

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
June 16th, 2025

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:08 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Constable, B. Cheney, P. Ruskiewicz, and P. DeBlock were present along with K. Sumner (SWCD), E. King (SWCD), M. Held (SWCD), and B. Luskin (SWCC.)

2025-6-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to approve May’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
 - Sumner reported that the Board is due to complete the District Law training module in 2026. The Board last completed this in 2023. Sumner noted the training opportunity that he wants King to attend regarding seeking competition in procurement. This training is online and is hosted by the Office of the State Comptroller’s legal division.
- Conservation Easement Mailing to Bastek Family Farm
 - Sumner’s goal is to finish the needed conservation easements needed for the floodplain bench project prior to his retirement. This includes completing the easement for the Bastek property, that was completed construction last year, and the Green Farmland LLC, whose construction finished in 2023.
- Letter to the Wetland Trust RE: Black Dirt Restoration
- NYS Ag & Markets: Part B 2024 Report Approved
- Warwick Valley Telephone: Offer to Upgrade to Faster Internet (WVT Fiber)
 - The District is hesitant to upgrade to the Fiber network given the reoccurring issues with the internet and phone. The District will collect prices for different phone and internet providers to present to the Board.
- TD Bank: Notice of Updates to Business Deposit Account Agreement
- Conservation Easement Mailing to Green Farmland LLC
- Floodplain Letter Mailing to Municipalities

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD JUNE 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

- Three copies of the letter were mailed to each municipality, and were addressed to the Town Board, Planning Board, and Building Department which summarized the Board's discussion from May's meeting. Sumner asked Wendell from B&L, who is a certified floodplain manager & engineer, to review the letter and help reinforce that municipalities run the risk of losing their flood insurance.
- The Upper Delaware: Spring 2025 Issue
- ShelterPoint: Notice for Policyholder of Non-Roster Group Term Life Policy
- The Empire State Granger: May/June 2025

Sumner discussed the notice from the County Executive's office regarding the budget preparation and submission due date for the 2026 budget. The 2026 budget submission is due 6/27, but given that the District was informed of this a few weeks after the initial mailing to other department heads, we were allowed an extension. The District will provide the Board with a copy of the complete proposed 2026 budget at July's meeting. However, Sumner would like the Board to decide on a proposed cost-of-living adjustment and 2026 county appropriation request value.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

2025-6-2 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to file May's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

Sumner informed the Board that the first BMP payment for Freedom Hill Farm project, which is in AEM Round 18, is \$11,250. This payment is the full amount of funds that was allocated for their project.

2025-6-3 Cheney made the Motion, Ruskiewicz seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor.

CONTRACT REPORT UPDATE

Per usual, any updates to the contracts report for the month of May are identified in red ink. Sumner listed the balance for each grant contract, as well as updates on interactions with the contract participants. Sumner expressed concern about the lack of response from the County & the Department of Public Works in regard to the Wallkill Maintenance project funding. The District still does not know whether the money will be transferred directly to the District as was discussed at the meeting with the County Finance Commissioner. In the meantime, the District has submitted requests for reimbursements to DPW based on contractor billing, but are still waiting for payments. Sumner asked the Board if they are agreeable to paying the contractors with the District's funds rather than wait for the reimbursements. One of the unpaid invoices is from CEC Excavating and the other is from Minkus Family Farms. Cheney updated the Board that the County finance department was unclear as to when the new funding policy took effect. For this reason, the County sent the original letters to the four towns with the adjustment amount. Cheney will continue to pursue this subject and ensure that the County knows the correct amount that the towns owe, which is their percentage of \$60,000, not the difference of what was spent the previous year.

2025-6-4 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to pay the Wallkill Maintenance Agreement contractor bills now with the District's funds, rather than wait for reimbursement from the DPW. All in favor.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

NRCS: Vélez-Juarbe provided a written report to the District that his team has been working on the most recent preapprovals and contract obligations. Additionally, they have been following up on existing contracts and practice certifications.

SWCC: Luskin informed the Board that the State Committee voting members will approve the Round 30 AgNPS ranking list at tomorrow's SWCC meeting. Per Luskin, most of the past round of contracts are progressing well. There are new hires in the fiscal and council offices which are helping to move the contracts along faster. The AEM Round 19 action plan and resolution are due to the State Committee by 7/1/25. Additional funding opportunities, such as Round 9 of the Climate Resiliency Farming and a new Ecosystem Based Management (EBM) program, will become available towards the end June. This round of EBM differs from previous rounds since eligible applications include both farm & non-farmland pertaining to stream and riparian buffers.

