

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
May 18, 2015

The Meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:02 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton, P. DeBlock and P. Ruszkiewicz were present, along with K. Sumner, C. DeGroot, K. Brown and N. Meyer (OCSWCD), J. Simpson (CCE), F. Barber (FSA) and J. Heller (NRCS).

Heller requested that April's Draft Board Meeting Minutes be amended to state that Heller was advised by his Supervisor not to confront or discuss the 5-Spoke Project with Sumner or the District Board. DeBlock made the Motion to approve this amendment, seconded by Wright. All in favor.

DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Keeton, to approve April's Board Meeting Minutes as amended. All in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

The District received a letter from Brian Steinmuller, Assistant Director, NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee, regarding the 5-Spoke Creamery project in Goshen, NY. The SWCC Environmental Engineer, Tim Clark, met District staff at the creamery on April 1, 2015 to evaluate the completed Heavy Use Area Protection Project funded under NYS NPS Ag Grant Round 19. Based on Tim Clark's observations, it is concluded that the completed project appears to meet the Ag NPS Program requirement that all Best Management Practice Systems are built to the appropriate NRCS-NY Standards and Specifications.

Chairman Wright sent a letter to Greg Kist, USDA-NRCS State Conservationist, regarding the NRCS Cooperative Working Agreement (CWA) and matters regarding the 5 Spoke Creamery Project. He stated his disappointment in NRCS and that they are choosing to ignore the language and intent of the CWA. As of today's date, the District has not heard back from NRCS.

The District received copies of permits from Arvind G. Goswami, P.E., CFM, Environmental Engineer 2, Flood Control Projects Section, NYS Department of Environmental Conservation, granting permission for rock ledge removal from Pochuck Creek near County Route 1 bridge and rock ledge removal from the Wallkill River near Celery Avenue.

The Orange County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board Meeting Draft Minutes from April 15, 2015 and Agenda for May 20th were passed out for review.

Reappointment letters for District Directors Wong, Keeton and Ruszkiewicz were received from Steven M. Neuhaus, Orange County Executive.

The Orange County Farm Bureau emailed Wright to request that he give an update on the Wallkill Flood Project. Wright will try to attend their next meeting on June 8th.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

April's Financial Reports will be discussed/approved at next month's Board Meeting.

There was one addition to the Bills to be Paid list, a bill from Lehman & Getz in the amount of \$150.00

for the 5-Spoke project. Sumner explained that this bill was for an additional review of his design by Getz after the addition of component practice (Heavy Use Area Protection) to provide for collection and treatment of portable bulk tank rinse water.

DeBlock made the Motion to pay the bills, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

April's Draft Grant Update Report was reviewed by the Board.

STAFF REPORTS

C. DeGrootd (SWCD) – On April 25th DeGrootd assisted with the cleanup on the Monhagen Brook.

All of the Ag NPS Interim Reports were completed and submitted to the State Office.

Storage rental space quotes to house the UTV and trailer were discussed. Storage Station in Middletown charges \$169/month. Capital Self Storage in New Hampton charges \$189/month. Lee's Self Storage in Middletown did not have the size we are looking for (10' x 20'). The Directors requested that DeGrootd get the quotes in writing to present at the next Board Meeting.

DeGrootd noted that the District's Investment Policy was updated to reflect last month's Board Motion to add TD Banknorth as the District's second bank and to increase bank funds to be held at Key Bank and TD Banknorth from \$200,000.00 to \$250,000.00.

K. Brown (SWCD) - Brown submitted the updated AEM Strategic Plan which is good for five years and outlines the goals of the program.

Brown assisted with the cleanup on the Monhagen Brook on April 25th.

The AEM Annual Action Plan was submitted for Year 11.

Brown is working on closing out AEM Year 10. \$32,038.00 was earned out of \$49,998.00.

The Wallkill Maintenance trip was last Monday. 15 sites were identified. Trip notes were passed around.

N. Meyer (SWCD) – The District's new Ford truck should be delivered sometime later this week.

RSR Mitigation Project Update – Two locations were identified for the RSR Project. Meyer has been looking for three sites to plant this year and is working on getting the planting material through Trees for Tribes. He is looking into phosphorous testing in the Monhagen.

Meyer has been busy working on repairs to the District's no-till equipment.

Meyer attended the Wallkill Maintenance trip last Monday with Brown.

Meyer will be attending a course on Stormwater Management at Cornell Cooperative Extension.

The Monhagen Brook Cleanup Project, led by Meyer, had approximately 30 volunteers show up.

K. Sumner (SWCD) – Sumner has been actively working on installing the 5-Spoke Creamery Ag NPS project and a bale storage area on Robert Stap's farm.

Sumner attended the Wallkill River Summit in New Paltz.

A RFP released by The Hudson River Estuary Program (NYSDEC) is due June 15th. The District thought it was an opportune time to go after money to do a more Comprehensive Watershed Plan on the Monhagen. So we reached out to our current Monhagen Project partners. Orange County Planning stated that they wish to lead the submission of this grant. They want funding to support Orange County Water Authority staff. In a meeting with D. Church and K. Dobbins, Sumner agreed to participate in the development of the proposal with OCWA being the formal applicant, but asked that Soil and Water be considered a co-manager of the project/proposal along with OCWA. Church and Dobbins did not object to this request.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

J. Simpson (CCE) – They are focusing on the Showcase which is July 22-27th.

CCE is still working on the Education Center and 4-H Park.

