



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

Tuesday, October 10, 2023

ATTENDING: Eugene Wright, Chair
James Murphy, Treasurer
Tracey Evanick, Vice-Chair
Amanda Barber, Manager
Melissa Rutter, Fiscal Officer
Linda Jones, Director
Beau Harbin, Director
Emily Olsenwik, Secretary
Shawn Murphy, Natural Resource Conservationist

A. MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER by Chairman Wright- 1:04 p.m.

B. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Motion by Murphy to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on September 13, 2023 as written. Seconded and carried 5-0.

C. FINANCIAL REPORTS: Including income and expenses for September. Presented for payment Abstract 9-23 for Vouchers 189-23 to 211-23.

Motion by Murphy to accept the September 2023 financial reports and approve the payment of bills presented on Abstract 9-23 in the amount of \$62,659.36. Seconded and carried 5-0.

D. REPORTS:

1. **NRCS-** None submitted.
2. **SWCD-** Report was presented by Barber and is appended to minutes.
3. **SLWAP** – Report is appended to minutes.
4. **SWCC-** Report is appended to minutes.
5. **USC-** Report is appended to minutes.

E. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. **NYACD-** Annual Meeting, Stream C Bill, NYS Envirothon.
2. **SWCC-** Ulster County Conservation Project Tour on Thursday, October 12th.
3. **SWCC-** Announcement of Round 29 grants for AGNP.
4. **USC-** Forum Announcement: *Community Engagement in our Watershed*, October 18, 2023.
5. **Schuyler County SWCD-** ESC Certificate Program Review & Exam - November 15th-17th.
6. **Stream C Bill Update**
7. **NYS Soil and Water Conservation Society-** *Save the Date!* Annual Meeting, November 9, 2023.

F. OLD BUSINESS:

1. **Health Insurance Update-** The County is looking at a new health insurance plan for retirees on medicare. Rutter has generated a letter to be distributed to retirees with an explanation of the next steps for retirees who are eligible for medicare and basics on the new proposed plan and information sessions. Barber noted that the change in plans is being challenged by retirees and there is some uncertainty if the new plan will take affect at the beginning of the year as planned.
2. **Policy Update-** Barber proposed the “Prostate and Breast Cancer Screening” language in the Human Resources Manual be changed to be more all-encompassing. Barber asked that the title be changed to simply “Cancer Screening” and the language be revised such that it is permitted with a note from the doctor and manager approval.

Barber also proposed two new holidays with pay. The day after Thanksgiving and a Christmas Eve holiday have long been holidays for county employees.

Motion by Murphy to accept the change in language in the Human Resources Manual from Prostate and Breast Cancer Screening to now read Cancer Screening and be permitted with the submission of a doctor’s note and manager approval. Seconded and carried 5-0.

Motion by Evanick to approve the addition of two holidays: the day after Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. Seconded and carried 5-0.

3. **Part B Project-** Barber reiterated that whatever project is chosen must be measurable and implementation based in order to be eligible for funding. The two ideas presented were tire recycling and upland tree planting. Concern around feasibility of tire recycling ultimately swayed the discussion in support of upland tree planting.

Motion by Murphy to approve Barber to submit Upland Tree Planting as Cortland SWCD’s Part B Project for 2024. Seconded and carried 5-0.

4. **SWCD Budget 2024-** The County Administrator’s Tentative Budget includes \$240,000 for SWCD, rather than the asked amount of \$260,857. Without the full funding amount, it may hinder the ability to hire an engineer. Barber plans to reach out to ask some individuals to speak at the public hearing on the budget on SWCD’s behalf to advocate the importance of receiving the additional funding. Barber plans to attend as well on October 26th at 6:00pm.
5. **Personnel/ Staffing Update-** Barber announced that Kollin Van Wagenen had submitted his resignation letter. Barber would like approval to hire a temporary conservation aide.

Motion by Murphy to accept Kollin Van Wagenen’s letter of resignation with regret. Seconded and carried 5-0.

Motion by Jones to permit Barber to hire a temporary conservation aide. Seconded and carried 5-0.

6. **2024 Annual Plan-** The Board received a copy of the proposed 2024 Annual Plan and Barber asked if there were any questions. Board did not have any comments.

Motion by Murphy to approve the 2024 Annual Work Plan. Seconded and carried 5-0.

7. **Little York Lake Protection and Rehabilitation District (LYLPRD) Update-** Barber contacted respondents regarding the lake management plan review to verify their understanding of the scope and to see if they would be willing to resubmit. Respondents advised re-issuing an RFP with more specific expectations regarding work product and level of effort.

Motion by Harbin to reject both bids of \$9,200 and \$25,000 and to re-issue an RFQ in an attempt to get a quote within budget. Seconded and carried 5-0.

8. **NYACD Resolutions-** Barber presented two resolutions for the board to vote on to determine how Chairman Wright will vote at the NYACD Annual Meeting.