There were no representatives from CCE, FSA, 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.

M. Held (SWCD)-

Roller Crimper- Held reported that she was able to see the roller crimper in action thanks to Alex Ronne. He experimented with crimping the rye before planting and then planting prior to crimping the rye. Touw and O'Dell are scheduled to use the crimper as well, but Rowe, Johnson, and Conklin withdrew their interest in the program.

Equipment Cleaning Fee- The District has had repairs to no-till equipment this season which are thought to be a result of misuse on the renter's part. Held recalled that the Board voted in 2025 on a \$250 cleaning fee to be charged to farmers who have returned the equipment in poor condition. Held lamented that she recently picked up one of the corn planters that was caked in mud and required her to extensively clean the equipment. The District charged the farmer \$100 as a first-time offence, in addition to the standard cleaning fee. Additionally, Sumner noted that parts of a corn planter were removed and incorrectly replaced which caused parts to break. This repair proved to be very arduous and may have been avoided had the prior renter informed the District of the alterations they made. Sumner is certain that this was not a manufacturing issue and was caused by recent human interference. DeBlock feels that the District should find out who is responsible for these changes. The District needs to consider the added expense of labor and parts for these repairs. Sumner feels that the District should take a firmer stand against such behavior, but acknowledges the challenge of determining who is at fault. DeBlock would like the equipment rental agreement to include a policy that states if the District is not made aware of equipment repairs made by the renter, then subsequent fees will be applied. Held and Sumner believe that policy may already be in the rental agreement, but will confirm. Sumner wants feedback from the Board as to how this policy should be implemented, either through a general statement or with the District's judgement. The District does not want to be accused of any discrimination. The District may need to instruct the farmers to clean out the fertilizer hopper once they are done regardless even if the next farmer says that they will be using it ASAP. Cheney recommended that the rate stay the same for all instances, but suggested that Held provide the farmers, in addition to the rental agreement, with a cover sheet that highlights the key points of the agreement. Sumner commented that this sheet could even be posted on the equipment itself for further reminder. DeBlock advised Held that when she cleans out dry fertilizer from the hoppers to take it back with her either to the next farm or for the District's use. Sumner feels that after two repeated offences, the farmer should lose access to the rental program. Regardless of the current number of farms in the County, the Board wants the District to maintain their pride in their work and not allow people to abuse the program. Sumner commented that O'Dell and his mechanical skills are imperative to the success of the rental program.

Local Cost Share Program- Held and Sumner initially discussed using LCSP funds for the 2025 crop residue management program, but have decided to wait until 2026 to do so. Sumner commented that there are a lot of people who meet the crop residue management requirement, but just are not aware of it. The District may send an announcement detailing this program in FSA's newsletter when the time comes. The District posted an article regarding our cover crop funding through the 2025 LCSP in FSA's latest newsletter. By then the roller crimper program will be established more which will benefit the program even more. Sumner clarified that a farmer can still

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD JUNE 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

meet the crop residue management requirement even if they sprayed rather than use the roller crimper. The current program requirements dictate planting in ground that have 30% or more residue left at the time of planting. Sumner noted that crop residue management reimbursement is ~\$22 an acre. The District does not yet know how much staff time will be used to check a farmer's fields for crop residue management, especially since some farms' fields are scattered around.

Sumner explained that the CRF Round 6 grant is soil health oriented which offers reimbursement for both cover crop and crop residue management practices. Round 6 of CRF ends in April 2026. Sumner admitted that there is a lot of State money still available in this grant, but the District is reluctant to keep adding to the existing balance. To qualify for State reimbursement, which is needed for both practices, the District needs a certified crop advisor sign off which the District does not have. Sumner clarified that the District does not need approval from the State to pay through the LCSP.

Wright suggested that the District consider adding orange safety flags to the truck whenever it is used to tow the District's equipment. The Board unanimously agreed with Wright's suggestion and Held will speak with O'Dell about installing these flags.

