



Cortland County Soil and Water Conservation District

100 Grange Place, Room 202, Cortland, NY 13045

Phone: (607) 756-5991 • Fax: (607) 756-0029

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

Wednesday, March 22, 2023

ATTENDING:

Eugene Wright, Chairman	Linda Jones, Director (entered 1:04 p.m.)
James Murphy, Treasurer	Emily Olsenwik, Secretary
Tracey Evanick, Vice Chair	Kim Cameron, Guest (entered 1:10 p.m.)
Amanda Barber, Manager	Beau Harbin, Legislator-Excused
Melissa Rutter, Fiscal Officer	

A. MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER by Chairman Wright- 1:01 p.m.

B. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Motion by Murphy to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on February 14, 2023 as written. Seconded and carried 3-0.

C. FINANCIAL REPORTS: Including income and expenses for February. Presented for payment Abstract 2-23 for Vouchers 21-23 to 40-23.

Motion by Murphy to accept the February 2023 financial reports and approve the payment of bills presented on Abstract 2-23 in the amount of \$295,779.88. Seconded and carried 3-0.

****Linda Jones entered the meeting at 1:04****

D. PUBLIC COMMENT-PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR:

Kim Cameron attended a meeting about PFAS, PFOS and microplastics. Cameron was curious if there was a grant available to assist with the cost of testing rivers for PFAS, PFOS and microplastics to help establish a baseline.

E. REPORTS:

- 1. NRCS-** Justin's replacement has been hired, however they're still in the process to fill Tyler's position of Area Conservationist.
- 2. SWCD-** Report was presented by Barber and is appended to minutes.
- 3. SLWAP –** Report submitted and is appended to minutes.
- 4. USC-** Report submitted and is appended to minutes.
- 5. Legislative Update-** Cameron and Evanick thanked the board for allowing them to go to Albany. They reported that while there were some delayed meetings due to the snow storm, they made nine

visits. The legislators and staff that were present seemed genuinely interested in the issues brought up by the soil and water representatives.

F. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. NYACD: Letter about Legislative Days and upcoming events.
2. NYACD: Thank you note for attending Legislative Days.

G. OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Policy Review-** Minor edits regarding who should sign the code was ethics was discussed. Board members signed their copies. Rutter will make clarifications to definitions to explicitly include directors and add other representatives of the board.

MOTION by Murphy to approve amending the code of ethics policy as presented. Seconded and carried 4-0

2. Little York Lake Management and District Administration-

Weed Harvesting: Received two proposals for weed harvesting in response to the RFP; expense is on par with last year. Currently waiting on an insurance quote to finalize costs, but cooperating with the lake association to operate the weed harvester from Lake Como seems to be the most cost-effective option. There should be more information by next meeting to make a final decision.

District Administration: In the process of working with the county to access tax district funds.

3. **Investments/CDs-** Barber updated board about current state of CDs. She was able to avoid the penalty and simply agreed to the higher interest rate for the remainder of existing terms.
4. **Landfill Monitoring Update-** Three responses were received for lab services, however it was determined there was a mistake in the first RFP. All respondents were notified after consulting with the county attorney, and all resubmitted. Even though the overall cost has increased, the lab with the lowest bid has been worked with in the past. Estimated cost for lab work has increased by about \$18,000.00 to \$63,000.00. It's anticipated to get through the approval process by June.
5. **Personnel/ Staffing Update-**
 - a. **Fiscal Officer-** Melissa Rutter was introduced as the new Fiscal Officer. She introduced herself and was officially welcomed and thanked for coming aboard.
 - b. **Water Quality Symposium-** Barber informed the board that the staff spent the majority of their time out of the office last week as they were attending various forums at the Water Quality Symposium.
 - c. **Conservation Aides/Assistants-** Amanda Barber and Stacy Russell interviewed a number of candidates for the Conservation Aide and Assistant positions. Barber would like to bring back the top three to five candidates for the board to meet. Barber stated that USC is able to add additional support to us through the Ag Team Leader professional services contract to help fund a position. Second round interviews will be scheduled for March 28th beginning around 1:00 p.m. with a special meeting to approve hiring decisions.
 - d. **Personnel-** With the new fiscal officer now hired, Barber asked that Emily Olsenwik act as Secretary to the Board and be authorized to sign as Secretary. Barber will remain Assistant Treasurer as we continue through the transition back to having a Fiscal Officer.

