertainty existing regarding the federal funding grants which some CCE employees rely on for the programs they teach.

**NRCS:** Martire reported that NRCS is still proceeding with the general farm bills. Anything pertaining to the inflation reduction act is currently paused. The application deadline for Round 2 of EQIP & CSP is 3/11. Martire noted that there is a lot of uncertainty. Martire continued that the deferred resignation proceeded & all probationary NRCS employees were laid off in NYS. His NRCS division lost an employee at the Millbrook office. For now, communication

is halted and there is no further information available. DeBlock asked Martire a question regarding a farmer who assessed fees associated with his expiring contract. Martire confirmed that those fees were waived by the State Conservationists. Martire explained that the farmer's contract was due to expire, the farmer rescheduled a meeting with NRCS multiple times, and tried contacting him to no avail.

**Comments from Directors:** DeBlock reported that FSA's Dairy Margin Coverage (DMC), which is a milk insurance program, is currently available. The deadline for enrolling is 3/31/25. DeBlock does not know if it pays for the cost of insurance. DeBlock mentioned that one of the County's dairy farmers, Peaceful Valley Dairy, now has a farm store and has their own on-farm pasteurization license.

There were no representatives from NYSC 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.

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

**M. Held (SWCD)**- Held reported that she took both the international & regional exams this past weekend for her Certified Crop Advisor certification. Unfortunately, Held did not pass either exam and is unable to access which answers she got right or wrong. Each test is graded separately. Held confirmed that she must pass both the regional and international tests to submit the application to become a CCA. The District approved reimbursing Held for her fees for this past weekend's exams. Held intends on retaking the tests, but she is prepared to absorb the whole amount or percentage of the future fees. The registration cost for each exam is \$220. Held will restructure her test taking method and may take each section separately. DeBlock suggested that until Held passes the exams, she will have to pay for her own test fees. Ruskiewicz suggested that Held pay for it and when she passes then the Board will reimburse her. Cheney asked whether there are instructors who are familiar with the test that can help Held understand the test. Cheney suggested that Held find out if there are tutors available. Held attended the four online review courses offered and took practice exams in preparation. Constable recommended that Held take the tests separately, which Held agrees with and can pay per competency area. The next CCA exams are available to take in April and subsequently every other month. Sumner acknowledged that there are some financial ramifications for the District that are associated with the CCA exams. The District is on track to use all of the AEM staff money and exhaust that a few months before the end of the contract period. Per Sumner, a District can qualify for more funding in the noncompetitive tract with a CCA on staff. Given this there are both financial motivations & having a CCA on staff solves the cover crop sign off issue. The Board assured Held that they are confident in her ability to pass the exams.

Held asked the Board if she could attend a Certified Nutrient Management Planner training in April 2025. Held noted that she needs to have her CCA status before she can apply to become a CNMP. Held explained that this is another certification that would make the District more eligible for funding and reduce the District's expenses associated with hiring a farm project planner. The next training is offered every other year and is a required part of the CNMP application. The training is from 4/1-4/4 in Ithaca at Cornell University. Per Sumner, there is a thorough application process of training, work review, and correspondence in order to become a CNMP. Held clarified that the training is free, but the Board would need to cover the cost of transport & lodging.

**2025-2-4 Wright made the Motion, Constable seconded, to send Held to the CNMP training on 4/1/25-4/4/25 in Ithaca, NY. All in favor.**

Held noted that she has been spending a lot of time on the District's funding application for the three farms located in the Wallkill Watershed for the Ag NPS Round 30. The application for Round 30 is on 2/24. Held will provide the Board with an updated total of completed soil group worksheets at the next meeting.

**K. Sumner (SWCD)-** Sumner provided the following reports and discussions to augment and add to his written staff report. Review “Old and New Business” for further information.

**OLD & NEW BUSINESS**

**Phase 4 South Walkkill –** Sumner reported that the District is working on finalizing the easement for Phase 4 South of the Walkkill floodplain bench project. The landowner is out of town until 3/3/25.

**Phase 4 North Walkkill-** The County surveyor’s office is halfway done with the field work for the Phase 4 North side. This field work pertains to property owned by the Bastek family. Sumner reminded the Board that Bastek wants the easement payments associated with this project in five installments.