E. King (SWCD)- King reported that she met with the Senior Vice President of NY MuniTrust who explained how the short term, high interest, investment accounts work. The SVP told King that she would share her presentation and offered that she or a portfolio manager from the firm could speak to the Board. Sumner and King felt that it would be worthwhile for the portfolio manager to speak to the Board, but King has not heard back from her since her last inquiry. Once she has the presentation and meeting materials from the SVP, King will share them with the Board. King received confirmation from Ag & Markets that State funds cannot be invested in NY MuniTrust given that they need to be readily available. Sumner noted that Ag & Markets wants Districts to discreetly track the interest earned on each grant which requires separate bank accounts. Instead, the District would invest either the County appropriation funds or the Part C money. The SVP told King that as of 6/6, which is when they met, the interest yield was 4.17%. The required minimum investment in MuniTrust is \$50k and funds are collateralized at 102%.

Cheney asked the Board whether they feel it is necessary for MuniTrust to give the Board a presentation. Due to his personal knowledge of MuniTrust, Cheney feels comfortable with the District moving forward and opening an account with MuniTrust. Sumner advises that the Board have a formal notice from the County or Ag & Markets attorney that confirms the District is not violating any clause. Sumner instructed King to ask whether an attorney with Ag & Markets can review the law for us, since they should be better well versed in it, but King has not received an answer yet.

The Board instructed King to find out if the District would be penalized if our account balance dropped below \$50k after the initial investment. Cheney wants King to request templates from MuniTrust to use for our Board resolutions when opening an account. The Board agrees with providing the minimum \$50k investment. Cheney asked King for a cash flow analysis through the end of the year to give the Board a better sense of our available funds.

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

Floodplain Bench P4N- Sumner reported that the Phase 4 North bench of the floodplain project did not flood this past winter. However, this bench has been flooded twice now, but it appears to Sumner that the mortality rates are affected more by the long-term stress of the site rather than the flooding. Sumner noted that the oak trees were affected by the spongy moths, which left some completely defoliated. A culvert was installed underneath the newly constructed road and additional grading was done to a field to accommodate for the farmer who rents it. Sumner

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD JUNE 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

spoke with the Bastek Family partnership, who own the P4N property, to explain what he could regarding the details of their proposed conservation easement.

Celery Avenue Permits- The District has still not heard back from the NYS DEC regarding the permits the District submitted last July. Both Sumner and Ruszkiewicz have received inquiries from farmers regarding the status of the permits. Sumner asked Rob Schreibeis to speak with the County attorney to confirm whether there is a timeframe that the State must adhere to regarding a permit decision under the uniform procedures law. The District does not want to press the State too much about it for fear of irking them.

Department of State Grant- Sumner submitted the Department of State grant application which totals \$450,000. Per Sumner, there was no mention in the request for proposal as to when the District can expect an answer from them. Sumner found it extremely helpful to have had help from the director of the County grants division with the application.

AEM Round 18- Sumner reported that some projects in AEM Round 18 have progressed well, but there are still two projects that have had little to no activity. The Round 18 contracts expire at the end of this year and any remaining funds will be returned to the State. Sumner wants to avoid this since the funding can be reallocated to another project should a farm drop out. These farms were already given a deadline by April 1st, but Sumner wants to know if the Board is okay with setting another deadline for August 1st. Sumner commented that these projects can often be completed within a weeks' time. However, the District must allot enough time for a new contract to complete all the necessary steps involved in executing a project. The Board had no concerns with Sumner's proposed August 1st deadline for the two farms in question.

Senator Skoufis Funding- The District has still not received a signed contract from Ag & Markets regarding the equipment funding from Senator Skoufis' office.

Conservation Innovation Grant- CCE will now oversee the equipment purchase and procurement process instead of the District regarding the CIG grant. Sumner does not know when the District can expect that equipment. Sumner asked the Board whether they feel the District should place an order for a 12-foot Esch seeder or wait for the signed contract from Ag & Markets. Sumner does not see an issue with waiting for the signed contract to order the Esch seeder. In the meantime, the District will continue working on the procurement procedures to make sure the District can purchase a Kinsey corn planter without having to request three bids.

Wetland Trust Proposal- Sumner reported that letters of opposition were sent by the District, the AFPB, Town of Warwick, and neighboring farmers/landowners. The applicant contacted Sumner with questions about the drainage district following the mailing. Per Sumner, it appears that the applicant is not backing off and still arguing that their proposal does not negatively impact the drainage district.

