



Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

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www.cortlandswcd.org

SWCD...established to promote the conservation and wise use of our county's natural resources

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Tuesday, July 11, 2023

ATTENDING:

Eugene Wright - Excused	Linda Jones, Director
James Murphy, Treasurer	Beau Harbin, Director
Tracey Evanick, Vice Chair	Emily Olsenwik - Excused
Amanda Barber, Manager	Stacy Russell, Natural Resource Specialist
Melissa Rutter, Fiscal Officer	

A. MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER by Vice Chair Evanick- 1:15 p.m.

B. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Motion by Murphy to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on June 13, 2023 as written. Seconded and carried 4-0.

C. FINANCIAL REPORTS: Including income and expenses for June. Presented for payment Abstract 6-23 for Vouchers 128-23 to 144-23.

Motion by Murphy to accept the June 2023 financial reports and approve the payment of bills presented on Abstract 6-23 in the amount of \$65,319.98. Seconded and carried 4-0.

Barber submitted the YTD 6-month expense/budget comparison report to the Board and mentioned that the District is tracking well for 2023. Barber commented that the District is in the midst of 2024 budget preparations and should have a proposed 2024 budget ready for the August Board meeting. Murphy praised the Septic Tank Workshop that was held in Cortlandville – he mentioned that it was organized and the presenter did a good job with both the material and keeping the attendees engaged.

D. REPORTS:

- 1. NRCS-** No report submitted.
- 2. SWCD-** Report was presented by Barber and is appended to minutes. Barber mentioned that now that the harvester repairs are complete, the Little York Lake weed harvesting has begun and will continue this week (weather-dependent). For efficiency purposes, District employees are performing the work in pairs.
- 3. SLWAP –** No report submitted.

****Stacy Russell entered the meeting at 1:30pm****

E. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. NYACD: Annual Meeting information, packet for resolutions and award nominations. The Annual Meeting will be held Oct 24-26, 2023 in Penn Yan. At the August Board meeting, Barber would like to discuss attendance.
2. EPA – Great Lakes Restoration Initiative July 19, 2023 at the Rochester Museum and Science Center.
3. NY Soil Health – 2023 Soil Health and Climate Resiliency Field Days are June 22-September 12, 2023 at various locations throughout NYS.
4. SUNY Morrisville – Grasstravaganza 2023 will be held July 20-22, 2023.

G. OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Policy Review- BMP Cost-Share** Currently, the District requires farmers to provide a 10% match on projects. Barber has conducted informal research and discovered that other Districts allow farmers to combine funding sources to assist with BMP funding match. Barber suggests that the District consider moving to a zero-dollar farmer contribution to projects that do not create a significant benefit to the farmer or landowner, but are more of an environmental benefit. Projects like buffers and wetlands are hard to implement with our policy because while we can usually convince the landowner to donate their property for the use, they are often unwilling or unable to invest cash or labor for implementation. Often SWCD initiates or identifies the opportunity with nothing to offer the landowner, not even an increase in property value. Barber requested input from Board members prior to crafting a policy revision. Murphy is in favor of the change. Evanick stated that there should be a nominal flat fee or contribution. Jones opined that the work should not be free, that there should be some type of sweat equity or monetary funding requirement. Additionally, the change should depend on how the work would improve property – i.e., wetlands control vs. capital improvements. Jones mentioned this is a complex issue that needs to be carefully reviewed. Harbin would like more information on how the rest of the counties in NYS compare. The District may have to differentiate the types of projects for cost-sharing, as well as take into account each landowner's financial situation when reviewing cost-share.
2. **Little York Lake Management and District Administration-**
Barber stated that Kathy McGrath is gathering quotes for a Management Plan Review. The weed harvesting is going well, things are progressing nicely.
3. **Personnel/ Staffing Update-**
Barber mentioned that Kathy McGrath's last working day would be July 26. Kathy has been training Chad Hill on her projects and feels that he can handle most of the day-to-day work. Given that, Kathy has stated to Barber that she is no longer interested in working on a part-time basis, unless it is to teach an E&SC workshop or something else Chad can't do. Barber reported that there has been no progress made in the Engineer position.

