

**MINUTES**  
**ORANGE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**  
**October 18, 2021**

The **MEETING** was **CALLED TO ORDER** by the Chairman at 9:06 AM. Directors G. Constable, J. Wright, P. DeBlock and P. Ruszkiewicz along with K. Sumner, T. Ferry and C. DeGroodt (SWCD), B. Luskin (NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets) and B. Diehl (NRCS) joined remotely.

**2021-10-1 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to approve September'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.
- The District received an NACD Membership Request. Discussion followed. No action taken.

**FINANCIAL REPORTS** – There was nothing new to report.

**2021-10-2 Ruszkiewicz made the Motion, Constable seconded, to file September's Financial Reports for audit review. All in favor.**

Ruszkiewicz asked Sumner if the SWCD received the support letter for the Wallkill Maintenance Expansion from the County Executive's office. Sumner stated that it was received.

(K. Stegenga joined the Meeting at 9:15 AM)

**BILLS FOR BOARD APPROVAL** - Sumner noted that we are receiving assistance from Barton & Loguidice for projects other than the flood mitigation work, so when we receive their monthly billing it's itemized by project. The fee for reviewing the pond designs for Callisto Vineyards will be billed to the landowner. The Stewart Compost Facility project budget (that's under the Carbon Farming Project) includes money for engineering fees.

The Van Aken barnyard project was active this month. Since there were some large payments to contractors, to assist the farmer we had him sign an Assignment of Payment form so that even though the contractors were hired by Van Aken, we made direct payment to them.

**2021-10-3 Wright made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to accept the Bills to be Paid. All in favor.**

**GRANT REPORT UPDATE** – The Grant Update Report is updated monthly to reflect changes.

**STAFF REPORTS**

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

**C. DeGroodt (SWCD)** – DeGroodt’s staff report was attached to the Draft Minutes.

**T. Ferry (SWCD)** – Ferry’s staff report was attached to the Draft Minutes. Ferry spoke with R. O’Dell this morning regarding the broken seeder. Ron was able to repair it over the weekend and it’s back up and running.

## **INTERAGENCY REPORTS**

**NRCS** – Brittany Diehl introduced herself to the Board. She was hired approximately a month ago and has the position of Soil Conservationist.

**B. Luskin (NYS Dept. of Ag & Markets)** – November 1<sup>st</sup> is the deadline for the Annual Plan of Work, the Part B request and the AEM Action plan.

Ag NPS RD 27 awards should be announced tomorrow. He hopes to give results to Sumner tomorrow after the State Committee meeting.

They have been working on updates to Ag NPS Round 28 RFP and the CRF RFP, which should go out sometime in December. Their plan is to release both at the same time.

Luskin has been doing close-outs and looking at projects and he will schedule a day to look at the Orange County projects.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

**K. Sumner (SWCD) – Office Procedures** – USDA is continuing a mandatory face mask policy and are not allowing any meetings at the USDA facilities. No enhanced security measures installed yet at the building. SWCD is still parking the trucks in front of the building.

**AEM Round 16 Tier 4 Implementation Projects Update** – Projects must be completed by the end of this year. Planning, design and construction is progressing on all three projects. The Van Aken project is almost complete. Vreeland switched from a metal building to a conventional wood frame structure because the metal building is not expected to be available until next year. Sumner gave approval to Barton & Loguidice to prepare a timber roof design.

**Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project Update (CFP)** – This project is moving forward. Sumner is anticipating that the contract end date of 2022 is expected to be extended for another year.

**Roller Crimper Update** – At last month’s Board Meeting there was discussion on securing a roller-crimper, using CFP funds, that could be lent out to farmers to facilitate no-till/reduced spray cropping systems field-level research. Sumner had researched costs and vendors. Discussion followed. No action taken.

**Flood Plain Bench Phase 4 Update** –Sumner said we are waiting on a design and construction plan from Barton & Loguidice.