Request from Town of Warwick for Review of Solar Proposal- The District sent the Town of Warwick Planning Board our schedule of fees for the review of the solar proposal. The District wants to bill the town not the applicant for this work. These fees were approved by the Planning Board and the District is now waiting on the applicant's submission.

Pennings Farm -The District received another request for review from a landowner/farmer, the Pennings Farm family, about the proposed senior housing development that would border their property. In the past the District would identify concerns to aid the permitting agency in their decision. Sumner believes that Pennings will ask the Town of Warwick to send the proposal to the District for review this week after the public hearing. The District would only have the characteristics of the site available to review since the stormwater plan is not yet drafted.

District Vehicles- Given how expensive mechanical work costs, Sumner asked the Board whether they feel the District should pay to have the Dodge serviced if the plan is to buy a new truck. The District will need to check state bid prices on a ¾ or 1 ton truck. Sumner noted that it would be beneficial to the District to have two vehicles that can tow. Sumner is concerned that it could be a significant bill due to existing issues. Sumner imagines that the Kelley Blue Book value on the Dodge will be low. DeBlock recommended that the District sell the Dodge.

Potential Hire- The District was recommended a candidate to help with the equipment rental program by Jason Touw. Constable broached this subject at the last Farm Bureau meeting, which is how Touw was made aware of this. Sumner provided the Board with two questions to consider, 1.) Is this someone the Board would want to hire? and 2.) Do we hire him as a standard employee or as an independent contractor? Sumner predicts the District could run into issues with the County justifying the creation of another district field technician position. Sumner feels that this employment would be better suited as a contractual arrangement. However, even if this employee does not have a commercial insurance policy, there is still a liability issue if he is using his own truck. Held met with him and learned that he would prefer being hired as an employee rather than dealing with his own insurance as an independent contractor. Sumner reported that apart from these recent emergency repairs, the District is handling the rental program well with the current staff. However, if the equipment rental program were to expand, then an additional employee may be necessary. The Board agreed to wait until the next meeting to make a decision regarding this matter.

AEM Round 19- Sumner informed the Board that Round 19 is a three-year contract rather than two years as previous ones have been. There is \$300,000 available for project funds.

2025-6-5 Cheney made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, authorizes the District to enter the non-competitive Round 19 of the AEM contract and give Sumner the authority to act on behalf of the District. Motion includes approval of Resolution AEM-2025-1. All in favor.

2026 Budget- The District's submission for the proposed 2026 budget is due to the County in a few weeks. Sumner wants the Board to determine what the 2026 county appropriation request, as well as the COL adjustment, at today's meeting. For 2025, the District's county appropriation request totaled \$286,813, which included a 3% cost of living adjustment from 2024 to 2025. Previously, there was concern that the District could not request more than the County employee's salary contract. The District's grade step system allows the District to raise our employee level, and the Board can award an unscheduled step increase based on employee performance. Sumner expressed his opinion that the District employees' salaries need to be commensurate for the employee's work to retain the position. Cheney noted that the County employee salaries were recently increased due to a contract negotiation with the employee's union and the County. Cheney recommended that the Board review this data to compare the District employees' salaries to the County's salary table. Sumner asked the Board whether they want to request an entire adjustment to the salary table, and if so do they want to request additional funding from the County to cover these increases or to handle the increases internally. DeBlock feels that the County should provide an increase in the District employee salaries. Sumner prefers an increase across the Board which can include a COL & a salary increase equivalent to professional positions.

Cheney suggested that the District include a place holder of 7% with the 3% COL request to account for step increases and possible across-the-board increase to the Salary Table. The District needs to submit a detailed personnel salary sheet for the County which will reflect the 10% increase. The Board feels that the District employee COL adjustment should at least equal that of the newly negotiated contract the County did with the union.

Given the uncertainty as to whether the District will be approved for the DOS grant, Sumner would like to discuss whether to include that funding in the 2026 budget. Cheney suggested that the District include the cost of the Celery

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD JUNE 2025 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Avenue project contract in the budget in case the District is not approved for the DOS grant. The District wanted to demonstrate that we were aggressively seeking funding for the project elsewhere than just the County. Sumner is concerned that the process will be more complicated receiving the funding from the DOS as compared to the County. He noted that the procedures we likely would need to follow for NYSDOS would be more cumbersome than what we have been using on the flood projects – following NYSA&M procedures. Cheney noted that when Sumner comes before the committee in October, he may have answers to existing questions with the budget, that could alter the request.

