



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, February 13, 2024

ATTENDING: Tracey Evanick, Vice-Chair John Phelps, Director
James Murphy, Treasurer William McGovern, Director
Linda Jones, Director Melissa Rutter, Fiscal Officer
Amanda Barber, Manager Erin Kurtz, NRCS

A. MEETING WAS CALLED TO ORDER by Vice Chair Evanick – 1:06 p.m.

B. REVIEW OF MINUTES:

Motion by Murphy to approve the minutes of the regular board meeting held on January 29, 2024 as written. Seconded by Jones and carried 5-0.

C. FINANCIAL REPORTS: Including income and expenses for January. Presented for payment Abstract 01-24 for Vouchers 01-24 to 15-24.

Motion by Jones to accept the January 2024 financial reports and approve the payment of bills presented on Abstract 01-24 in the amount of \$161,760.18. Seconded by Murphy and carried 5-0.

D. REPORTS:

1. **NRCS-** Erin updated the board on staffing levels and projects.
2. **SWCD-** Report is appended to minutes.
3. **SWCC** – Report is amended to minutes.

E. CORRESPONDENCE:

1. **SWCC** – Update on increased State Aid, Environmental Protection Fund appropriations. Additional correspondence regarding Gov. Hochul's State of the State address in regards to SWCDs.
2. **NYS Ag & Mkts** – Announcement of Leopold Conservation Award application window. Acknowledgement of participation in Ag Assessment webinar.
3. **CDEA** - 2024 Water Quality Symposium/Annual Training Session packet.
4. **Suffolk Co. SWCD** – Letter requesting District donation for National Envirothon.
5. **NYACD** – Legislative Days packet arrived. Evanick and Stacy Russell attending this year.

F. ORGANIZATIONAL BUSINESS:

1. **Election of Officers:** Barber nominated James Murphy as Chair, Linda Jones as Vice-Chair, and Tracey Evanick as Treasurer.

Motion by McGovern to elect Murphy as Chair, Jones as Vice-Chair, and Evanick as Treasurer and to have Secretary cast one vote for the nominated officers. Seconded and carried 5-0. Subsequently, Murphy began presiding over the meeting.

2. 2024 Per Diem Forms Signed – Forms were distributed for Board member signatures.

3. Designate Signatories – New Tompkins Trust signatories are needed due to officer changes.

Motion by Jones to change authorized Tompkins Trust account signatories as follows: remove Eugene Wright add Tracey Evanick. Seconded and carried 5-0.

G. OLD BUSINESS:

1. 2024 Budget – Final modified budget was presented to the Board.

Motion by McGovern to approve the modified budget as presented. Seconded and carried 5-0.

2. Annual Reports – Hourly Rates for Grant Work report, Annual Report, and Parts A, B, and C reports were submitted to the Board for review prior to submittal to the State Committee.

3. LYLPRD Update – Barber reported that the District was going to go ahead with the workplan that was created for weed harvesting.

4. AEM Base Contract Approval – Barber requested approval to enter into the AEM Base 18 contract in the amount of \$420,000. Duration of contract is 2 years.

Motion by Evanick to authorize Barber to enter into AEM Base 18 contract in the amount of \$420,000. Seconded and carried 5-0.

H. NEW BUSINESS:

1. Weed Harvesting – Barber and the Board discussed the logistics of purchasing a harvester vs. renting/leasing the harvester and using District staff to operate vs. hiring outside contractor to perform the harvesting. Barber has information on a potential grant opportunity and/or other funding opportunities for purchase of a harvester.

Motion by Jones to authorize Barber to move forward with the grant process and bring information back to the Board at the next meeting. Seconded and carried 5-0.

2. Lease - The lease with the Grange is up for renewal. Barber will have a lease for the Board to review when it is ready. She asked if the Board had any concerns or needs concerning the lease or the building facilities.

3. Shed Roof – There has been some damage to the shed roof due to surrounding trees, and it needs to be replaced. Barber received a quote for \$2680 for a reroof, and is continuing to seek out other options.

4. Interviews – Barber would like to schedule some dates for interviews for the Engineer, Conservation Assistant, and Conservation Aide, and have a Board member present. Jones and Murphy volunteered to be present for any interviews scheduled on Feb 23.

5. **2024 Meeting Dates** – Dates for 2024 Board meetings have been confirmed for the second Tuesday of each month for the remainder of the year.

****Board entered Executive Session at 3:09 pm and exited Executive Session at 3:55 pm****

6. **Probationary report for Rutter**

Motion by McGovern to approve the rating and to retain Rutter as Fiscal Officer, appointing her to the permanent FT position. Seconded and carried 5-0.

Motion by McGovern to advance Rutter to the 2024 Grade 17 Step 5 salary in the SWCD Salary Schedule. Seconded and carried 5-0.

I. **NEXT MEETING:** March 13, 2024, 1:00 pm.

J. **ADJOURNED at 3:55 pm.**

Jim Murphy, Chairperson