**Celery Avenue Ledge Lowering Project-** Sumner noted that the NYS DEC is still reviewing the Celery Avenue Ledge Lowering project permit. Sumner provided the DEC with farmer support letters & hydrologic studies completed by the engineer. Sumner expressed concern that the DEC is taking a lot longer to review it this time compared to previously. Sumner and Wright agreed that the District not request project-specific funding until a decision is made on the permits.

**AEM Round 18-** Sumner informed the Board that four of the six projects that the Board approved funding for in the AEM Round 18 grant have made no progress. Sumner reminded the Board that if the money is not spent by the end of 2025, then it will be returned to the State. Sumner recommends that the Board decide by April ’25 if they want to reallocate the money. It is doubly frustrating since the District does not have a list of potential projects to reallocate the funding. One of the four projects that have had no activity is the silage leachate project at the Simpson farm in Port Jervis.

Sumner mentioned that there are a lot of hours spent on the compost bedded pack barn proposal for Simpson in Ag NPS Rnd 30. Sumner reminded the Board that this project proposal was initially submitted for CRF Rnd 8, but it was not selected for funding. Sumner noted that Simpson has indicated interest in pursuing the project, however the application is in limbo since the LO has not returned Sumner’s calls as to whether he wants to submit the proposal. If the LO does not provide the signature to submit the Rnd 30 application, then it leaves Sumner feeling ambivalent about the AEM Round 18 project the Board approved funding for.

**Ag NPS Round 30-** Sumner discussed the three farm project proposals that are in the Walkkill Watershed in Ag NPS Rnd 30. One of these proposals is a secondary fuel containment project. The District was unaware of the size of the tank that the farmer wanted to install so they initially set a smaller budget of \$20,000. The District has had no problem in the past funding projects with smaller tanks on that budget, but this farmer wants to install a 10,000-12,000-gallon tank. If a double wall tank is used, multiple balusters need to be installed around it. If a single wall tank is used, it needs to be set in a vault. Held contacted Suffolk County SWCD, since they have more experience with larger tank projects, and they told her that for a similar size tank, the installation cost alone for the tank cost \$200,000. The District requested quotes from vendors for the tank prices and were informed that they can cost upwards of \$100,000. Had the District known the specifications that the farmer wanted, then the District would have submitted this project as a separate proposal, instead of including it with two other projects. Unfortunately, the District does not have the luxury of time to change their submission plan. Since the farmer was told that the project would be submitted with the two others, Sumner feels obligated to act on his word. If the entire application is not approved, then there is a chance that the Board could allocate funds to help with the cost of the two smaller projects.

The District needs to gain a better understanding of what the cost of the projects will be. Typically, the breakdown is 70% state, 20% LO, and 10% from District. However, 10% of \$300,000 is more than what Sumner feels comfortable

allocating out of the District's local funds. The more that the District contributes then the better the ranking the application receives. The District will speak with the LO and see if he can contribute more. Sumner asked the Board if they want to discuss a cap on what the District would contribute to the project. Sumner acknowledged that there are uncertainties regarding projects that the District is already committed to. Sumner would be uncomfortable contributing more than \$20,000 to the project given the already agreed upon contracts and planned river flood control work. The District needs to decide how much they will contribute by the end of the week. Sumner is trying to get B&L to prepare a secondary containment construction plan template. This would benefit the District in the future since most plans are similar in design. Martire suggested that if the project is too expensive for the farmer to fund, then he can look into funding through NRCS. Martire acknowledged that seeking funding through NRCS would slow down the process, but NRCS has funded secondary containment fuel projects. The two additional project applicants were also hesitant when they were informed what their contribution would be. Callisto Vineyards, whose proposal is a mixing facility, is a bit hesitant with moving forward since he would have to contribute \$7,200 for the project. Moraczewski will come into the office to discuss his windbreak project.

**2025-2-5 Constable made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, to contribute \$20,000 towards the secondary fuel containment project. All in favor.**

**Walkkill River Maintenance Agreement-** Due in part to conversations had between Rob Schreibeis, Cheney, & DPW, trees will be removed from the Walkkill that are adjacent to the landfill. These trees were brought to attention by landowners who live close to the Celery Avenue project. The District will reply to them to let them know that their concerns were addressed. Sumner asked that a photo be sent to him once the trees are cleared. Sumner contacted the Walkkill Maintenance agreement partners to schedule their annual meeting. The meeting will take place on Friday, March 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00AM in the 1st Floor Conference Room of Soil & Water. The District will provide light refreshments at the meeting paid for from our credit card rewards points.