Cheney reported that the County advocated the hiring of interns and allocated money to human resources to hire interns to various departments. Cheney asked whether the District would find it beneficial to hire an intern to help with administrative or technical work. Sumner and King need to discuss whether she is interested in hiring an intern to help her with administrative work, which opens her schedule to do more technical work. Or if she would prefer to dedicate her time to honing her skills as the office manager. Per Sumner, the District has hired college students in the past for summer internships centered around field work. Sumner acknowledges that it requires supervisory effort to make it worthwhile. Sumner noted that there is technical work to be done regarding collecting the piezometer readings needed for monitoring the four floodplain bench project sites. The plan dictates that the water levels should be checked twice a month during the months of April through October. Cheney recommends that the District advertise a paid internship in the future directly with universities that will have students interested in the field of conservation. The Board proposed adding a budget of \$3,000 for a paid summer internship in the 2026 budget.

Given the Board's discussion at today's meeting, Sumner reported that the proposed 2026 county appropriation request totals \$765,494. This amount includes the 10% added to 2025's county appropriation request for staff salary increases, which is \$315,494, and the addition of the DOS grant, which is \$450,000. Sumner noted that there will be a line item in the 2026 budget for Celery Avenue Ledge project of more than ~\$450,000.

2025-6-6 DeBlock made the Motion, Wright seconded, to request the proposed 2026 County appropriation in the amount of \$765,494. All in favor.

Next meeting date: July 21st

ADJOURNMENT

2025-6-7 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 11:19 AM. All in favor.

Minutes Prepared By:

Emily King, Secretary to the Board

Report to Board KMS

June, 2025

Walkkill Flood Projects –

Floodplain Bench Phase 4 North

Flooded a second time, with trees in water for 3-4 days. Trees doing OK, overall. Some mortality, not quantified yet. Gypsy moths impacted the Oaks quite significantly. I have straightened probably 25 of the larger trees that tipped over.

A second culvert was installed to convey drainage from adjacent field under new road. An 'overflow notch' was created to connect the bench to four pre-existing 42" culverts under County Route 1. The culverts previously would only receive flow at very high flood stage. By removing a 'hump' between the pipes and the bench, flood flows will now be able to access these four pipes at a lower stage. The capacity of these four pipes as compared to the bridge opening is small, but the cost to create the 'notch' was very modest for whatever additional flood mitigation benefit is derived.

A mailing was sent to the Phase 4N owners (Bastek Family partnership) regarding the proposed Conservation Easement on the bench areas. They received the mailing, and replied that they were "overwhelmed and confused". The letter recommended they contact their attorney, but I have offered to meet with them in effort to help them understand the necessary next steps.

We are continuing to 'tweak' the grading in the field where extensive fill from the bench was placed. The unusually wet spring weather makes it difficult to assess the improvements made to the field. With the depth of some of the fills, it was expected that it would take some time for the field to 'tighten up'. It has been planted to corn.

Celery Avenue ledge lowering project – Still no word on the DEC permit, or on Wawayanda/Goshen floodplain permits (same status as last month). NYSDOS grant application for \$450,000 was submitted, with extensive assistance from Jody at County Grants Division.

Phase 3 – A mailing was sent to Green Farmland, LLC attempting to progress the establishment of Conservation Easements on the Phase 3 areas.

Carbon Farming Project – Still waiting on final payment of \$4,268.32 on Southway project. I reached out again, and there appears to be some movement. I had to submit some additional documents.

AEM Round 18 – Hoyt project is somewhat in a holding pattern, being impacted by poor weather and priorities of the farmer. It has endured several large storm events, with only minimal erosion which is expected to be corrected as soon as seeding and stabilization can be completed.

The Vreeland project is progressing steadily.

A Contractor has been selected for Ronne project.

I am concerned about the lack of activity of several of the Round 18 Tier 4 projects, as the contract end date (12/31/2025) is fast approaching. Will discuss more at meeting.

