

MINUTES
ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS
November 21, 2022

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:03 AM. Directors P. DeBlock, P. Ruszkiewicz, G. Constable, B. Cheney and J. Wright were present along with K. Sumner and C. DeGroodt (SWCD).

2022-11-1 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to approve October's Board Meeting Minutes as written. All in favor.

ACTIONS TAKEN BETWEEN MEETINGS – Some bills were paid and are listed on the 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.
- Selective Insurance Company sent the District a Notice of Change in Policy Terms.
- The New York Association of Conservation Districts sent the District an update on the Stream C bills. There has been no change in the bills since May 2022. An update on the 2022 NYACD Annual meeting was also included.

There was a brief discussion on Performance Measures and whether or not the District is meeting all of the requirements. This will be included on December's Board Meeting Agenda and discussed at the next meeting.

- There was an update to the District's Shelterpoint Life Insurance Company. Effective January 1, 2023, New York's Department of Financial Services expands state-mandated NYS Paid Family Leave to include sibling coverage.
- A hard copy of the 2023 Proposed Budget Notes was available for Directors to review (also emailed to Directors prior to the Budget Hearing). The District's Budget Hearing was on October 24th. Ruszkiewicz, Cheney, Wright and DeGroodt attended the hearing.
- The District sent out an update to the parties that are part of the Wallkill River Federal Flood Control project Maintenance Agreement which included a 2022 Work Summary. So far this year, the District paid out \$18,860 to contractors and charged \$3,324 to the account for District staff time.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

2022-11-2 DeBlock made the Motion, Cheney seconded, to file October's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.

DeBlock asked what the post office bill on the credit card statement was for. DeGroodt explained that the District buys stamps only a few times a year. DeBlock also asked what was purchased at Staples, DeGroodt said it was an ink cartridge for one of the printers.

BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL

2022-11-3 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to pay the bills as presented. All in favor.

GRANT REPORT UPDATE – The Board reviewed the monthly Grant Report. The Grant Report is updated monthly to reflect changes. Although there were quite a few cover crop sign-ups, some of the projects were not completed this year. It was mentioned that even if it is planted late in the season, it will grow in the spring. Discussion followed. Sumner raised the idea of a lower cost share rate for cover crops planted too late for winter protection but still providing other soil health benefits.

The Carbon Farming Grant - The contract end date is the end of April 2023 but projects should be completed by the end of this year.

A Livestock Heavy Use Area Runoff Management System has been completed on the Brady farm and is in progress on the O'Dell farm. The Dean Ford Stream and Corridor and Shoreline Management System is planned to start by the end of this month or the beginning of December.

INTERAGENCY REPORTS

P. DeBlock (FSA) – There are several new programs coming out. Producers who are eligible have until December 16th to contact the FSA regarding the Emergency Relief Program (ERP) Phase 1. Phase 2 will be based on revenue lost for years 20/21.

There was discussion regarding using the District's Reward Credit Card accumulated points to pay for pizza if an Open House for producers/DeBlock's retirement is held jointly with the Farm Service Agency sometime in January. It's a great way for producers to learn about the new programs and have a chance to say goodbye to DeBlock. Sumner noted that the Natural Resources Conservation Service will be notified. The Board is in favor of this.

STAFF REPORTS

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

C. DeGroodt (SWCD) – DeGroodt emailed her staff report prior to the meeting.

K. Sumner (SWCD) – See "Old and New Business".

OLD & NEW BUSINESS

Sumner is hopeful that a District Technician will be hired sometime before spring.

AEM Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects) – The O'Dell project is under construction. The Dean Ford project is expected to begin late November. DeStafeno project is on hold due to the participant's concern over material costs.

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project – All Soil Health tests have been completed and we are awaiting two construction projects.

Flood Plain Bench Phase 4 – The NYS DEC has been reviewing the JAP. We still need to secure a Landowner Access License for J. Bastek. The Floodplain Permit was received from Warwick, we are still waiting on Minisink.

Flood Plain Bench Phase 3, Area 2 – The bulk excavation is complete. The herbaceous seeding of the bench was completed, all of the trees have been planted and the crossing has been removed. Stockpiled soil is still being exported off-site. Sumner mentioned that when he spoke to the NYS DEC about approval for leaving the hardened crossing, he also told them that the bridge deck is in bad shape and asked them if there was any way they could come up with some money to replace the deck boards. While the DEC was there looking at the crossing, they looked under the bridge as well. Sumner later got an email from the DEC asking him what the capacity of the bridge was. Sumner was able to find out that the bridge has a 60-70 ton capacity. Sumner passed this information on to the DEC but has not heard back yet. Discussion followed.

