

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
December 15, 2014

The Meeting was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:12 AM. Directors J. Wright, G. Keeton and P. DeBlock were present, along with K. Sumner, C. DeGroot and K. Brown (OCSWCD), J. Heller (NRCS) and R. Baglia (CCE).

DeBlock made the Motion, seconded by Wright, to approve November's Board Meeting **MINUTES** as written. All in favor.

CORRESPONDENCE

Two Notices of Incomplete Applications were received from the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation regarding the Celery Avenue Rock Ledge and the Pochuck Creek Rock Ledge. The Notices state that the District needs to submit copies of the Flood Control Land Use Permits issued by the NYSDEC Division of Water, Bureau of Flood Protection and Dam Safety. These Notices were passed around for Director review.

P. Ruskiewicz and S. Wong joined the Meeting at 9:14 AM.

The District received a letter from Michael Schiavone, Wildlife Biologist for NYS DEC, stating they are looking for landowners to assist with a large-scale study of wild turkey movements in New York.

Various newsletters were passed around for review.

The 2014 edition of The Soil & Water Connection: A Watershed Manager's Guide to Organics produced by the U.S. Composting Council Research and Education Foundation was passed around for review.

The December Ag and Farmland Protection Board Meeting Agenda and Draft November Meeting Minutes were passed around. The next meeting is on Wednesday, December 17th.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Sumner noted that the District's unobligated funds are higher than normal this time of year and suggested that we add this as an Agenda item to be discussed at January's Board Meeting. DeBlock made the Motion to approve the November Financial Report, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

The Grant Report for November was reviewed by the Board.

Sumner mentioned there are quite a few black dirt farmers that are signed up for Ditch Bank Seeding and Cover Crop in our Ag NPS Grants but there is not alot of activity on these practices. Options need to be discussed as to how this will be addressed in the future, whether it be not including these practices in future grant proposals, canceling them out of current grants or possibly having growers hire out if they don't have the time to complete these practices. Letters were sent out to Ag NPS Round 17 participants asking whether or not they are still interested in completing practices they signed up to do.

A few additional bills were added to the Bills to Be Paid for December. R. Stap's bill for his barnyard practice for \$6,500.00, Brown's CCA Certification Renewal for \$80.00, B&L for \$6,221.00 for work on the Wallkill Flood Project and a receipt for a diner tab for the Flood Project for \$18.86. A brief discussion followed regarding B&L bills.

A Motion was made by DeBlock, seconded by Keeton to approve payment of the bills with the additions. All in favor.

STAFF REPORTS

C. DeGrootd (SWCD) – DeGrootd worked on the Monhagen Project participation letters and sent them out.

Additional plants for the Newburgh Rain Garden were ordered.

DeGrootd has been working on the Soil Group Worksheets as they come in.

Wallkill Flood Project and Pellet Project reimbursement requests were sent out.

DeGrootd worked on the paperwork required to obtain the UTV and trailer.

K. Brown (SWCD) - Brown has been working on the UTV and trailer purchase.

She has been working on obtaining letters to the politicians from the landowners for the Wallkill Flood Project.

On December 3rd Brown attended a pre-application meeting at the NYS DEC.

On November 18th Brown attended a Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC) meeting with Sumner regarding the T. Vellenga project.

On December 11-12 she attended the Conservation Districts Employees Association meeting in Syracuse.

K. Sumner (SWCD) - Sumner stated that although T. Vellenga did not attend the SWCC meeting, he felt that he and Brown's attendance at this meeting did make a difference in their decision to allow the landowner to include the roof expenses as landowner match.

Stan, a retired Civil Engineer who was hired by CCE to manage the 4-H park construction activities asked Sumner about stormwater permits. They are making some revisions and the town is telling Stan that they have to file a new permit application. Joyce called Sumner and asked if he would be interested in doing the weekly inspections. They are not looking for it to be done for free but it's complicated because that project had a consulting firm, Lanc & Tully, do the original design. Sumner suggested to Joyce that they check with D. Getz. Keeton suggested that Joyce attend our February Board Meeting to present a plan to the Board. Heller added that CCE also contacted NRCS to take a look at the plans. He brought an engineer out to the site and told CCE that if there were practices that met NRCS specifications that they could design those. NRCS's State Engineer would have to stamp the plans. A brief discussion followed.

Sumner received a call from Larry Racini who's on the Board from the Beaver Dam Lake District. Sumner had met with him four years ago regarding locations around the lake where they could do water quality lake protection projects. They now have someone in the community who is a retired educator that wants to get

involved with fundraising, etc. Sumner met with both of them recently regarding the Five Star grant which is due February 3rd. They are looking to Sumner for help with lake protection.