CRF Round 7 - Limited activity this month. Shuback is waiting for delivery of his irrigation equipment.

‘Sign Offs’ on Soil Health Practices –No updates from last month.

Revision of Wallkill Maintenance Agreement –Still waiting on updated procedures from County. Contractor submitted billing of about \$26,000. We submitted a reimbursement request to County per past procedures on 5/5, have not received a payment yet. We submitted additional contractor billing of about \$9,000 on 5/28 (Minkus).

Roller Crimper Project Update -See Held’s report.

The AgNPS Round 29 – No recent project activity. Brady project expected to commence in the next week or two.

AgNPS Round 30 –No word yet on Wallkill Watershed Proposal. Ranked list to be reviewed by NYSSWCC on 6/17.

Other Items

.

Equipment Planning

Skoufis Equipment Funding – Working through contract paperwork with A&M. Will have a 2024 start date, currently working to get the end date extended.beyond 9/2025. No signed contract yet.

CIG Grant – CCE now says that they will make the equipment purchases, so the time frame on this will be largely out of our control.

We had an inquiry from someone interested in helping with the equipment program. Will discuss at meeting.

Old Business

Wetland Trust Proposal – Letters of opposition were sent by OCSWCD, OCAFPB, Town of Warwick, and at least two neighboring farmers/landowners. Based on correspondence I have had since then with the applicant, they are still pursuing approvals for this site.

Review of Warwick Solar Proposal – Schedule of Fees sent to Town. They agreed to us billing them. Sent fees to applicant, no material provided to review yet.

New Business – Pennings Orchard is concerned about at Senior Housing development proposal that would border their property on Sanfordville Road. They have requested my assistance in reviewing the proposal.

Vehicle Discussion

Secretary to the Board Update

Since May's meeting, I finished tying up loose ends in regard to the District's 2024 audit which is performed by PKF O'Connor Davies. I will keep the Board posted whenever I receive updates on the status of the District's audit report.

Following the Board's approval, I ordered a water cooler for the office and created an account with Fox Ledge. The District is scheduled for monthly deliveries and everyone seems pleased with the water and cooler.

I met with Michelle Lens who is the Senior Vice President at NY MuniTrust on 6/6. I found the meeting to be very informative and MuniTrust and seems very promising. I will discuss my meeting summary with the Board at Monday's meeting. Michelle offered that either she or the portfolio manager can speak to the Board at a meeting. I have not heard back from Michelle about arranging this so I imagine that it will not be until July's meeting. I am also waiting for her to send me the presentation she showed me at our meeting which I will share with the Board.

Kevin and I received an email from Mariya Kitcmanuk, the new budget analyst for the District, regarding the 2026 County budget. The District was only made aware of the 6/27 budget submission deadline on 6/13. However, an email was sent to the County department heads on 5/30 with this information. I told Mariya that the District may need an additional few days to gather the materials needed and she understood that.

I have helped Kevin with preparing the first round of drafts for the conservation easements for both the Bastek & Green Farmland LLC properties. Both of those documents were sent to the intended recipients. Bastek received the drafts, and I am waiting on confirmation as to when Green Farmland receives them via certified mail.

I contacted Amanda with FSA to arrange for the District's 2025 cover crop application through our LCSP to be included in their monthly newsletter. Kevin prepared the article and it was published in FSA's May newsletter which was distributed on 5/30. Shortly after the mailing, the District received a request for an application from a farmer.

On 6/12 I attended the 2025 regional district managers' meeting on behalf of the District. I appreciate the opportunity to go to the meeting. I was able to discuss NY MuniTrust with members of State Committee who expressed interest in it and I shared my findings with them. I was advised to reach out to the County attorney to confirm that there is no stipulation in the District law that bars the District from joining MuniTrust. Kevin suggested that I ask the members of State Committee if a lawyer with Ag & Markets could review this for us since they are more versed in this matter. I am waiting on a response from them as to whether this is possible.

I prepared the mailing for the floodplain letters to all the municipalities in the County. I included copies of the letter for the municipality's building department, planning board, and town board. The mailing was picked up by the USPS on 6/12.

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 May's dedicated fund summary. Kevin & I received confirmation that the new checking accounts for Shuback & Crist were created, but I am working on activating them. Once they are, I will allocate funds from the main checking to show their current balance.

