

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
May 17, 2022

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:01 AM. Directors J. Wright, P. Ruszkiewicz and P. DeBlock were present along with B. Luskin (NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets), E. Schellenberg (CCE) and K. Sumner, T. Ferry and C. DeGroodt (SWCD).

2022-5-1 DeBlock made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, to approve April's Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS – Some bills were paid and are listed on Bills for Board Approval.

CORRESPONDENCE

- The bank statements and collateral agreements were available for review.
- Ben Luskin, NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC), sent us a written report of general updates on NYS SWCC activities.
- Copies of letters sent to the Floodplain Bench Phase 4 landowners to give them preliminary notice of how much of their land would be used by the project were available for review.
- Sumner provided a support letter to the Town of Goshen, for a NYSEDA grant called the Stretch to Zero Carbon Program that they are applying for.
- Kate Schmidt, OCPD, asked the District to provide a support letter for the Community Preservation Act. Sumner asked the Board what their consensus is on the District weighing in on this Community Preservation Act issue. Schmidt told Sumner that she had spoken to Ruszkiewicz who reported to her that the Legislature supported it a few years ago and they weren't planning on repeating that action. Schmidt may have misunderstood as Ruszkiewicz thought the Legislature would support it. Discussion followed. The Board is in support of sending a support letter. Kate is also interested in other state level entities that the District is associated with that might support it. Sumner told her he was unsure if our State Committee would take a position, but he provided her with contact information for both the State Committee and the NY Association of Conservation Districts.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

There was a brief discussion on the District's Fund Summary balance. We are waiting to receive some payments.

There was discussion about the District's new 2022 no-till seeder. \$6,000 from 2022 Conservation Project Part B and money received from the Ag & Farmland Protection Board from their last year's budget will be used towards offsetting the cost of the seeder.

2022-5-2 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to file April's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

2022-5-3 DeBlock made the Motion, Ruskiewicz seconded, to accept the Bills to be Paid. All in favor.

GRANT REPORT UPDATE – The Grant Report is updated monthly to reflect changes. The May Report was reviewed by the Directors. RD 17 AEM Tier 4 projects were included on the report.

The Climate Resilient Farming Grant Round 5 – Wallkill Floodplain Bench Phase 4 - had preparation, design and permitting activity. All of the state money for this grant is for construction costs and it runs through June 30, 2024.

STAFF REPORTS

Written staff reports were emailed to Board Members prior to the Meeting for review.

C. DeGroodt (SWCD) – DeGroodt had nothing to add to her report, which was emailed prior to the meeting.

T. Ferry (SWCD) – Ferry had nothing to add to his report, which was emailed prior to the meeting.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

E. Schellenberg (CCE) – Sumner is teaching and CCE is sponsoring a 4-Hour Contractor's Erosion and Sediment Control Training on Thursday, July 14th. He will forward a list of sign-ups to Sumner.

P. DeBlock (FSA) – FSA is searching for a full-time temporary program technician which could become permanent.

B. Luskin (NYS Ag & Markets) – **SFY 2022-2023 Environmental Protection Fund Update:** The budget passed with an increase of \$100 million over the last fiscal year. The budget includes increases for Ag Nonpoint Source projects and a \$12 million dollar increase to the Climate Resilient Farming Program. The state aid to districts was increased by \$3.5 million dollars and will go towards our Performance Measures Part C. Next year it will be \$240,000 between Parts A, B and C.

The EBM Program funding has \$22.5 million available.

The May State Committee meeting was cancelled. The next one is in June.

The last day to submit a Climate Reserve Farming (CRF) Round 6 application is today. Orange County already submitted one.

AEM Leopold Conservation Award 2022: The AEM Leopold Conservation Award recognizes landowners who inspire others with their dedication to ethical land, water, and wildlife habitat management on agricultural land. The winning farm will receive \$10,000 and the nominating District will receive \$1,000 from the Sand County Foundation along with having a high quality professionally produced video featuring the farm's conservation story.

81 applications for Ag Non-point Source Round 28 Grant were received this year.

(B. Cheney joined the Meeting at 9:20 AM)

Sumner asked Luskin if Ag NPS and CRF proposals will be released annually. Luskin said that they anticipate tentatively releasing them every year in December. Sumner asked Luskin if he knew how many CRF applications were received this round. Luskin was unsure but will probably know within a few days.

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

K. Sumner (SWCD) – Office Procedures – The Farm Service Agency got an update on Friday regarding procedures. They are back to a mask policy and keeping office doors locked.

AEM Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects) – Tier 4 projects were submitted to the NYS SWCC and we are waiting for review/approval for the 5 farms included in it.

The District is waiting on a contract and advance payment for Round 17. Ben said hard copy contracts started going out in the mail last week.