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. **SLWAP 23-24 Agreement-**
Barber asked for authorization to enter into an agreement with the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP) in the amount of \$7,000 for Whole Farm Planning/Best Management Practices in the watershed from June 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024.

Motion by Murphy to authorize Barber to sign contract to enter into an agreement with the Skaneateles Lake Watershed Agricultural Program (SLWAP) in the amount of \$7,000 for Whole Farm Planning/Best Management Practices in the watershed from June 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Seconded and carried 4-0.

2. CRF Applications and Ranking - **Evanick recused herself and left the meeting at 1:49pm**

Barber reported that, of the three tracks in the RFP, only tracks two and three had any applicants. Barber explained the ranking system and recommended ranked lists were presented to the Board for discussion. The proposals are due in August, Barber is continuing discussions with landowners and the ranked list will be adjusted, as needed, if landowners withdraw.

Motion by Jones to approve ranking as presented and attached. Seconded and carried 3-0.

Motion by Jones to approve Resolution 2023-3 authorizing Barber to act on behalf of the District in all matters relating to CRF applications. Seconded and carried 3-0.

****Evanick returned to the meeting at 1:56pm****

3. USC Team Leader Contract-

Barber asked for authorization to enter into an agreement with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) in the amount of \$15,000 for USC Ag Team Leader services from September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023.

Motion by Harbin to authorize Barber to enter into an agreement with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition (USC) in the amount of \$15,000 for USC Ag Team Leader services from September 1, 2022 through August 31, 2023. Seconded and carried 4-0.

4. WQIP Applications-

Barber relayed to the Board that the Town of Freetown has requested assistance from the District to obtain a salt storage structure.

Motion by Murphy to approve Resolution 2023-4 authorizing Barber to act on behalf of the District to prepare and process paperwork for the Freetown salt storage structure. Seconded and carried 4-0.

5. Longevity and Certification Payments –

Barber requested approval to process longevity and certification payments as scheduled and budgeted.

Motion by Murphy to approve payment of longevity and certification as scheduled and budgeted. Seconded and carried 4-0.

6. Landfill Validation –

Barber requested that the Board approve the sole timely bid submittal for landfill data validation of \$950 from Baldwin.

Motion by Harbin to approve Baldwin's landfill data validation bid of \$950. Seconded and carried 4-0.

7. CD Renewal –

Barber requested that the Board approve rolling over the existing 6 month CD at Tompkins Bank, with the option of converting it to a 1 year CD if the interest rate is favorable.

Motion by Harbin to approve rolling over the existing 6 month CD at Tompkins Bank, with the option of converting it to a 1 year CD if the interest rate is favorable. Seconded and carried 4-0.

8. AEM Base Reallocation –Barber recused herself and left the meeting at 2:04pm****

Russell explained that the original Round 17 AEM Tier 4 funding consideration was given to 3 farms: Northland, Currie Valley, and Hart. Recently, Currie Valley and Hart have withdrawn from consideration, as they are not proceeding with their respective projects. Russell requested approval to revise the original plan to add the VanPatten Farm (silage leachate control project, appx \$50,000) and the Dylan Barber (runoff management project, appx \$4,457) projects for AEM Base funding.

Motion by Murphy to withdraw Hart and Currie Valley projects and add VanPatten Farm and Dylan Barber projects to the Round 17 AEM Tier 4 Cost Share Program. Seconded and carried 4-0.

Motion by Murphy to appoint Board Member Evanick as signatory on behalf of the District on all paperwork concerning the Dylan Barber Farm. Seconded and carried 4-0.

****Barber returned to the meeting at 2:10 pm****

9. 2024 Budget –

Barber distributed a preliminary draft of the 2024 expense budget, is still compiling figures for the 2024 revenue portion of the budget.

I. NEXT MEETING: August 8, 2023, 1:00 pm.

J. ADJOURNED at 2:24pm.

Eugene E. Wright, Chairman of Board