

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
March 23, 2015

The Meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:10 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton, P. DeBlock and S. Wong were present, along with K. Sumner, C. DeGroot, K. Brown and N. Meyer (OCSWCD), R. Baglia (CCE) and J. Heller (NRCS).

Ford F-250 Pickup Truck Bid Opening – 1) \$375.00 – Richard Blazeski 2) \$500.00 – Toby Wetthus 3) \$572.00 – Shaw Stack 4) \$750.00 – Simon Ziegler 5) \$1,111.11 – Guy Bogart. A Motion was made by Keeton to accept the highest bid of \$1,111.11 from Guy Bogart, seconded by DeBlock. All in favor.

A Motion was made by Keeton, seconded by DeBlock, to accept the second highest bid of \$750.00 from Simon Ziegler if the first bid does not go through and that if the second bid does not go through, to have further discussion at April's Board Meeting. All in favor.

P. Ruskiewicz joined the Meeting at 9:16 AM.

There was a brief discussion regarding participants that were removed from the Ag NPS Round 17 Wallkill Grant per the NYS Agricultural Nonpoint Source Abatement and Control Program Participant Removal and Project Completion Policy adopted at January's Board Meeting. Participants being removed were notified by mail and phone to give them ample time to respond on whether or not they wanted to stay in this grant. Due to lack of response, these participants were removed at February's Board Meeting. Certified letters have not yet been sent out notifying these participants that they were removed.

CORRESPONDENCE

The Ag & Farmland Protection Board Meeting Agenda and Minutes were passed out. The Meeting was rescheduled for this Wednesday via an email that was sent out.

Wright received a reply from the Natural Resources Conservation Service regarding the Working Agreement. This will be discussed under New Business.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Wright made the Motion, seconded by DeBlock, to approve February's financial report. All in favor.

The Monthly Ag Grant Report was reviewed by the Board.

Sumner stated that there were three B&L Invoices on the Bills To Be Paid list because a bill from last year for B&L staff time was overlooked. DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Keeton, to pay March's bills. All in favor.

STAFF REPORTS

C. DeGroot (SWCD) – DeGroot has been uploading information for both the Moodna and Wallkill Ag NPS Round 21 Grant Proposals in to a computer program called Gateway.

She assisted with two 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control Training classes – one was held at Cornell Cooperative Extension and the other was for the Local 17 Labor's Union.

The Auditor requested additional paperwork for the 2014 Annual Audit, which DeGroot is working on.

K. Brown (SWCD) - Brown attended the annual Water Quality Symposium March 10-13 in Syracuse. Some of her classes included SET, Ag Waste, Riparian Buffers, Job Approval Authority and Applied Hydraulic Practices.

Brown's first Certified Nutrient Management Plan passed NRCS review.

On March 17th she attended the Wallkill Flood Committee Meeting at the Pine Island Firehouse.

Brown has been working on the Ag NPS Round 21 Grant Proposal paperwork.

N. Meyer (SWCD) – Meyer has been working on the Ag NPS Round 21 Grant Proposal. He completed the maps that are required such as the Watershed Map, SWAP maps, topographic maps and farmstead maps.

Meyer has been keeping track of no-till equipment requests as they come in.

He also attended the Water Quality Symposium. Some of the classes he took were Culvert Design, GIS, Hydrology and Animal Health. Meyer mentioned that during the GIS class, he learned of a way to get an update for free.

Meyer has been busy completing Soil Group Worksheet requests as they come in.

He has also been working on the RSR Grant and the Monhagen Brook Project.

K. Sumner (SWCD) – Sumner taught 4-Hour Erosion and Sediment Control courses, one for the Local 17 Laborer's Union and the other at Cornell Cooperative Extension.

He taught a SUNY Orange upper level water resources class.

Sumner has had some meetings with the bench project landowners and also with the Town of Goshen regarding their concerns about the ledge project.

There have also been meetings regarding the Monhagen Project.

There was a field visit at Troy Vellenga's on Friday. Their engineer was there digging test pits. It appears that this project is steadily moving forward.

The pellet project final payment is still in limbo. They are still trying to find a farm in the tri-county area where the machine can stay long term.

The PRISM grant to remove invasive multiflora rose at the Benedict Farm Park, located in the Town of Montgomery was not successful.

Sumner added that Meyer worked on Purchase of Development Rights (PDRs) soil reports for the Towns of Montgomery and Warwick.

Sumner also added that there has been a good joint effort between office staff regarding work on the Ag NPS RD 21 Ag Grant Proposals.

There has been design activity on the Alan Glustoff Farm (5-Spoke). The participant would like to start work soon.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

R. Baglia (CCE) – On April 4, 2015 there will be a “Fruit Trees for the Home Garden” class at Devitt’s Supply in New Windsor.

“A Deeper Shade of Green”, part of the Stormwater Management Series, will be held at Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) on April 16th.

On April 18th there will be a “Hydroponics, Aquaculture, and Applications for Organic Production” class from 1:00-5:00 at CCE.

On April 30th there will be another class held at CCE that is part of the Stormwater Management Series called “Ensuring a Long Life for SMP’S”.

4-H Showcase Update – there has been discussion regarding the pole barns going up. The Showcase will be on July 22-26. There will also be a barbeque and calf sale.

J. Heller (NRCS) – March 20th was the deadline for AMA applications, specifically for Irrigation.

There are Nine EQIP pre-approvals to-date for Orange County.

There will be an Organic NY Event on June 2nd with Northeast Farm Access Group on a farm in Chester.

Machelle Simmon’s detail was extended. Mary Kerkstetter will continue to be the Acting Area Conservationist.

