

ONTARIO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
August 21, 2024
Minutes

Meeting held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension (District Office)

PRESENT

DIRECTORS: Vice Chairman Jim Malyj, Ken Livermore, Ed Jackson, Mark Venuti, Dale Stell, Amanda Amadon (4:32), Chairman Sam Casella (4:37)

ABSENT:

STAFF: Megan Webster, Diana Thorn, Jennifer May

USDA

FSA: Joann Rogers

NRCS: None

CALL TO ORDER REGULAR MEETING

Vice Chairman Malyj called the regular meeting to order at 4:30pm and led the pledge to the flag.

MINUTES

Vice Chairman Malyj asked for any comments, changes, or corrections to the minutes from July 17, 2024. The following motion was offered:

Amanda Amadon arrived at 4:32

Motion that the minutes of July 17, 2024 be accepted as submitted.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Dale Stell.

All in favor, motion approved. (Chairman Casella not present)

Resolution #20240821-01

BILLS

A spreadsheet was provided that shows the bills that appear in the Abstract listed with more detail and in their current status.

Motion to approve the bills as submitted and Abstract #8 in the amount of \$88,783.19.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Ed Jackson.

Ken Livermore reviewed and signed the bills earlier today.

All in favor, motion approved. (Chairman Casella not present)

Resolution #20240821-02

TREASURER'S REPORT

Diana reviewed the Treasurer's Report with the Board, which includes the financial statements for July 31, 2024. Megan has reviewed and signed payrolls #15 and #16; the July bank statements; and the reconciliation reports from QuickBooks. All bank accounts are reconciled successfully through July 31st.

Diana shared that the District Savings Certificate of Deposit matured and was rolled over for 90 days with \$326,072.29.

Motion to approve the Treasurer's Report and the July financial statements.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240821-03

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

Ed Jackson

1. Ed offered congratulations to Jenny for passing the CCA exams.
2. Ed asked for an update on the Middlesex parking lot discharge. Megan explained that the source of the discharge has not yet been discovered, but Tyler is actively working with a number of agencies to resolve the issue.
3. Ed asked about Regenerate NY. Megan explained that there is a new round of this funding but Districts are limited to two submissions. Katie is working diligently to organize the requests we have received.
4. Ed shared photos he took when he visited a concrete manure storage recently.

Chairman Casella arrived at 4:37.

FSA

Joann Rogers

County Committee (COC): The next COC meeting is on Tuesday, 08/27/2024 at 9AM; Local Administrative Area (LAA)# 1: Naples-South Bristol, Bristol-Richmond-Canadice, East & West Bloomfield and Canandaigua is up for elections this year. For more information visit: [County Committee Elections \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/countycommittees/elections)

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Continuous CRP: is a voluntary program that contracts with agricultural producers so that environmentally sensitive agricultural land is devoted to conservation benefits; inquires can be directed to Courtney Kautz or Joann Rogers; [Conservation Reserve Program \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservationreserveprogram); Fact sheet: [Conservation Reserve Program: CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT PERIOD \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservationreserveprogram/continuous-enrollment-period)

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): provides financial assistance to producers of non-insurable crops to protect against natural disasters that result in lower yields or crop losses, or prevents crop planting; deadline for 2025 garlic is **09/01/2024**; and grasses mixed forage (hay), fall small grains-rye and value loss type crops (Christmas trees & floriculture is **09/30/2024**;
[noninsured crop disaster assistance program-nap-fact sheet.pdf \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/nisnap)

Disaster Programs: FSA offers a variety of disaster programs that assist with honeybee losses, livestock losses, milk losses, tree and vine losses, and feed losses. With the recent storms Ontario County has a disaster declaration for the tornado. We request producers contact the office if they have any weather related losses to report.

Farm Program Loans:

- **Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):** interest rates range from 4.250% to 4.375% for terms from 3 years to 12 years; the FSFL program has a variety of loan options from bulk tanks, hay barns, grain bins/dryers, telehandlers and storage coolers just to name a few;
[farm storage facility loan programs fact sheet july 2022.pdf \(usda.gov\)](#)

Farm Loan: has a variety of loans available and funding is still available. **Farm Loan staff:** Abbey Combs, Farm Loan Officer; and Kim Weykman, Program Technician. Denise Buisch assists with new farm loan inquiries and can be reached by email at denise.buisch@usda.gov or by telephone at 315-946-9912 ext. 112.

Farm Record: if new producers are interested in getting their farm records established please have them contact the office to make an appointment to get these established; here is a factsheet for your reference: [farmersgov-getstarted-factsheet-06-15-2021.pdf](#)

Crop Reporting: the office was very busy crop reporting approximately 124,000 acres of very diversified crops for crop year 2024.

Fact sheet: [FSA: Crop Acreage Reporting \(usda.gov\)](#)

Reminder to complete the AD-1026 form PRIOR to any clearing or tiling projects.