Wallkill Maintenance Project Update - The expansion request is in the Orange County Law Department waiting for the SEQR review process to be completed. The District was looking into doing culvert upgrade work with the 2014 Wallkill Maintenance remaining funds but at this point it's probably not going to happen.

RD 17 Time Extension Update - This grant runs out in May 2015. We are still working on the time extension paperwork.

Pellet Project Update - waiting for the last \$15,000.00 NYSERDA grant payment. A landowner in Ulster County agreed to store the equipment at his farm at no charge.

District staff had previously discussed the Tree and Shrub Program and decided to hold off on it for a year.

Sumner received a resume from someone that graduated from Binghamton. He has farm experience. Sumner is meeting with him on Christmas Eve.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

R. Baglia (CCE) – The CCE Annual Meeting was last week.

Farm Assistance on January 14 at CCE.

The 2015 Nursery and Greenhouse Growers School will be on January 27th at CCE.

J. Heller (NRCS) - They are finished with EQIP application signups. Several are organic producers.

The Agricultural Conservation Easement program was underfunded this past year.

Last year Heller wrote a Request For Proposals for Irrigation and Orange County was a recipient of \$170,000.00 initially and then received another \$170,000.00. They are again requesting funding for irrigation under Agricultural Management Assistance and this time the application will include all counties in the Hudson Valley. This application is due January 16th.

NRCS in New York State is now a regionalized team with Kathy Capella as the Team Leader.

CSP signups - This will be brought across Orange County next year. It's an enhancement to current activities you're already doing.

NRCS has been seeing Food Security Act investigations.

NRCS is now hiring for the Soil Conservationist position that is open in Middletown.

Heller attended a CCA training in upstate New York and an RC&D meeting in Westchester County.

OLD BUSINESS - Wallkill Flood Project - Sumner sent an update to the Committee and the Board last week which covered the DEC meeting. He heard it takes almost three months to receive a flood control permit but that two years can be typical. It's time to make direct personal contact with the landowners in these project areas. A brief discussion followed.

Heller left the Meeting at 11:02 AM.

RSR Grant- The District received the two checks from the Town of Wallkill for the purchase of the trailer and the UTV. Brown will work on the procurement of equipment this week.

Monhagen - The District received an award for \$47,000.00. No staff time was included in this proposal. We're currently working on the Work Plans for the NYS DEC to get the contract in place. Ed Helbig, Orange County Water Authority, is looking to do a grant proposal for the Monhagen. Sumner said that a whole watershed plan needs to be done on the Monhagen. Discussion followed on locations of the Brook.

There was a brief discussion on the District's health insurance and Draft Donation Leave Policy. Sumner suggested that if we did leave donation case by case, it would show up on our Annual Leave Summaries. No Motion made.

NEW BUSINESS - O'Connor Davies, LLP, our Auditor, wants to increase our annual fee from \$3,200.00 to \$3,500.00. A brief discussion followed. DeGroot will send an email to them requesting that they keep the rate at \$3,200.00.

At October's Board Meeting the Board requested price quotes for rebuilding one of the District's existing seeders and also a price for a new seeder. Phillip Johnson estimated a price of \$4,500-\$4,800 for a rebuild on the 7' seeder. Pine Plains quoted \$31,304 for a new 7' and \$38,541 for a 10'. Great Plains in Kansas estimated \$2,000 on parts and labor would be \$1,000-\$1,500 for a rebuild. Sumner suggested getting a price quote for a rebuild from Pine Plains and report back at the next Board Meeting. Brown stated that as of today, she has not heard back from Pine Plains regarding the rebuild.

Wong attended the Soil and Water District Law Training in Ulster County.

The Board entered into Executive Session at 11:51 AM to discuss the employment history of one or more particular employees, on a Motion by Keeton, seconded by Wong. All in favor.

The regular meeting was reconvened at 12:05 PM. On a motion by Keeton, seconded by Ruszkiewicz, the Board endorsed and accepted an employee appraisal for Sumner, dated and signed by Sumner and Wright on 12/15/14 and filed in Sumner's personnel folder.

The **NEXT MEETING** is scheduled for Monday, January 26, 2015 at 9:00 AM.

The **MEETING** was adjourned at 12:10 PM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Keeton. All in favor.

Respectfully submitted,

Christine DeGroot
Secretary to the Board