The Dairy Explorers Program starts this week. It's a unique program where children from ages 5-19 can adopt a calf for six weeks. They will feed the calf, watch a cow being milked, learn about machinery safety and then show off the calf at the 4-H Showcase.

Simpson has accepted a job at Delaware University and will be leaving Cornell Cooperative Extension at the end of August. The Directors and staff at Soil and Water congratulated her and wished her well.

There are currently 6 calves registered for this year's annual calf sale.

F. Barber (FSA) – The Farm Service Agency finished the onion acreage reporting.

The Agriculture Risk Coverage (ARC) and Price Loss Coverage (PLC) signups will begin shortly.

Margin Protection Program (MPP) for Dairy – Prices for milk are lower than anticipated.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program – FSA is predicting a lot of activity.

J. Heller (NRCS) – NRCS finished EQIP obligations. They received two AMA applications.

Last week NRCS closed out on an easement program.

Heller is participating in an Organic NY Event on June 2nd with Northeast Farm Access Group on a farm in Chester.

OLD BUSINESS

NRCS Cooperative Working Agreement – The District received the Agreement back, now signed. Sumner felt it was important to hear back from NRCS regarding the Chairman's letter to Kist. Heller responded that he will check to see if this was an oversight. DeBlock asked if the Kist letter was sent to the Soil and Water State Board and Sumner replied that it was only sent to Kist without any cc's because he felt it was appropriate to give NRCS an opportunity to respond before copying others. Since NRCS has not responded in a month's time, it was felt that making the NYSSWCC and their advisory members was now appropriate. Wright suggested sending another letter to the State Soil and Water Committee. A Motion was made by Wright, seconded by DeBlock, to send the letter. All in favor.

Wong joined the Meeting at 10:04 AM.

Wallkill Flood Project Update – The ledge projects were reviewed and permitted by the ACoE and the Department of Environmental Conservation Flood Control Department. The District placed a public notice in three newspapers. The Town of Goshen is outstanding for permits. The Pochuck Ledge Project can be started while we wait on the Goshen Project. There was a brief discussion regarding the Goshen Project and Dave Derrick's visit to the black dirt.

Sumner mentioned the possibility of looking into using another firm when it's time for construction of the projects. Discussion followed regarding what to do with the soil that is removed. Sumner stated the preferred approach is to use as much of the soil as feasible on adjacent fields but we have to have permission from the landowners. It could potentially raise the land 3-4 inches. There was additional discussion on how moving the soil will not increase or decrease the floodplain area.

RSR Mitigation Project Update – So far two sites have been identified for planting projects.

Monhagen Brook Project – The Municipal Resolution was presented to the Board for approval. Keeton made the Motion, seconded by Wright to approve the Municipal Resolution. All in favor.

Ag NPS Round 21 Proposals – There has been no response yet from a letter Sumner sent to Chairman Stein, State Soil and Water Conservation Committee, regarding the 5 point deduction on the Round 21 Wallkill proposal.

SWCD Investment Policy – The District received concurrence from the NYSSWCC that increasing the amount in the investment policy to \$250,000.00 is consistent with GML. The banks insure up to this amount.

UTV and Trailer Space Rental Update – There was additional discussion on rental rates. Jim Bergen verbally quoted \$50-\$75/month for open storage in one of his barns. Ruskiewicz mentioned that he received a call from Antoinette Reed, County Legislative Attorney, stating that this may be a violation of County Ethics Law and that she has been receiving calls/complaints. Ruskiewicz read the section on the Ethics Law. An employee is not supposed to gain an ongoing additional benefit to their job. It was brought up that this needs an opinion from the Board of Ethics. Rental Space for the UTV and trailer have already been voted on twice by the Board. Keeton recommended that we take it to the County and show them what our savings would be if housed at Sumner's. DeBlock offered to write up a draft letter to the County Board of Ethics and send it to the other Directors for review, including with it the written quotes and state in the letter that the hours of the machine will be logged. Keeton stated that the monitoring of the machine will begin after the 25 hour break-in time. A Motion was made by Ruskiewicz, seconded by Keeton, to have DeBlock write up the letter and send it to the Directors for review. All in favor.

NEW BUSINESS

The District is going to be audited by the NYS Comptroller's Office. It was mentioned that we already get audited annually by a firm that audits the County of Orange and other contract agencies.

There was discussion regarding the procedures for sending out the Draft Board Minutes. The Directors would like a "draft" watermark be added on all pages. They also would like the Minutes that are approved at a Meeting to be up on the District's website within five business days. A Motion was made by Wright, seconded by Keeton, to only distribute the Draft Minutes to attending agencies. All in favor.

The Board discussed whether or not to send a representative from the District to the Organic NY Event on June 2nd. It's from 5:00 PM – 8:00 PM. Meyer offered to attend.

The NEXT MEETING is scheduled for Monday, June 15, 2015 at 9:00 AM.

The MEETING was adjourned at 11:43 AM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Wright. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroodt
Secretary to the Board