**Senator Skoufis Equipment Funding-** Sumner received an email containing an application for the District's equipment funding from the Empire State Development on 2/14. Sumner does not know how quickly it will be moved through the Empire State Development.

**Soil Group Worksheets-** Sumner presented information to the Board regarding preparation of these worksheets which are part of the State's agricultural assessment program. Even at \$80 per parcel, Sumner does not feel that the fees collected cover the staff time spent. Sumner provided the Board with an analysis of the staff time costs which totaled around \$10,000, while fees collected are less than \$5,000. This does not cover the cost of the staff time. If the District were to set the price per worksheet to fully cover the cost, these would be a significant increase. Sumner noted that the program supports the overall mission of the District of keeping land in agricultural production. Sumner would like to maintain some discretion on a case-by-case basis. Circumstances can differ in terms of the time involved in dealing with SGW requests (for example, simple name changes). In cases where there are multiple parcels, the District charges for the first two parcels and then charges on an hourly rate. Sumner noted that time spent on worksheets can greatly vary depending on the size of the parcel, number of conversations with the LO, and numerous other factors. He also noted that District is sometimes 'put in the middle' with regard to how much of a parcel receives the agricultural assessment, even though our role in this State program was intended to be more rote (gridding out acres of the various soil types on the parcel). The way that the District prepares these worksheets/maps affects how much the LO pays in taxes. Sumner warns people that if the assessor is not satisfied then they will send the LO back to the District. Cheney suggested having a fee set for a name change only, which Sumner noted that the District had previously. Sumner reiterated that the current price of \$80 is not covering the actual District costs. Cheney suggested that the District increases the fee in increments until it reaches the actual cost and noted that the District has the justification for it if needed. Cheney proposed increasing it to \$120-\$125 at some point this year. Sumner recommended that this price increase take effect after March 1<sup>st</sup>, which is the deadline to file for agricultural tax exemption. DeBlock recommended increasing the price to \$100 on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and then increase in 2026.

Constable noted that the Board will need to revisit this topic next year to vote on the proposed price increase to \$150 per parcel in March 2026.

**2025-2-6 DeBlock made the Motion, Constable seconded, to set the new price for the Soil Group Worksheets to \$100 per parcel as of 3/1/25. Subsequently, the cost per parcel will increase to \$125 on 1/1/26. All in favor.**

**Equipment Rental Program-** Sumner reminded the Board that the District tracks their time associated with the equipment rental program separately. Sumner continued that the annual cost of staff time in 2024, with an added 5% overhead, was \$16,800. A summary/estimate of additional expenses beyond staff time was prepared which includes repairs, rental space, half of the annual vehicle expense, and an estimate of the District's insurance coverage related to the rental program. With these findings, the total cost of the annual staff time and other expenses total ~ \$23,800. The 2024 income for the rental program was \$26,000. Based on this, Sumner feels that the District is close to covering annual expenses without factoring in equipment replacement. Sumner acknowledged that the District is fortunate to have received assistance from the Ag Board, the State, & the County for new equipment. If the District had to budget for this, Sumner estimated that the annual cost of the program would be closer to \$50,000. Cheney stated that since the District is getting more funding sources, it would be disingenuous for the District to raise the rental rates and assign that burden to the farmers who utilize the program. Cheney believes that the funding sources would expect nothing less from the District than to keep the rental prices low for the farmers. In the future, the Board can always revisit this discussion if things were to change, and prices needed to be raised.

**AEM-** Sumner reminded the Board that the AEM contract is a non-competitive grant which provides a lot of staff time support. Sumner noted that staff time in the AEM contract is a flat reimbursement rate of \$51/ hour. The District benefits more with this charge from newer employees with a lower pay scale compared to more senior employees who have a higher salary. In 2024, the total reimbursement through the AEM contract for staff time was around \$100,000. Meanwhile the District's annual staff time cost, which includes the benefits factored in, is \$324,000. This means that roughly a third of the District's staff time is paid by AEM contracts. Sumner reminded the Board that in order to receive the reimbursement, the Districts needs to have projects that fit the parameters of the AEM contract. The strong focus on agricultural work is a good thing for the Districts. However, if the District were to do more work in other, non-ag areas such as the stormwater sector, that time would not be covered by the AEM contract. Sumner is not proposing a big shift in program emphasis, but wants the Board to be aware of this. It was further noted that there are other State grants we participate with that help with staff time. For example, we have chosen to set up our more recent Ag NPS grants to reimburse the District 50 cents for every staff time dollar the District devotes to the Ag NPS.