Resolution No. 134: *Madison County SWCD Board of Directors request the NYACD work with our State elected officials to restore home rule thus allowing the local governing bodies to determine the siting of these industrial solar complexes within their legal boundaries.*

Harbin expressed concerns that local governments weren't equipped to review large projects such as these and projects would be stalled. He also felt that individual communities weren't able to review projects from a statewide perspective and look at the greater good of the whole, and that if these were left to home rule decisions the state would never meet its goals.

Motion by Murphy to have Chairman Wright to vote in favor of Resolution No. 134. Seconded and carried 4-1.

Resolution "Everyone Deserves Clean Water"- *NYS grant funding has been appropriated to the Finger Lakes region, however, non Finger Lakes waters in the watershed, such as the canal system, have remained unfunded and lack support to address aquatic invasive species.*

Motion by Harbin to have Chairman Wright support "Everyone Deserves Clean Water" Resolution. Seconded and carried 5-0.

G. NEW BUSINESS:

1. **USC Practices and Implementation Agreement-** Barber requested approval to enter into agreement with Tioga County SWCD and sign the USC Landowner Cost Share Pilot grant for the VanPatten Silage Leachate Control Project. The project will commence on August 30, 2023 and be completed by December 31, 2023 with expenses not to exceed \$14,875.00.

Motion by Murphy to authorize Barber to enter into agreement with Tioga County SWCD and sign the USC Landowner Cost Share Pilot agreement for the VanPatten Silage Leachate Control

Project in the amount of \$14,875.00 for tasks completed from 8/30/2023 - 12/31/2023. Seconded and carried 5-0.

- 2. Onondaga County MOU** – The VanPatten Farm operates land in Onondaga County and the Otisco Lake Watershed, as well as in Cortland County and the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Nutrient management on the farm protects water quality in all watersheds where the farm operates. Onondaga County has authorized funding in an amount up to \$10,000 to support the VanPatten silage leachate control project.

Motion by Harbin to authorize signature of MOU with Onondaga County for additional assistance of up to \$10,000 for the VanPatten silage leachate control project. Seconded and carried 5-0.

- 3. USC Technical Assistance Agreements-** Barber requested approval to enter into agreement with Tioga County SWCD and sign USC Skilled Services agreement for the purpose of planning and implementing the conservation and improvement of natural resources on public and private lands as part of the NFWF Building Capacity project. Project to commence March 1, 2023 and be completed by December 31, 2023. Total billable hours shall not exceed \$70,000.00.

Motion by Evanick to authorize Barber to enter into the agreement with Tioga County SWCD - USC Skilled Services agreement for technical assistance for planning and implementing conservation practices in the amount of \$70,000.00 from 3/1/2023-12/31/2023. Seconded and carried 5-0.

- 4. Letter of Collaboration- USC-USFS Inflation Reduction Act Forest Landowner Support-** Barber read a letter in support for the Upper Susquehanna Coalition’s proposal, titled, “Expanding Climate Resiliency Opportunities for Chesapeake Bay Forest Owners.” The letter speaks to the need of hiring a professional forester and offers to collaborate with USC for the expense incurred.

Motion by Harbin to approve Wright sign the letter of support to collaborate with USC to hire a professional forester. Seconded and carried 5-0.

****Shawn Murphy entered the meeting at 2:55pm****

- 5. AEM 18 Action Plan-** presented by Shawn Murphy. Murphy presented the resolution authorizing the District to participate in Round 18 of the AEM base Program and for Barber to act as the District representative. The Round 18 AEM Action Plan was reviewed.

Motion by Jones to approve Resolution #2023-4 authorizing participation in Round 18 of the AEM Base Program and for Barber to act as the SWCD representative. The project Action Plan includes activities and expenses of \$220,000.00 anticipated between January 1, 2024 and December 31, 2025. Seconded and carried 5-0. Full Resolution #2023-4 is appended to the minutes.

****Shawn Murphy left the meeting at 3:00pm****

H. LANDOWNER SUBCONTRACT REVIEW-

1. Barber requested authorization to increase cost-share assistance by \$4,125.00 for the VanPatten silage leachate control project to cover a project modification. Funding will come from the Onondaga County assistance. The total cost-share is now \$69,000, 75% of the total estimated project cost of \$92,000.

Motion by Harbin to approve an increase in funding for the VanPatten silage leachate control project in an amount of \$4,125. The new total estimated cost is \$92,000 with cost-share not to exceed \$69,000. Seconded and carried 5-0.

2. Barber requested approval to execute a landowner subcontract with Twin Oaks Dairy, LLC. for a replant of a CREP riparian forest buffer. The project period shall be from October 1, 2023 to November 15, 2023 with assistance not exceed \$9,486.75. Funding will come from the USC IJA Implementation contract.

Motion by Murphy authorizing Barber to sign the Landowner subcontract with Twin Oaks Dairy, LLC (Kathie Arnold) in an amount not to exceed \$9,486.75 for the purpose of a Riparian Forest Buffer CREP Replant project with work to be performed October 1, 2023 to November 15, 2023. Seconded and carried 5-0.

I. NEXT MEETING: November 14, 2023, 1:00 pm.

J. ADJOURNED at 3:06pm.

Eugene E. Wright, Chairman of Board