Please feel free to refer any inquiries on any FSA programs or what programs we have to offer by contacting our office at 585-394-0525 ext. 2.

In addition to myself there are Program Analysts: Courtney Kautz, and Sarah Potter. We encourage participation from all types and sizes of farm operations, whether you are an Urban or Rural producer/farmer.

NRCS

Dan Weykman

- **All Programs** ○ Applications for FY25 have been accepted and will continue to be until approximately the end of October 2024. • ~12-15 already
 - The remainder of summer and fall will be used to make initial visits and begin the planning to continue through winter.
 - Anticipate all current initiatives/fund codes to be available again
 - Farm Bill 2024?? Could impact timelines and funding levels.
- **EQIP** ○ Existing Contracts: • Payments: ○ \$13685 – Residue Management
 - FY 24 Applications: • FY24: ○ All have now been obligated: ▪ 19 EQIP for \$1,215,901 • High Tunnels, Forestry, Pollinator Habitat, Erosion Control, Waste Storage
 - IRA funding used for most. Some GLRI and regular EQIP
 - 8 Beginning Farmers
- **CSP** • FY24 Applications – Obligation complete ○ 4 CSP for \$113,824 ▪ Pollinators, Forestry, Pasture/Hayland practices
 - IRA funds used for all
- **Food Security Act Determinations** ○ All wetland determination requests are now being completed by 2 Area (15 counties) staff, 80%+ of their job duties
 - FY 2023 HEL requests getting closer to complete. Will be done by September 30th. We have more staff getting training to do these

- **Reminder—AD-1026 to be completed for cropland activities (tiling, clearing) with FSA staff for NRCS assessment.

➤ **Staffing**

- Statewide postings will be recurring, large push to fill IRA positions over next few years, 1-2 more on LOY field team potentially. Entry level Soil Conservationist and Natural Resource Specialists expected to be majority of positions
- **Outreach** ○ Feel free to reach out if any farm or partner group events are happening that may have interest in our programs or direct them to me.

STAFF REPORT

Jennifer May

Jenny reported that she has taken over the Base AEM program for Tiers 1 and 2. She has completed 19 Tier 1s and 18 Tier 2s in her first year.

Jenny is also working on Tier 3 and she has completed 1 Tier 3A and she has 3 additional Tier 3As ongoing.

Jenny reported that she worked with Sap Tap Farms to develop a Tier 3A pasture plan for grazing their sheep. This plan will help them meet their flock size goals. She also helped them apply for a Brighter Future Fund grant through the American Farmland Trust. They were recently notified that they have been awarded \$10,000.00 to expand fencing and add a new waterline for a pasture.

Jenny shared that she has passed both the Northeast CCA exam and the International CCA exam. Her application has been submitted to the CCA Board for approval and certification.

Jenny reported that she has been working with Tucker as part of her on the job training and she has been involved with planning and design, surveying, and project site preparation. Tucker is also training her on the AEM Program.

Jenny is working with Katie on Ag Value Assessments.

Jenny recently created an outreach letter that she will be sending to farms that are not currently involved with the District or the AEM Program.

Jenny reported that she spent a day assisting at the National Envirothon.

Jenny shared several goals for her second year and beyond. She shared that she would like to improve her pasture plant identification skills, she is very hopeful that she can develop relationships with several local equine facilities to learn more about their operations and share information about our programs, and she is focused on learning more about the AEM Program. Specifically, she would like to further develop our soil testing program. Jenny stated that ultimately, she would like to pursue certification as an AEM Planner / CNMP.

On behalf of the Board, Chairman Casella thanked Jenny for her efforts and good work.

Megan reported that the Conservation District Technician position no longer requires a written test. Jenny will meet the requirements for the permanent position on her anniversary, August 28, 2024.

Motion to make Jennifer May's appointment permanent.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240821-04

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was going around the room.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Megan Webster, District Manager Report

Employee Benefits

Megan and Diana led a brief discussion regarding Health Insurance coverage options for the next plan year and related Health Savings Account employer contributions. It was recommended that a Board Committee review this benefit carefully before the 2025 enrollment period to make recommendations about future offerings.

Motion to approve offering the Excellus Simply Blue Silver 19, Excellus Simply Blue Silver 2 and the Excellus Simply Blue Bronze 4 plans for the plan year beginning December 1, 2024 and making an employer contribution to an employee's Health Savings Account equivalent to the deductible of the chosen plan or the HSA contribution maximum for the 2025 tax year, whichever is lower.

Motion made by Ed Jackson, seconded by Jim Malyj.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240821-05

Eastern Finger Lakes Coalition

Megan shared that this group is now officially formed and funding will be available for 2025. Megan reported that the group has met with DEC to formalize the process for the funding to flow through NYS Ag and Markets utilizing processes with which we are already familiar. There are funds for administration and implementation. Staff is working on project planning and will be ready for 2025 implementation.