**B&L Work-** Sumner feels that the District is at a crossroads with the Blackdirt flood mitigation work. Sumner asked B&L if they can quantify the benefits of the District's work so far and provide an idea of what projects would reap the most reward going forward. Given the amount of money spent on this work, Sumner feels it is in the District's best interest to have this report. Sumner asked the Board to consider whether they feel it would be advisable to augment investigations B&L has been asked to provide with input from a local consulting firm. This might be done via a Request for Qualifications. Sumner asked Cheney to review a document he prepared summarizing past projects and identifying possible future projects to be evaluated, given his engineering background. This document might be used in conjunction with a RFQ. Sumner noted that if the District continues moving upstream with the Bench project, then extensive updated environmental and related studies would need to be commenced well in advance of any construction. The District's next steps will be influenced by whether the Celery Ledge project is passed.

**District Office Space-** Wright asked Sumner if the District has heard whether they will still have their office space given the cutbacks to the USDA agencies. The District currently shares the office space with NRCS and fortunately does not pay rent. Sumner has not heard otherwise, but given that there are three employees stationed in Middletown, he is hopeful that a closing of their Orange County Field Office is not being contemplated.

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD FEBRUARY 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

**Next meeting date: March 24th**

**ADJOURNMENT**

**2025-2-7 DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Wright, to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 AM. All in favor.**

Minutes Prepared By:

Emily King, Secretary to the Board

Report to Board            KMS

January, 2025

**Wallkill Flood Projects –**

Working on scheduling closing for Phase 4 South parcels. Title company has finally confirmed they will provide title insurance. Now waiting on our attorney to schedule closing.

**Floodplain Bench Phase 4 North**

County Surveyor's office is ~1/2 done with field work for topo and easement survey.

**Other Flood Control Items**

**Celery Avenue ledge lowering project** – Sent DEC permit contact copies of 7 support letters from farmers. B&L provided the hydrologic study support documents requested by DEC.

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

**AEM Round 18** – Still no progress on 4 of 6 projects. If no progress by March meeting, I would like Board's sentiment on when to consider re-allocating funding.

**CRF Round 7** - We still have not received any payments on the two contracts that have been fully executed, still do not have an executed contract for Crist.

**'Sign Offs' on Soil Health Practices** – No real updates from last month.

**Revision of Wallkill Maintenance Agreement** – Meeting with Finance Commissioner and Budget Department was encouraging, but they need to confer with County Attorney. Will provide more details at meeting.

**Roller Crimper Project Update** - Equipment is ready. Phil Johnson has offered to pick up for us at lower cost than vendor. We are not currently rushing the delivery while we wait to see if the option for Phil to pick up solidifies.

**The AgNPS Round 29** – No recent project activity.

**AgNPS Round 27** – All time extension materials submitted to NYSSWCC. We expect it to be reviewed at their February meeting.

**AgNPS Round 30** – work on 2 proposals is continues, may be submitted before Board meeting (due 2/24)

**Other Items**

Gas Purchase From Wawayanda – No updates from last month.

**PDR**–.

**Possible Collaboration with Walkill River National Wildlife Refuge** – no updates from last month

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

### **Equipment Planning**

**Skoufis Equipment Funding** – Still no formal agreement in place. I have been told by his office that there has been some ‘movement’

Asked OCCCE for copy of CIG contract in effort to progress equipment procurement. They are in the process of trying to confirm that recently proposed/enacted federal policies will not affect the grant funding.

### **Select Program Cost Analyses**

I prepared income/expense reports for Equipment Rental Program and for Ag Assessment (Soil Group Worksheet), which I will present at the meeting. Also, a brief analysis of contribution of NYS A&M programs to overall office staff time expenses.

**Emily King**

**Secretary to the Board Update**

**2/18/25**

My time in between meetings has been spent primarily on the end of year reports. I submitted the 2024 W-2 forms to the Social Security Administration. I also distributed the W-2 forms to the District employees. Additionally, I completed the District' 2024 Annual Treasurer's Report, and the 2024 Part A report. I included a claim for payment with the Part A report in the amount of \$60,000.

