

**MINUTES**  
**ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**July 17, 2017**

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:08 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton, P. DeBlock and P. Ruszkiewicz were present, along with K. Sumner, N. Meyer and C. DeGroodt (OCSWCD) and R. Baglia (CCE).

**2017-7-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to approve June's 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.
- Letter from B. Hurlbutt, Interim Ex. Dir., NYACD re: hired as Interim Executive Director.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS**

- There was discussion regarding a non-paying no-till equipment user who has an outstanding bill over \$1,200.00 from last year.
- **2017-7-2 Wright moved to file the June 2017 Financial Report for audit review, Keeton seconded. All in favor.**

(M. Kemnitz joined the Meeting at 9:21 AM)

- **2017-7-3 DeBlock made the Motion, Keeton seconded, to accept the Bills to Be Paid. Wright-aye, Ruszkiewicz-aye, Kemnitz-abstained due to absence on bill discussion.**

**STAFF REPORTS**

- DeGroodt
  - Worked on the proposed 2018 budget
  - Currently working on a NYS DEC 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Contractor Training that is scheduled for August 11, 2017 at CCE.
- Meyer
  - No-till equipment use has been slowing down. Meyer has been doing maintenance on the no-till equipment.
  - The AEM Annual Report was submitted to NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets.
  - The Monhagen Brook Planning Project - The third sampling collection out of five is today.
  - Meyer has been following up on any outstanding NYS Ag NPS grant projects. Round 18 is ending soon.
  - There was a brief discussion on the tillage coulters on the old corn planter.
- Sumner
  - NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets staff are coming to our office on July 27<sup>th</sup> to close-out the Round 17 Wallkill Ag Grant.
  - The Draper Ditch culvert replacement was completed. One of the head walls is tipping. The farmer that organized the work on this is asking us to help him get reimbursed from some of the farmers/landowners that own or operate land in the benefitting area. Although we assisted him in estimating an apportionment of the costs to the benefitting land and want to help maintain Drainage District functions, we can't get too involved in collecting fees for the work since it wasn't

a project we funded or designed. Sumner will keep the Board informed on what happens with this situation.

- Walkkill Maintenance Project – Per previous Board meeting discussions, we are continuing to use Vellenga’s Lawn Care on the Walkkill Maintenance Project work.
- Ag NPS Grants – Currently working on projects at three farms: Brady, D. Ford and M. Lain.
- Sumner is teaching a NYS DEC 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Contractors Training on August 11, 2017 with J. Wedemeyer from Ulster Co. SWCD. The cost is \$95/ per person to attend.
- Sumner received an email from an intern at Assemblyman James Skoufis’ Office regarding a rain barrel project. Sumner responded that he would meet with her to discuss the project but did not hear back from her after that.

## INTERAGENCY REPORTS

- R. Baglia – Cornell Cooperative Extension
  - Family Fun day is on Saturday, July 29, 2017 from noon until 7:00 PM at the Education Center & 4-H Park in Otisville, NY.
  - The 2017 Floriculture Field Day is August 1<sup>st</sup> in Ithaca, NY.
- P. DeBlock reported that today is the last day of reporting acreage at the Farm Service Agency. There will be staff from the national office in tomorrow to watch how acreage reporting is done.

## OLD BUSINESS

- Walkkill Flood Project update
  - Phase I – The fields where the dirt was placed look good. A field visit from a NYS DEC technician focusing on the Project planting plan went well. On August 3<sup>rd</sup> Sumner is scheduled to show the project to a group from DEC and the Water Resources Institute.
  - Phase II – The low bid for the south side of Phase II was \$242,000.00. The Board previously approved focusing on the north side, which Vellenga Lawn Care will start on July 31<sup>st</sup>. Dirt will be placed on the 15 acres adjacent to where they are excavating.
  - There is no new information regarding the CFI Notice of Claim.
  - Follow up on the NYS DEC tree cutting letter - There was a previous discussion at last month’s meeting on doing more aggressive tree cutting downstream from the Celery Avenue ledge. Sumner had noted that numerous growers from that area believed that tree cutting along the River in this section is a primary need in terms of improving flood protection. He also noted that work like this could be pursued without identifying/securing new funding if consensus can be gained to utilize the existing federal flood control project maintenance fund for the work. We would need to work with NYSDEC to develop a tree cutting plan that they were comfortable with. Wright had asked if Sumner could write a draft letter for the Ag & Farmland Protection Board to use as an example that can be used to send to the NYS DEC and send it to him, something that can be presented Wednesday night at the Ag & Farmland Protection Board meeting. Sumner offered to do a draft letter. DeBlock asked if the County of Orange would also write a letter in support of this and Ruskiewicz said he would look into it. Update: Wright stated that the Ag Board endorsed Sumner’s letter but he was unsure whether or not the letter had been sent out yet or not. DeBlock asked Ruskiewicz if the County of Orange took any action on sending a similar letter and he said “no”.
- Sumner handed out copies of the 2018 Proposed Draft Budget. \$50,000.00 will be earmarked for the Walkkill Project. **2017-7-4 Wright made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to accept and approve the June 29<sup>th</sup> version of the 2018 Proposed Budget. All in favor.**
- Dam Removal Project at Browns Pond Lake – DeBlock and Sumner met with C. Rowe on Friday. They explained to him that the District will advocate for them, whereas a different sponsor may not. Rowe

contacted Sumner yesterday and stated that if the focus is on keeping the dam then they would still like the District to be the sponsor, if not then they would not be in favor of us being the sponsor. Unfortunately, at this time we do not have an opportunity to sponsor a project to keep the dam since the landowner is intent on divesting himself of it and there is currently no one willing to take it so far as we know. After doing research, DeBlock and Sumner found that the County of Orange owns 80 acres on the Campbell Hall side that abuts the pond. Discussion followed on whether or not the County could take ownership of the dam and repair it. The District in the meantime will look into alternative water sources for them. The Grantor asked the District to stay in a holding position as sponsor until things are figured out. If not figured out the District can still withdraw their sponsorship. **2017-7-5 Keeton made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to temporarily retract our 2017-6-6 Motion to withdraw from the Dam Removal Project sponsorship. All in favor.**

#### **NEW BUSINESS**

- None.

The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, August 21, 2017 at 9:00 AM.**

**2017-7-6 Meeting adjourns at 10:36 AM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.**

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroot, Secretary to the Board