Legoland EBP (\$50,000) - The NYS DEC verbally gave approval to use \$35,000.00 on a boundary survey for the Sugarloaf Mountain Project. However, they need a formal written request to issue written approval. Sumner asked Kyle from the Orange County Land Trust to prepare the request draft.

The Open Space Institute is working with West Point to install a foot bridge on the Schunneunk Trail. Cadets participating in an engineering course would do the design and installation. They would like \$15,000 to use on materials for the bridge. The check would be written to The Open Space Institute. Sumner told Simon Gruber if he can get the Moodna Coalition to endorse this project, that Sumner would bring it to our Board for approval. If Simon writes up the request and the Board had no objections, Simon can give the letter to Sumner and Sumner will submit it to the NYS DEC.

Meat Processing Facility – We were getting close to hiring a consultant to update a study that was done in 2020 for the Hudson Valley, when Mary Ann Johnson, Hudson Valley Agrobusiness Development Corp., was at the last Ag Board meeting and reported that there is a facility, called Catskill Quality Meats, opening in Sullivan County (outside of Jeffersonville) in January that will have the capacity to process fifty animals a day. The facility will do beef and pork with a connected facility that will do poultry. The Ag & Farmland Board rescinded their prior Motion to fund the study, and made a Motion to re-allocate \$10,000.00 to facilitate connecting Orange County producers and processors, with the Sullivan County facility in mind.

Sumner mentioned that the Ag & Farmland Board received a letter from Ag & Markets regarding a solar facility in the Town of Minisink on October 17th, so it did not make it in time for their October Board Meeting Agenda. Ag & Markets wanted comments by November 4th and if they did not hear anything by November 4th they would assume the Ag Board is fine with the solar facility. Sumner agreed to write to Ag & Markets expressing frustrations about that time table.

2022 Soil Health Incentive Program (SHIP) – There is ~\$29,000.00 available for Cover Crop. \$16,100 of this is already committed to producers leaving a balance of \$12,795.00. There are two new applications submitted for Board Consideration: Mike O'Dell (122 acres cover crop - \$8,450) and Mark Hoyt (17 acres cover crop - \$1,190). **2022-11-4 Wright made the Motion, seconded by DeBlock, to approve and pay for cover crop on the two new applications. All in favor.**

All three seeders are back at the O'Dell Farm. Sumner made arrangements for R. O'Dell to bring the 2006 corn planter to Pequea Planter in April for an overhaul. They will schedule to have it back to us before the end of the month.

The District incurred engineering fees in the amount of \$13,945 associated with the Compost Facility that Sumner has been working on with Barton & Loguidice. The intention is to use the plans on at least three different projects and possibly future projects. Sumner recommends paying these fees out of the District's 2021 Performance Measures Part C funding. **2022-11-5 Wright made the Motion, seconded by Ruszkiewicz, to pay \$13,945 in engineering fees**

associated with the Compost Facility design to Barton & Loguidice out of the District's 2021 Performance Measures Part C funding. All in favor.

The District's IT contract with The Computer Shop was briefly discussed. We pay them \$95/month. This contract will be discussed again at December's Board Meeting and whether or not to continue with it.

Wallkill Maintenance Expansion – The District has 13 easements in-hand that are signed/notarized, out of 19. A map was passed around. There was discussion on one parcel that the County owns.

Pulaski Culverts – Lowering 3 County culverts at the request of Black dirt farmers has been an ongoing issue for around a year now. The topic came up again recently with the new County Attorney. Sumner reminded the Directors that the last meeting on this matter left off with DPW asking the Law Department if sign-off from the downstream landowners would satisfy the concerns they expressed about lowering the culverts. That meeting was in February. It is still unclear if such action by downstream landowners would satisfy the Law Department. Based on recent discussions, it also appears that the County may not be willing to consider lowering the culverts to help the farmers because it would be of no benefit to the County.

CRF 6 - Sumner has to research the new seeder and roller crimper options. Contracts were prepared and sent to participants. The Plan of Work is due by December 1st, 2022.

2022-11-6 DeBlock made the Motion, Ruszkiewicz seconded, to go into Executive Session at 10:20 AM to discuss employee history of one of more employees. All in favor.

2020-11-7 The Board came out of Executive Session at 10:42 AM on a Motion by Cheney, seconded by DeBlock. All in favor.