I updated the District's 2025 time sheet so that it reflects the recently added grant hour recording practices. This pertains to the technical vs administrative hours that are charged to Ag NPS Rnd 27 & Rnd 29.

I contacted fellow District office managers for guidance on the filing of quarterly taxes and recorded their response. I'm continuing to provide a paper trail and detailed explanations for how values are determined.

I emailed the approved CFPs for Shuback and Wright's projects in CRF Round 7 to the accounts payable department in the State's Business Service Center. The CFPs indicate a request for a 25% & 65% funding advance for the farmer's respective contracts.

I emailed the treasurer of the NY Association of Conservation Districts regarding a letter the District RE: our 2025 Annual Invoice. The letter claims that the District made a partial payment in the amount of \$150. I informed her that the District did not send this payment and that we typically pay the invoice in two installments. As a reminder, this means that the District issues two separate payments in the amount of \$750. I am waiting for a response from the treasurer, but I have made Kevin aware of this.

Additionally, I have received a few phone calls regarding soil group worksheets. I collected the necessary information, emailed the form to the callers, and shared it with Mary to assist her in the process. I also prepared the 2024 mileage reimbursements for the eligible Board of Directors.

Lastly, 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 January's dedicated fund summary.

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

Best,

Emily

## OCSWCD Technician Update

Mary C. Held

2/14/2025

I took the CCA exams (Regional and International) on Sunday. (Results pending). I have been preparing for that heavily for a couple of weeks. The majority of my time at the office has been spent getting The Ag Non-Point Source Round 30 application ready for submission and tending to most of the soil group worksheet requests that have been coming in.

In addition to that, I did what I could for the end of year reporting for Emily and Kevin – mostly pulling numbers and streamlining the grant money reimbursement calculations as best as possible.

An opportunity has arisen for CNMP training in April. This training is offered every other year and necessary for CNMP certification. We discussed in the past getting me CNMP certified which would inevitably make us eligible for more funding and eventually allow us to cut costs of CNMP plans that we currently outsource. The course itself is free of charge, but meals and lodging are not included. The days out of the office would be April 1-4<sup>th</sup>.

I would like to ask for a motion to send me to CNMP training April 1-4<sup>th</sup> in Ithaca, NY.

### **Equipment:**

#### Roller Crimper Demo Project:

We have considered getting Phil Johnson to pick up the roller crimper and the roller crimper is completely paid for. Other than that, no further updates.

#### R/C Cover Crop Recap::

Rowe, Chuck: Checked, paid

Ronne, Alex: Checked, paid

Conklin, Sue: Late cover crop not germinated – will crimp if germinates in spring

Touw, Jason: Cover Crop Planted, germination rate very low – will crimp if germinates in spring

Johnson, Phil: Late cover crop not germinated – will crimp if germinates in spring

O'Dell, Mike: Checked, paid.

### **Local Cost Share Program: (No update from last month)**

#### Single Species 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	paid	checked, photos in file

Brad Meres	30	7	0	late planting	not checked, not paid
Jessy Raap	15	2.89	2.89	paid	checked, photos in file
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		

Multispecies plantings:

<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: \$63,453.95

**CRF Update:**

Round 6:

No update.

Payments:

Russell Smiley: \$1,706.05

Alex Kocot: \$10,441.15

Phil Johnson: --

Jason Touw: \$1,701.70

Bob Stap: \$1,152.90

Total CRF6 **2024**: \$15,001.80

No further updates.

Round 7: No updates from the technician.

### **AGNPS Update:**

Round 27: Contract End Date: March 2025

- No update.

Round 29:

- No update.

Round 30:

- This is where the majority of my time this month has gone. The application process for AGNPS is much more tedious than I was expecting but it will be submitted by Feb 24<sup>th</sup> (submission deadline).
  - o Mike Moraczewski (windbreak) – plans to come into the office this week to discuss commitment.
  - o Michele Callisto (mixing facility) – plans to come into the office this week to discuss commitment.
  - o Tom Owens (fuel tank storage) – We’re currently chewing on the decision to make this a separate application, as we’re finding this cost will be significant.
  - o Devon Simpson (bedded pack barn) – previously, Devon was submitted through CRF8 but his project was not funded due to the competition. We have yet to hear from him.

AEM Update:

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