**Phase 3, Area 1** - We are still planning on planting smaller trees (#2 containers) on the bench sometime in November.

**Phase 3, Area 2** – Nothing new to report. The District is hoping for 2022 construction.

Wright asked DeBlock if she knew what the losses due to flooding were this year. DeBlock was not sure of a monetary amount but said they had over a dozen producers report crop loss due to Ida. They do have a Disaster Declaration due to Ida. Stegenga asked if the District has any forms or anything that can be shared as she has farms in her district. Ruskiewicz said he doesn't think there are any forms, but said the farmers would have to contact the Farm Service Agency to see what is available. DeBlock said that if a producer doesn't have the NAP coverage or insurance from FSA, they may not be able to assist. Ruskiewicz said that the federal government would have to appropriate some kind of disaster payment. Sumner mentioned that if anyone had physical damage to their land from Ida that constitutes some kind of erosion or water quality issue, the District may have programs that could assist. Sumner mentioned to Stegenga that if she was aware of any landowner with these issues to have them call the District and we could let them know of any opportunities we are aware of. Wright suggested to Stegenga to tell people to document everything and include photos.

**Ag NPS Round 27** – Our proposal was submitted and we are waiting for results to be announced tomorrow.

**Round 17 AEM Action Plan** – will be presented to the Board for approval today. We do not have to specify yet which projects the money will be used on.

**Legoland Update** – The District has not yet received the \$50,000.00 check from Legoland. We will follow up in a few weeks if we have still not received it.

**Pellet's Island Reach Maintenance Program** – It's moving forward at a steady pace. Letters were sent out last week to all of the affected landowners. We've made good progress and the County Surveyor has provided assistance that would have cost the District a lot of money if we had to hire a private sector surveyor. We have support letters already from Warwick, Wawayanda and the County of Orange. It has been brought to the attention of the Town of Minisink and they said they would discuss it. The District did not receive support from the Town of Goshen.

**Pulaski Highway Culverts** – Barton & Loguidice (B&L) was selected as the engineering firm to do the field study analysis. They were willing to allow the District to provide some field survey data to them. Sumner collected this information in the field with assistance from the County DPW and this was provided to B&L.

**Callisto Vineyards Ponds** – the ponds are almost complete.

**Masker Orchard** – The District is assisting them in trying to find out if they needed a permit to install a new driveway exit that potentially involves a regulated stream. It's been two months and we are still waiting for a reply to whether or not they need a permit.

**Soil Health Incentive Program** – Last month the Director's approved allocating some of our Performance Measures Part C money to support this program. We have some signed contracts in hand. Some cover crop has been completed and there is more in progress.

**No-Till Equipment Update** – Three proposals for the purchase of a new no till drill were received from three NYS Great Plains dealers and reviewed with the Directors. Directors were in support of purchasing a seeder and tying it into our new Soil Health Incentive Program. Discussion followed.

**2021-10-4 Stegenga made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to purchase a 7 foot, Great Plains drill with seed and small seed boxes from Salem Farm Supply in the amount of \$26,640.00. All in favor.**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

**2021-10-5 Wright made the Motion, DeBlock seconded, to approve the District's 2022 Annual Plan of Work. All in favor.**

**2021-10-6 Ruskiewicz made the Motion, Constable seconded, to approve the District's 2022 Conservation Project Financial Assistance Request Part B in the amount of \$6,000.00, titled "Soil Health Improvement and Equipment Services for Farmers" to assist with the seeder purchase. All in favor.**

**AEM Round 17 Action Plan** – Ferry stated that because he is now a Certified Crop Advisor, the District can choose Option C in the Plan and request \$180,000.00 over two years. **2021-10-7 Stegenga made the Motion, Ruskiewicz seconded, to approve the AEM Round 17 Action Plan for submittal. All in favor.**

**NEXT MEETING DATE** - The next **MEETING** is scheduled for **Monday, November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2021 at 9:00 AM.**

## **ADJOURNMENT**

**2021-10-8 The meeting was Adjourned at 10:11 AM on a Motion by DeBlock, seconded by Ruskiewicz. All in favor.**

Minutes Prepared By:

Christine DeGroodt, Secretary to the Board

Report to Board KMS

October, 2021

**Office Procedures** – Nothing new to report on office procedures. No evidence of any enhanced security measures yet.

**AEM/AEM Round 16 Tier 4 (Implementation Projects) [Must be completed by 12/31/21]**

Planning, design and construction progressing on all three projects.

