



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, December 10, 2024

ATTENDING: Linda Jones, Vice-Chair Stacy Russell, NRPS
Tracey Evanick, Treasurer Shawn Murphy, NRC
William McGovern, Director Russell Smith, NRC
John Phelps, Director - excused Jeremy Boylan
Amanda Barber, District Manager Erin Kurtz, NRCS
Melissa Rutter, Fiscal Officer

A. MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER by Vice-Chair Jones – 1:03 p.m.

B. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Motion by McGovern to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on November 12, 2024 as written. Seconded and carried 3-0.

C. FINANCIAL REPORTS: Including income and expenses for November. Presented for payment Abstract 11-24 for Vouchers 215-24 to 235-24.

Motion by Evanick to accept the November 2024 financial reports and approve the payment of bills presented on Abstract 11-24 in the amount of \$164,446.88. Seconded and carried 3-0.

D. PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR – Jeremy Boylan introduced himself and gave some background on his personal and professional career.

E. REPORTS:

1. **SWCD-** Report was distributed and is appended to minutes.
2. **SLWAP –** No report submitted.
3. **NRCS-** Erin reported on current contracts, staffing, and FSA contracts.
4. **NYACD –** No report submitted
5. **SWCC –** No report submitted.
6. **USC –** Report was distributed and appended to minutes.

F. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. **SLWAP –** Program update.
2. **NYACD –** Letter regarding the 2025 NYACD Legislative booklet, letter from the Director regarding events scheduling, and an email regarding proposed NYS legislation.
3. **SWCC Managers' Meeting –** Barber and Jones discussed the meeting that they attended on Dec. 3 and 4. Some of the topics presented were the Bond Act and Part C funding.
4. **NYSDAM –** Grant release notifications.

G. OLD BUSINESS:

1. **LYLPRD** – Barber distributed the previously-submitted workplan and advised the Board that the workplan is moving ahead as proposed, since the funding was approved in the budget. The Association is getting quotes for aquatic herbicide application. Barber requested confirmation of Board approval of the workplan as presented.

Motion by McGovern to approve activating the workplan as presented. Seconded and carried 3-0.

2. **2025 Budget** – Barber reported that the 2025 modified budget based on the 2024 actuals should be ready for the Board to review and approve at the January regular meeting.
3. **Staffing**– Barber reported that the Civil Service Exam for Conservation Assistant was held on Dec. 7, the District's two provisional employees did sit for the test. Barber further reported that the County personnel office advised her that the Engineer position was approved for the State HELPS program. Barber requested that the Board consider increasing the starting salary for the Engineer position, due to the lack of applicants and current competitive market rate. She suggested a starting salary from \$45-\$60/hr, an increase from the current posted starting rate of \$40-\$50/hr.

Motion by Evanick to adjust the posted starting salary for the Engineer position to \$45-60/hr. Seconded and carried 3-0.

- H. STAFF REPORTS:** Russell gave a report on and discussed SLWAP projects and events. Smith discussed the cover crop program. Murphy reported on a waste storage project that is nearing completion, he is working with farms to prepare for the new grant application cycle, and he is preparing for site showings to be held at several locations early next year.

I. NEW BUSINESS:

1. **Longevity Payments** – Barber requested approval to pay longevity as presented and as budgeted.

Motion by McGovern to authorize Barber to pay longevity as budgeted. Seconded and carried 3-0.

2. **2025 Salary Increases/Health Insurance Premiums** –

Insurance Rates – The District is in receipt of the Cortland County 2025 health insurance rates, and Barber requests approval to set the employee health insurance rates per pay period as provided by the county, with slight modification for single coverage due to rounding: Traditional Plan: \$93.00, PPO Plan: \$83.70.

Motion by Evanick to set the health insurance rates for single coverage as presented. Seconded and carried 3-0.

2025 Salary Increases - Barber requested approval for 2025 starting salaries as presented and as budgeted.

Motion by McGovern to approve 2025 starting salaries as presented. Seconded and carried 3-0.

3. **Special Meeting of the Board** – Barber requested the Board set a special meeting to approve payment of year-end bills and the septic repair project reimbursements. Additionally, Barber would like to award the weed harvester bid during the special meeting.

The Board will convene for a Special Meeting on December 20, 2024 at 11am.

4. **Credit Card Points** – Barber requested approval to utilize the existing credit card reward points to fund a scheduled Staff Development day to be held on December 18.

Motion by Evanick to authorize Barber to redeem existing credit card reward points to fund the Staff Development day. Seconded and carried 3-0.

5. **Irish Hill Road, Freetown Project** – Barber reported that the USC has approved reallocating some funding from the Brackel/Merrill grant to be used for this project. Barber reported that the pipe will be purchased immediately for delivery next year. The USC has indicated that they have additional grant funding available for rock and other installation needs for this project. The Town will send the District a letter of intent to install the pipe next year. The Board concurs with this approach.

****Board entered Executive Session at 2:20 pm and exited Executive Session at 2:47 pm****

I. **NEXT MEETING:** January 14, 2024, 1:00 pm.

J. **ADJOURNED at 2:47 pm.**

Melissa Rutter, Board Secretary