It was noted that Performance Appraisals for DeGroodt and Sumner were reviewed and accepted by the Board, and signed by the Chairman. **2022-11-8 A Motion was made by Cheney, seconded by Wright, to approve bonuses, paid out of the District's 2021 Performance Measures Part C funding, to Sumner in the amount of \$1,000 and DeGroodt in the amount of \$250. All in favor.**

2022-11-9 A Motion was made by Ruszkiewicz, seconded by Constable, to approve Employee Performance Appraisals. All in favor.

NEXT MEETING DATE - The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, December 19, 2022 at 9:00 AM.**

ADJOURNMENT

2022-11-10 The Meeting was Adjourned at 10:45 AM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Cheney. All in favor.

Minutes Prepared By:

Christine DeGroodt, Secretary to the Board

Report to Board KMS

November, 2022

AEM/AEM Round 17 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects) Deadline for Completion – 12/31/2023

O'Dell project is under construction

Dean Ford – construction expected to begin late November

DeStafeno- on hold due to participant concern over materials costs

Ewanciw – Design complete, no schedule for construction

Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project [contract extended to 4/2023]

Southway Compost Facility – Final design delivered.

Still waiting on Minkus controlled drainage project.

Final Soil Health tests have been collected.

Floodplain Bench

Phase 4 (CRF 5)

DEC has been reviewing JAP. Only remaining item we need to provide is Landowner Access License for Bastek.

Received Floodplain Permit from Warwick. Still waiting on Minisink.

Phase 3, Area 2

Bulk excavation complete.

Herbaceous seeding completed. Tree planting completed.

Stockpiled soil still being exported off-site.

County completed 'as-built' survey. Excavation quantity by truck count and by survey/geometry within 2%. Working on final payment calculation.

Other Flood Mitigation

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – Continuing to follow up with easement requests. Status - _____

Round 27 ANPSACP

Brady construction complete.

CRF 6 Contracts prepared and sent to participants. Work Plan due 12/1.

Other

Legoland EBP – DEC has verbally ‘OK’d’ using \$35,000 all on boundary survey for Sugarloaf Mountain project. They need a formal written request to issue written approval. I asked Kyle from OCLT to prepare request draft.

Pulaski Culverts – nothing new to report since last month

New Hire – nothing new to report

Meat Processing Facility – to be discussed at Board meeting.

2022 Soil Health Incentive Program (SHIP) Two new applications for Board consideration:

Mike O’Dell – 122 acres cover crop	\$8450
Mark Hoyt/Hoyt Farms – 17 acres	<u>\$1,190</u>
	\$9,640

2022 SHIP Funding Allocation	\$28,895
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Amount already committed	\$16,100
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Available balance	\$12,795
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All three seeders back at O’Dell’s.

Made arrangements to send the 2006 Corn Planter to Pequea Planter in April, 2023. They will schedule to have it back to us before the end of the month.

We have incurred engineering fees of \$13,945 associated with the Compost Facility I have been working on with B&L. Although these fees ended up being a bit more than I hoped, our intention is to use the plans on at least three different projects, and possibly on additional future projects. While we have modest engineering budgets for the projects, I suggest we draw these fees out of our Part C fund. This will give us more ability to cover any additional engineering fees or other cost over-runs on the projects.

I would like to complete the 2022 Employee Appraisal process at the Board meeting.

C. DeGroodt

Board Meeting Activities October 15, 2022 – November 18, 2022

- We have \$589 cash awards on the rewards credit cards.
- **AEM Round 17** - Worked on the AEM Round 17 paperwork. Submitted a 90% advance request for two participants.
- Submitted the District's 2023 Annual Plan of Work and the 2023 Part B Conservation Project request.
- Attended the District's budget hearing with Chairman Wright.
- Listened in on the Round 6 Climate Resilient Farming Program and Round 28 Agricultural Nonpoint Source Program webinar on November 2nd.
- Calls have been coming in for Soil Group Worksheets.
- Updated the spreadsheet that keeps track of who sent back surveys for livestock processing plant.
- Work on **Ag NPS Round 27** paperwork. Receiving back signed contracts. Claim for payment submitted for 25% advance and 65% for four projects.
- **Carbon Farming Project** - Soil samples mailed in to the lab.
- **CRF 6** – Working on the CRF 6 Plan of Work. Contracts sent out for signatures.
- **District's SHIP Program** – BMP Payment documentation prepared for some of the participants.
- **MISC/MONTHLY**: Payroll, taxes, mail, phones, walk-ins, office supplies ordered, type minutes/board meeting documents/financials, pay bills, computer backup, bank deposits, etc.