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. USC Contract Approvals

- a. USC Susquehanna Coalition Buffer Steward Contract Approval:** Barber requested approval to enter into agreement with Tioga County SWCD and sign USC Skilled Services agreement for the technical support of establishing riparian forest buffers in the amount of \$25,000.00. Project to commence April 1, 2023 and be completed by October 31, 2023.

MOTION by Murphy approving Barber entering into agreement with Tioga County SWCD and signing USC Susquehanna Coalition IJA Implementation contract in the amount of \$25,000.00 for buffer steward tasks completed from 4/1/2023-10/31/2023. Seconded and carried 4-0.

- b. USC Upper Tioughnioga Assessment:** Barber requested approval to enter into agreement with Tioga County SWCD and sign the watershed assessment of the Upper Tioughnioga River Assessment within the Chesapeake Bay agreement. Utilizing \$80,000 the project should commence on January 1, 2022 and be completed by November 30, 2023.

MOTION by Jones approving Barber entering into agreement with Tioga County SWCD and signing the USC Upper Tioughnioga Assessment contract in the amount of \$80,000.00 for tasks completed from 1/1/2022- 11/30/2023. Seconded and carried 4-0.

- 2. AGNP 25 Chesapeake Implementation (C012167) Extension Request Approval-** The AGNP Rd 25 grant –for the Fredenburg Beef Operation HUA expired 2/20/23. Staff requested a no-cost time extension from SWCC. Board approval is also required. The extension is requested by the landowner and necessary due to the unexpected death of the applicant’s mother and the length of time it took to finalize the estate. The Hoellerer Farm also included in this proposal has withdrawn from the grant.

MOTION by Murphy to approve the request of an extension for the AGNP Rd 25 grant - Chesapeake Watershed Implementation (C012167) including the Fredenburg and Hoellerer farms until February 20, 2025, in order to allow time for the Fredenburg Farm to complete their project. Seconded and carried 4-0.

- 3. Finger Lakes Cover Crop MOU-** Barber requested approval to enter into agreement with Yates County SWCD and sign the Practices Implementation agreement to participate in the cover crop program. Through this cover cropping program, cover crops will be reimbursed at a flat rate of \$70/acre for basic cover crop and \$82/acre for multiple species cover crop. Total project funding for all counties is not to exceed \$350,500.00. Each participating county will be allocated an equal share. Project to commence March 1, 2022 and terminated by December 31, 2026.

MOTION by Murphy approving Barber enter into agreement with Yates County SWCD and sign the Practices Implementation agreement to participate in the cover crop program. Total project funding will be based on participating counties as each will receive an equal allocation of the total amount, per Yates County contract of \$350,500.00. Project to commence March 1, 2022 and terminated by December 31, 2026. Seconded and carried 4-0.

- 4. Water Festival-** Barber seeks approval for a budget of \$1,100 to use toward the annual Water Festival on June 3rd.

MOTION by Murphy to spend FLOWPA funds in an amount up to \$1,100.00 on the 2023 Water Festival expenses. Seconded and carried 4-0.

5. Hydroseeder Equipment- Barber requested approval to spend \$5,682.00 on supplies needed for the hydroseeding. VanWagenen received quotes for seed, mulch and fertilizer. Lowest estimates for each will be used and purchases are planned from two vendors.

MOTION by Jones to approve expenditure of WQIP funds in the amount of \$5,682.00 for hydroseeding materials. Seconded and carried 4-0.

6. Private Lands- Wetlands Construction-Barber brought to the Board's attention that two landowners in the Fingerlakes watershed had been working with the Upper Susquehanna Coalition on possible wetlands sites before it was determined that they were in the Fingerlakes watershed. Staff suggest we support the projects using FLOWPA funding instead of USC funding. USC is willing to do the work as SWCD representative if they can be compensated. The USC program does not require a landowner cost-share for these types of projects. Staff propose to work with landowners to maximize their inkind support through site prep and plantings, but acknowledge that it would be less than the standard 25% contribution from the landowner in our BMP cost share policy. We could perhaps reach the 10% minimum if another source of funds could be secured. Staff recommend board authorize an exemption from SWCD policy requiring minimum landowner contribution.

MOTION by Murphy to proceed with project to create a wetland on a two landowner properties working with and compensating USC for their work from FLOWPA funds, with less than the standard 25% contribution from the landowner. Seconded and defeated 2-2. Further discussion was tabled until the next meeting.

I. NEXT MEETING: April 11, 2023, 1:00 pm.

J. ADJOURNED at 2:56 pm.

Eugene E. Wright, Chairman of Board