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

Best,

Emily

OCSWCD Technician Update

Mary C. Held

6/13/2025

Equipment:

Roller Crimper Demo Project:

The roller crimper has been out and about lately.

O'Dell, Mike – expected to crimp soon

Rowe, Chuck – withdrew interest

Ronne, Alex – crimped in late May / early June

Conklin, Sue – withdrew interest

Touw, Jason – crimped week of 6/9

Johnson, Phil – withdrew interest

Corn planter rentals:

Much of my time lately has been spent, if not delivering corn planters, trying to assess these planters' problems, working with Ron O'Dell and Kevin to fix the corn planters, and trying to find parts in the part books. The corn planters this year have had non-stop problems but I have learned quite a bit on how to address them.

The cleaning fee: One Board meeting, we discussed and decided to implement the idea of taking away the 'clean planter' discount and implementing a penalty of \$250.00 if the corn planter was returned excessively dirty. One of the first users of the corn planters returned the corn planter chock-full of mud and I spent 30-40 minutes cleaning it out before I was able to take it anywhere.

I was asked to bring this up to the Board to discuss how to handle excessive mud instances such as this. We charged this particular renter \$100.00 as a first-time offense after implementing the cleaning charge, but we wanted to discuss what the go-to mode of action should be – whether we continue the 'first time offense' charge of \$100 then increase it to \$250, then take them off the deliverable list for repeated offenses or another mode of action.

Efforts are being taken to remind users to return the equipment in good condition – the rental agreement was edited and highlighted to indicate the new policy, the rental agreement is sent to everyone I speak with, and I personally remind everyone I talk to that the corn planter should be returned clean so I can take it straight to the next person.

LCSP:

Kevin and I discussed potentially funding crop residue management this year, but we think that it may be beneficial if we omitted the program this year entirely and instead implemented it next year with a little more 'advertisement.' With the roller crimper now in our possession, the crop residue management / conservation tillage program could be more robust in terms of offering farms the opportunity to participate. Between cover crop reimbursements, the use of the seeders, potential crop residue reimbursements, and the use of the roller crimper, the District has been fairly diverse in its ability to provide farmers with the opportunities to participate in these local funding opportunities.

CRF Update:

Round 6:

No update.

Payments (RECAP FROM LAST BOARD MEETING):

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

Projected **2025** CRF6 payout (Wagon Wheel Farm): \$1,232.00

Soil testing and compost testing need to be completed before the closeout of this grant if farmers are wanting those services. I am preparing a schedule of those who have soil testing to be completed and plan to get it done when the weather is more agreeable.

Crop Residue Management payout: We anticipate a crop residue management payout to be made to Jason Touw (Wagon Wheel Farm) sometime this year. I do not have details just yet, but the update will come when I get into it more.

Round 7: No updates from the technician.

AGNPS Update:

Round 27: Contract End Date: March 2025 (was extended)

- Soudant: trying to help collect proposals.

Round 29:

- No update.

Round 30:

- Feb 24th: AGNPS 30 was submitted. The following projects were submitted:
 - o Michele Callisto (mixing facility)
 - o Tom Owens (fuel tank storage)

- The ranking of the AGNPS 30 projects is supposed to be accepted/announced at an upcoming meeting, so hopefully we will know soon if we got funded.

AEM Update:

Round 18 Tier 4 Projects:

Joe Minkus: Mailed formal letter indicating cancellation.

Rick Minkus: Mailed formal letter indicating cancellation.

Steven Demberg: Emailed asking for a follow up on project progress. Demberg indicated that construction is still imminent and will reach out to us when further progress is made.

- Emailed again 6/13/2025 requesting update

Alex Ronne: Selected Chris Vellenga for his project.

AEM Activities:

- Tier 2s in progress:
 - o Taffera Family Farms – G&C
- Tier 3s completed:
 - o Alex Ronne (needs signature but work is mostly completed)
- Tier 3s being put together
 - o Alex Ronne – grazing plan
 - o Marc Suffern – grazing plan
 - o John King – laneway / erosion control project

CCA Plan:

- (no update from last board meeting) I have decided to re-take at least a portion of the CCA exam in August with a new strategy and extra materials acquired by friends who have taken the exams and passed before. There are 2 more opportunities to take the exams this year. I will keep the Board posted of any further decisions made about this opportunity.