

**MINUTES**  
**ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**February 27, 2017**

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:06 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton, P. DeBlock and P. Ruskiewicz were present, along with K. Sumner, N. Meyer and C. DeGrootd (OCSWCD), Baglia (CCE) and J. Heller (NRCS).

**2017-2-1 Keeton made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to approve the January Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.**

**ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS - None**

**CORRESPONDENCE**

- Bank account statements from the District's banks were available for review.
- A proposal from Donald R. Stedge, P.L.S. for surveying services was received in the amount of \$3,500.00. This is for providing boundary surveys of two parcels in the Town of Wawayanda and providing Subdivision Computations and review with Lehman and Getz, P.C.
- A Draft letter to J. Bastek from K. Sumner was discussed regarding Bastek's most recent request for SWCD assistance with the impacts of the Millennium Pipeline Project.
- The 2017 NYS CDEA Annual Fair Assessment in the amount of \$100.00 was added to the District's list of Bills to Be Paid.
- The Agenda for February's Ag and Farmland Protection Board and Draft January Minutes were available for review.
- A bill for services on the Walkkill Flood Project from Richard Hoyt, Attorney, in the amount of \$878.75 was added to the list of Bills to Be Paid.
- NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee approved our request to amend our Ag NPS RD 18 contract. We requested to extend the contract to 7/23/17.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- **2017-2-2 Wright moved to file the January 2017 Financial Report for audit review, Keeton seconded. All in favor.**
- **2017-2-3 DeBlock made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to accept the Bills to Be Paid. All in favor.**
- The Draft Grant Update Report for January 2017 was reviewed.

**STAFF REPORTS**

- Meyer
  - Meyer has been working on Soil Group Worksheets.
  - He continues to work on the Ag NPS Grant Round 23 Proposal and on AEM plans.
  - Held a Monhagen Streamwalk meeting last week.
  - Paternity leave starts on March 1<sup>st</sup> but Meyer will be attending the WQS for two days in March.
- DeGrootd
  - A new laptop computer was purchased and Meyer was working on installing GIS arcmap on it.
  - Auditors changed the audit date to March 2, 2017.

## INTERAGENCY REPORTS

- R. Baglia – Cornell Cooperative Extension
  - The Dairy/Livestock Day & Trade Show is on March 15<sup>th</sup> at the Old Lady Mt. Carmel Parish Center in Middletown, NY from 10-2.
  - The Philadelphia Flower Show Bus Trip is scheduled for Tuesday, March 14<sup>th</sup>.
  - The first 2017 Stormwater Management Training Series training is on March 21<sup>st</sup> from 8:30-4:30
- J. Heller – Natural Resources Conservation Service
  - Three new farms in Warwick are enrolled in the Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program.
  - Heller mentioned that Bittner, the new Soil Conservationist, is doing a great job and has a lot of upcoming trainings to attend.

(R. Baglia left the Meeting at 9:31 AM)

There was a brief discussion on an NRCS grant, Regional Conservation Partnership, that is out. Sumner reviewed the RFP and thought the District's flood control work on the Wallkill had a good fit for this offering. A pre-proposal can be done. If a pre-proposal is selected then a complete full proposal would be required. Requests can be made up to \$10 million. Pre-proposals are due in April. While significant funding is available, there are a lot of unknowns. No firm decision was made on whether or not to try to pursue this opportunity.

## OLD BUSINESS

- The Bastek situation (previously mentioned) was discussed further. The Board was in favor of sending out Sumner's Draft letter to Bastek.
- Wallkill Flood Project update
  - There was an article on the Wallkill River Tree Clearing (Phase II) in the Times Herald Record.
  - Sumner provided the Board with a written summary report of activity on the flood projects (attached).

(J. Heller left the Meeting at 9:52 AM)

- Update on CFI payment - The District was willing to fast track a \$75,000.00 payment to CFI but they did not accept this offer. Instead they submitted a fourth payment request and said that they saw no reason that any money should be withheld. B&L engineer Wendell is coming to the office on Wednesday to do a walk-through on the project. Sumner met with the Fords and R. Minkus at the site last week and they were all in agreement that no further work should be done in the fields yet because they are too wet. Sumner passed out a copy of an as-built survey that demonstrated that CFI did not accomplish the grading plan they were contracted via change order to complete. They did not get the contours or elevations correct. Portions of the roads are still in bad shape. There are over 1 ½ miles of road that need to be assessed and repaired as necessary.
- Phase II – Going well. We received a 20 page draft plan set from B&L. The plans had no quantity calculations for excavation, which Sumner felt should be included. Sumner told the engineer that he wants to do addendums to the plan set that will help to ensure fair and accurate contractor proposals. After all gets approved we will seek three written proposals for each side of the river, as required by the CRF funding that is supporting the work. Sumner wants it specified in the plans

that they have to use flotation tires in the fields to minimize the kind of damage that occurred in phase 1 with CFI's end dump trucks.

- Celery Avenue Rock Test – test was useful. The test supported feasibility of the approach to hammer rather than blast the rock ledge out. Sumner also took survey shots of the work area that will allow for refinement of the profile drawings in the current B&L construction plan draft.
  - There was a brief discussion on whether or not the County of Orange would take ownership of the Phase 1 Bench area.
  - While today's Board Meeting was active, Sumner received a call that CFI was out working in the fields today despite that they were told by Sumner last week to discontinue work until further notice.
  - Discussion regarding paying the Town of Goshen for review work their consultants on the Wallkill River Flood/Celery Avenue Rock Ledge Project proposal. **2017-2-4 DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Ruszkiewicz, to seek the County Law Department's assistance in writing to Goshen to determine what the status of our permit would be after our bill is paid. All in favor.**
  - A Wallkill River Flood Committee Meeting needs to be scheduled.
- Update on Board Appointments – The last that Ruszkiewicz heard was that the County was moving forward with existing appointments.
  - Ag NPS Grant RD 23 – A farmer with a beef herd wants to do a bedded pack barn. He will need a Certified Nutrient Management Plan completed on it but he does not have the money to pay for the plan, which can cost \$8,000-\$10,000. This money can be used as match for his project. The District could potentially front the money out of the Contingency Fund and recoup it from the farmer after construction funds were paid to him, but there is a possibility it would not be built and the District would be out this money. Discussion followed. Directors are not in agreement to front the money.

## NEW BUSINESS

- Christopher Eachus owns Browns Pond Lake at the intersection of Route 207/208 in the Town of Hamptonburgh. He requested that the District sponsor a grant proposal for him to remove the dam on this lake. Sumner told him that we have inadequate staff resources to prepare or manage the grant but if they have someone that can, he offered to bring it to the Board to discuss the possibility of the District being the sponsor. After discussion the Directors are in favor of sponsoring this grant.

**2017-2-5 DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Wright, to go into Executive Session at 11:38 AM to discuss employment history of one or more employees. All in favor. 2017-2-6 The Board came out of executive session on a motion by DeBlock, seconded by Keeton.**

The Board reviewed and accepted an employee appraisal for Office Manager Christine DeGrootd, which was signed by Sumner and DeGrootd on 2/15/17.

Sumner is in the process of preparing an employee appraisal for District Technician Noah Meyer. Sumner has had preliminary meetings with Meyer about this matter.

The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, March 20, 2017 at 9:00 AM.**

**2017-2-7 Meeting adjourns at 12:18 PM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Ruszkiewicz. All in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGrootd, Secretary to the Board