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project – A time extension to the end of 2023 was approved, but the project managers would like to get all of the projects completed by the end of this year. Two construction projects are pending as well as ‘after’ Comprehensive Assessments of Soil Health (CASH) for all six participants that are now planned for fall, 2022.

There was a video shoot and farmer interview on 5/3 at the Keith Stewart farm. The video and interview are to be part of a Project webinar scheduled for the fall, 2022. Scenic Hudson was a partner in the project and the lead on the outreach work. They were able to film Keith building the first compost batch that’s going to get finished by the system that was installed there. They had a drone that was able to get footage of Keith covering the pipes.

(G. Constable joined the Meeting at 9:29 AM)

FLOOD CONTROL PROJECTS

Floodplain Bench Phase 4 (CRF 5) – The District received preliminary design plans from Barton & Loguidice (B&L). Sumner is meeting at the site tomorrow with the New York State DEC. Sumner passed around the project overview. Using the B&L preliminary plan, Sumner undertook map work to estimate acreage expected to be impacted by the project per parcel. Letters with maps were sent to affected landowners. Actual Bench footprint is estimated to cover approximately 18 acres. We have to figure out how to handle compensating the landowners. The area expected to need Conservation Easement coverage is 26 acres. 18 of these acres are already within the existing Federal Flood Control project area.

Phase 3, Area 2 - The final part of the initial three phases is scheduled to start in June. A signed License Agreement was received from the landowner as well as Landowner-Contractor and SWCD-Landowner contracts.

Phase 3, Area 1 – Sumner completed field work for tree survival inventory on 5/12. Many trees had flood debris accumulated around their trunks/stems, some were tipped over or even snapped off. But most tolerated the flooding. Sumner said the overall survival looks good so far. The two gallon trees had an approximate 65-70% survival rate, while the 2 inch caliper trees had a 80 to 85% survival (survival goes down on smaller size trees). Sumner is considering proposing a shift towards the bigger trees in the Phase 4 permit/planting plan.

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program Expansion – The County Surveyor, Tom Barry, is progressing with the easement maps and descriptions. We are waiting for the updated title searches.

(E. Schellenberg left the meeting at 9:40 AM)

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD MAY 2022 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Legoland – Sumner is meeting with the Orange County Land Trust later this week to discuss land preservation projects they have in the Moodna Watershed. Sumner said he will come back to the Board with whatever recommendation they have.

Chester Ag Center/Pumping Plant –Sumner had a field visit with Lucinda, Executive Director at the Chester Ag Center, and a few growers and they discussed the idea of starting a Master Drainage Plan for the area. Sumner suggested to them that we hold off on pursuing grant funding through Soil and Water for updating the pumping plants until we know what is going on with the County Department of Public Work's applications for this work. One of the first things to do for a potential master drainage plan is to pursue developing a detailed topographic survey of the whole area. The 2' LIDAR data from the County does not have the necessary resolution on a flat area like that. Sumner suggested to the CAC folks that they solicit proposals for doing a 0.5' contour survey of the entire Chester Muck area. Sumner assumes a Climate Resilient Farming application could be developed to design and implement a master drainage plan would meet CRF eligibility requirements.

Climate Resilient Farming Round 6 (CRF) – The Soil Health Tract Proposal was submitted 5/6/22.

IIJA – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – The District received an email from the NRCS State Office indicating that the 'PIFR' (initial study) was approved for funding.

Cornell Pesticide Study – SWCD is continuing to assist Cornell Project staff and provided them with landowner contacts.

Farm Tires – The Town of Crawford landowner contacted Sumner again to inquire about assistance in removing tires from his farm. Discussion followed. This was Tabled until next month.

Cheney requested to discuss Cromline Creek. He looked up the programs that are part of the CFA that is coming out and there is up to \$5.8 million dollars available through a program from the NYS Department of Ag & Markets called the NYS Grown and Certified Infrastructure Technology Research and Development Grant Program. He asked if we were familiar with it and if it would have a fit for the pumping plant replacement. Sumner referred him to Luskin and Luskin said he will look into this. He's not sure if this kind of project would be eligible unless they opened it up to a broader range of practices. Cheney briefed the group on other funding opportunities County DPW is looking at for the pumping plant update.

Pulaski Highway Culverts – Sumner requested that the two Board Legislators follow up with the Orange County Department of Public Works (OCDPW). It might be held up at the OCDPW or the OC Law Department.

The Orange County SWCD 2023 Budget Packet has to be submitted to the County Budget Department in July. A draft will be presented at next month's Board Meeting. Discussion followed regarding a cost-of-living (COL) increase. Directors agreed in concept to a 3% or similar COL increase. A proposed Salary Table adjustment will be presented to the Board at the June meeting for formal action.