NRCS held interviews for the Soil Conservationist position that is open in the Middletown office.

OLD BUSINESS

Wallkill Flood Project Update – The Committee meeting was last week. District staff has been meeting with landowners regarding the bench projects. B&L brought a draft of the joint application for the permit for the bench project to the meeting. Doug from Integrated River Solutions saw it for the first time last week and both Keeton and Sumner reviewed the application. Keeton and Sumner did not see anything in it that needed a great deal of additional work. There is still no discussion in there on the soil disposal issue. A brief discussion followed regarding soil disposal. Sumner stated that there are approximately 100,000 dump truck loads of soil to be removed. Wong asked if we are required to move it out of the flood plain. Sumner said that is what we are trying to find out. Wong stated that Neal Halloran, Building Inspector for Town of Goshen, said that the District’s flood plain development permit application that was sent to him was incomplete and that their engineer is requesting only information relevant to Celery Avenue and also to send two copies (one

for their Engineer and one for their office). The District Board gave authorization for Goshen's engineer to contact our engineer to get the information they require.

RSR Mitigation Project Update – Meyer previously mentioned sending out letters to landowners and he is working on a follow-up with them. He is looking for three sites to plant this year. Wright asked how large the projects are. Sumner stated they are a modest size and he'd like to complete a site by the Middletown School where the two tributaries of the Monhagen come through.

UTV and Trailer Space Rental Update – Last month's Draft Board Meeting Minutes were discussed. In the Minutes there was a paragraph stating DeBlock made a Motion, seconded by Keeton, to set a cap of \$900.00 to pay Sumner for building storage on his property to house the UTV and Trailer. She stated this was incorrect and requested this paragraph be amended to state that the Board approved a one year rental payment of \$900.00 to Sumner to store the equipment. Wong stated that she believes the issue the County Law Department has is that you can't be an employee and get any additional benefits from your place of employment. Sumner said it's not a benefit. Keeton suggesting getting several price quotes from commercial storage unit companies.

DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Keeton, to approve February's MINUTES as amended. Wright and Ruszkiewicz in favor. Wong was not in favor.

Monhagen Brook Projects at Campbell Hall Plaza Update - The Monhagen Brook Project meeting will be today at 2:00 PM at Shop Rite. There is a potential stream cleanup scheduled on April 25th with a rain date of May 2nd. Meyer sent edits on the project brochure to Ed Helbig. The poster was passed around. There will be a day, before the cleanup, for public outreach and to hand out ~300 seedlings with the brochures attached.

Update on Seeder Rebuild – Pine Plains told Brown that additional parts are needed. They were supposed to email her prices but she has not yet received them. We need the seeder back in time for planting. The Directors would like to see the additional costs as soon as possible.

Director Compensation – Wright thanked Sumner and stated that all of the Directors appreciate his efforts to compensate them, but they volunteered for this job. The Board recommends that Sumner not pursue this.

NEW BUSINESS

Ag NPS Grants - Sumner stated that the District can not get reimbursed from the state for engineering fees from a project until that project is complete. Discussion then followed on using the Ag Contingency Fund to assist grant participants that request financial assistance to pay for engineering fees as Troy Vellenga, who is in the Round 20 Livestock Waste Control Grant, asked the District for assistance for paying engineering fees. His engineer will be billing monthly. The estimated total cost is currently just over \$10,000.00. This does not include the roof design. As long as the practice gets completed then the District will be reimbursed this money by the ag grant. There is always the possibility that the practice will not get completed. Keeton recommended that there be a written agreement signed by the farmer that states if the project does not get completed, the farmer will reimburse the district. Sumner said that if something should happen beyond anyone's control, he would just as soon not front the engineering fees if there has to be a contract that will require Vellenga to pay the money back to the District. Sumner said the Ag Contingency Fund is a fund that was established to assist with helping these projects get completed. It's funding that the District is not expecting to get back once spent. The Board discussed paying 50%, with the participant paying the other 50% and that this can be done with other participants on a case by case basis if necessary as the budget allows.

Keeton made the Motion, seconded by DeBlock, that the District will pay 50% of his payment after he makes the payment to his engineer, not to exceed \$5,000.00 without further Board discussion. The amount we prepaid will be reimbursed to the District directly from the ag grant once his project is complete. All in favor.

Sumner read the NRCS Working Agreement additions to the Board. There was no mention of the District paying rent in the Agreement. Wright made the Motion to sign the Agreement as presented, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

A discussion took place regarding the details of Brown's planned leave-of-absence. The board had previously been apprised that Brown hoped to take approximately 3 months maternity leave beginning in May. The Board was agreeable to this arrangement. Several others matters were clarified. 1) Part time employees over 20 hours/week continue to receive full health insurance benefits per NYSHIP and OCSWCD policies. 2) p/t employees receive pro-rated holiday pay (for example, at 20 hours/week, employee receives 4 hours pay for an 8 hour holiday). 3)p/t time employees similarly receive pro-rated IRA contributions. Brown anticipated that when she returns to work she will probably want to start at 20 hours/week. The Board felt it best to have a set number of hours at least until the end of the year. After that, the option to increase the hours or allow for an adjustable number of hours per week could be discussed. The Board was agreeable to the idea of Brown working some portion of her hours from home, and was inclined to be flexible about how the 20 hours was completed (full days or half days), but indicated that Brown would need to communicate closely with Sumner to ensure that whatever arrangement was pursued was beneficial for both Brown and efficient office operations.

The NEXT MEETING is scheduled for Monday, April 20, 2015 at 9:00 AM.

The MEETING was adjourned at 12:25 PM on a Motion by Keeton, seconded by DeBlock. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroodt
Secretary to the Board