Browne completed installation of roof gutter project component. A fencing practice is still expected to be completed and certified before the project is totally closed out.

Vreeland – metal building installers say they won't get there until next year. Funding would be expired. I gave B&L the go-ahead to prepared timber roof design. Vreeland plans to build it himself. He is anxious to start, but I have stressed he needs to wait for the design and we need to follow it closely.

Van Aken project is mostly complete. Waiting for all final bills.

**Hudson Valley Carbon Farming Project [contract ends 4/30/2022]**

Keith Stewart – Construction in progress.

Matthew Southway – on waiting list for engineer assistance. Continuing to do research on facility design, including Aerated Static Pile aspects. Draft plans that include active aeration have been shared with landowner. He wants to include the aeration capability.

Minkus Controlled Drainage – Waiting on landowner .

Roller-crimper discussion to continue at October meeting.

Videographer hired by Project managers visited Smiley farm on 10/14.

**Floodplain Bench Phase 4**

Nothing new to report on P4. Still waiting on B&L for design/construction plan.

**Phase 3, Area 1**

Planting of #2 containers planned for November.

**Phase 3, Area 2**

Nothing new, still hoping for 2022 construction with DASNY funds.

**Other Flood Mitigation**

**Round 27 ANPSACP**

Submitted, awaiting results. Not on the agenda for October State Committee meeting.

**Other**

Legoland EBP – Still waiting for \$50,000 check from LLNY.

Pellets Island Reach Maintenance Program – Working with Hoyt to advance this project. Letter sent out to landowners. Continuing to discuss services from County Surveyor to reduce Project expenses.

Pulaski Culverts – Collected field information for B&L with assistance from County DPW.

Callisto Vineyards ponds mostly complete.

Masker Orchards - Still waiting for reply to permit inquiry sent on 8/27.

Some signed contracts for Soil Health Incentive Program received, some cover cropping completed, more in progress.

Discuss/approve APW.

### **No\_till Equipment Rental Program**

Three proposals received from three NYS Great Plains dealers. Review proposals at Board meeting.

## TF October Board Meeting Activity Summary

- Spent probably close to 12 hours total with Ron tearing apart the old seeder and putting it back together.
  - Seeder then went out to a farm in Walden and seeded 6.5ac without any issues.
  - Currently at a farm in Pine Bush, they haven't had any issues either.
- New seeder broke a spring bar and closing wheel arm. Need 2 parts for Ron to complete the repair. Both of these pieces had been welded before.
- Spent time at Smiley farm with a videographer for the Carbon Farming project.
- Helped Kevin with Van Aken Barnyard project.
- Round 17 AEM information has been released, Annual Action Plan is due November 1<sup>st</sup>
  - Currently working on a 1<sup>st</sup> draft of the AAP
- Been working on preparing to certify cover crop for both our local soil health program and the Carbon Farming project.
- Attended the Conservation Skills workshop a few weeks ago. It was good to have an in-person training. Took a couple of classes that provided CCA continuing education credits.
- Been receiving a few soil group worksheet requests lately.

**C. DeGroodt**

**Board Meeting Activities September 17, 2021 – October 15, 2021**

- We currently have \$472 cash awards on the rewards credit cards.
- Submitted reimbursement request for the Walkkill Maintenance Project.
- Updates to the District website.
- Assisted with sending out landowner letters/maps for the Walkkill Maintenance Expansion.
- Organizing project files.