All three of the District's seeders are out in use. Sumner suggested keeping all three for this planting season. If we are successful in obtaining another new seeder we will sell an old one.

NEXT MEETING DATE - The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, June 20, 2022 at 9:00 AM.**

ADJOURNMENT

2022-5-4 The Meeting was Adjourned at 10:10 AM on a Motion by Ruszkiewicz, seconded by DeBlock. All in favor.

ORANGE COUNTY SWCD MAY 2022 BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Minutes Prepared By:

Christine DeGroodt, Secretary to the Board

C. DeGroodt

Board Meeting Activities April 16, 2022 – May 13, 2022

- We have \$503 cash awards on the rewards credit cards.
- I never heard back from the Warwick class that wanted to attend the Envirothon.
- Assisted with 4-Hour Erosion & Sediment Control Training paperwork.
- I have begun work on the 2023 proposed budget.

TF May 2022 Board Meeting Activity Summary

- Received new Great Plains No-till drill. 5.1ac seeded at O'Dell farm.
- All 3 seeders are currently out
- Corn planters are finally both up and running, both are out currently.
 - Had an issue with a user on the Old planter, we replaced the fertilizer augers last year with high rate, which only goes down to 150lbs/ac. Due to fertilizer costs and manure utilization, user was looking to get down to 100lbs/ac. Provided user with old worn augers that should feed at a lower rate.
- Finished up the Wallkill inspection with DEC, added a few more items to note.
 - Still awaiting contractor to remove large tree at Pine Island Turf Nursery as water levels are still high depending on rain.
- Working on some AEM plans
- Submitted CRF grant proposal.

Report to Board KMS

May, 2022

AEM/AEM Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects)

Tier 4 Projects/budgets submitted to NYSSWCC, waiting for review/'approval'.

Ewanciw

Van Aken

Dean Ford

Kocot

DeStafeno

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project [contract extended to 2023]

Two construction projects are pending, as well as 'after' Comprehensive Assessments of Soil Health (CASH) for all six participants that are now planned for fall, 2022.

Video shoot and farmer interview 5/3 at Keith Stewart farm, building first compost batch. Video and interview to be part of Project webinar scheduled for fall, 2022.

Floodplain Bench

Phase 4 (CRF 5)

Received preliminary Design Plan from B&L. Contacted DEC to request 'pre-application' meeting. Site meeting tentatively scheduled for 5/17.

Using B&L preliminary plan, I undertook map work to estimate acreage expected to be impacted by the Project per parcel. Letters with maps were sent to affected landowners. Actual Bench footprint estimated to cover 18 acres. Area expected to need Conservation Easement coverage is 26 acres. 18 of these acres are already within the existing Federal Flood Control project area.

Phase 3, Area 1

Completed field work for tree survival inventory 5/12. Many trees had flood debris accumulated around their trunks/stems, some were tipped over or even snapped off. But most tolerated the damage so far. Overall survival is good so far, but years 2 and 3 usually show poor results for 2 gallon stock (while larger 2" caliper plantings fare much better).

Phase 3, Area 2

Anticipated start date – June. SWCD-Landowner contract and Landowner-Contractor contract both signed. Access License received from Davandjer Farms.

Other Flood Mitigation

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – County Surveyor Tom Barry is progressing with the needed easement maps and descriptions. Title search work was predicted to be completed week of 5/9.

Round 27 ANPSACP

Progressing draft project designs/construction plans. Many projects on hold due to materials costs, and also due to wait for engineering review/assistance.

Other

Legoland EBP – Nothing new to report. Meeting with OCLT scheduled for 5/19 to discuss land preservation projects they have in the pipeline in Moodna Watershed.

Pulaski Culverts – nothing new to report since last month

Chester Ag Center/Pump Plant – ‘master drainage plan’ to follow pump plant upgrade?

Grant Proposals

Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) – Soil Health Track proposal submitted 5/6.

AgNPS Round 28 – No submittal planned.

IJA – Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act – Received email from NRCS State Office indicating the ‘PIFR’ (initial study) funding was approved.

Cornell Pesticide Study

Continuing to assist Cornell Project staff with landowner contacts.

Farm Tires

Crawford landowner called again inquiring about what assistance was available.

Presented 4-hr Erosion and Sediment Control course to BOCES Heavy Equipment class 5/11 and 12. Scheduled to present it in open session on July 14 at 4H park.

Assist Greenville landowner with PDR process.

Forino wetland compliance issue, mediation

Several calls with RS from CE office – fill violations

Querner NYS wetlands visit – interpretations of restrictions

Monhagen Brook landowner – garbage in stream

Cornwall slope – OCDPW study