2025 Annual Plan of Work

Megan will be working on the APOW in September and she will submit it to the Planning and Facilities committee members by the end of September. She reported that she does not plan any big changes to the document.

Grant and Project Updates

Base AEM

The implementation project at Wesche broke ground this week. The Hickory Lane and Grumble Hill projects are also starting.

AgNPS 24

Tucker met with PJ to do the final site visits and review the materials. Staff are working on the final report and hope to submit it this week.

Ag NPS 27

This grant is held by Yates County. Construction is underway on the Brahms project.

Ag NPS 28

Construction is ongoing for the J Minns Waste Storage Project. This project continues to be on schedule. The concrete should be poured soon.

CRF Round 7

The District continues to wait on executed contracts before work can begin.

CAFO ENMP

Applications for this grant program are due in October. Staff are currently working with 3 farms and plan to submit individual applications for enhanced nutrient management projects for each.

NFWF SOGL

We continue to wait on the contract and we are still working through the federal requirements for NEPA.

NYSDEC Watershed Grant

One bid was received for the work on the Castle Creek water management project. Zimmerman Excavating LLC submitted a bid for \$67,317.00 for the work. In addition to the grant, funds for this project have been committed by the Town of Geneva, Seneca Pure Waters and FLOWPA.

Motion to accept the bid of \$67,317.00 from Zimmerman Excavating LLC and to authorize entering into a contract with Zimmerman Excavating LLC for the described work.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240821-06

Water Resources Council (Ontario County)

Megan shared that the WRC has \$60,000 available in 2024 that will be awarded through a competitive process. Applications are due September 4th and we are planning on applying. WRC could have up to \$100,000 for 2025.

FLOWPA

District staff is coordinating a contractor for the project on Armstrong Rd. Megan has submitted plans for SFY 2024/2025 with a continued focus on Ag BMPs and water management projects.

WQIP 18

Megan reported that the Town of Bristol is working on a large steep slope project on Egypt Rd. The flexamat for the stabilization project on Ganyard Hill Road has been installed. We are working with the Town of get the proper paperwork for reimbursement.

WQIP 19

Megan reported that we are still waiting on contracts from NYS DEC for these three grants. Roadside stabilization on County Road 33 has been completed with the exception of the hydroseeding. We will reimburse once we have the executed contract. Work is ongoing on the culvert repair and

stabilization project on County Rd 6. Work on the Naples Creek Project is pending. We recently received contract numbers for the first two of these grants and we are submitting the final budget and workplans. We have been told that the contract number for the third grant is forth coming.

Motion to approve starting the work on the Naples Creek Project as we wait for the executed contract.

Motion made by Mark Venuti, seconded by Dale Stell.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240821-07

WQIP Round 20

Katie submitted three applications. One is a planning grant for Naples Creek, one is a roadside stabilization grant, and one is a road salt reduction grant.

Finger Lakes Cover Crop

Jenny has contracted the final acreage with Schum Acres for single species cover crop work.

GLRI Cover Crop

Jenny has contracted the final acreage with V. DeBoover Farms.

Septic Replacement Fund Round 4

Megan reported that Tad, Tyler, and Jamie have been very busy with applications. Megan extended a special thank you to Tad for taking the lead on the approval/denial letters and for working with Yates County DPW as they roll out their program.

Ag BMP Workshop

This was a joint workshop with Seneca and Yates Counties and it went very well. About 30 technicians, many of whom were new to the job, attended the two-day training and it was well received. Megan reported that she applied to NYS CDEA for funding for the event because it was open to all SWCD technicians. Her submission was awarded and she will work on the final report and reimbursement request to be sent to CDEA.

Megan thanked the Town of Geneva for hosting the training.

Megan thanked the staff for their time and efforts in putting the training together.

University of Rochester

Megan is working with the University of Rochester's Greene Center for Career Education and Connections Hydrology and Water Resources class on a collaborative project for the Fall 2024 semester.

Megan has been receiving a number of requests for internships/shadowing opportunities from current college students. She will be considering and assessing our current situation to determine if there is a potential fit for the District.

Upcoming events

8/27/24-8/28/24- Advanced Soil Training with American Farmland Trust, partnering with us for local farm, coordination of event and dinner, etc.- Alaina and Tucker

8/29/24- NYS Fair (Alaina & Jenny will be working a shift)

9/7/24- Town of Farmington Highway Department Tire Recycling Event

9/7/24-9/8/24- Macedon Lumberjack Festival (Alaina for the OWSC)

9/24/24-9/26/24- Conservation Field Days

Week of 9/23/24 Conservation Skills Workshop (Megan, Katie, Jenny and Tucker will attend)

9/27/24-9/28/24- Fun on the Farm at Hemdale Farms

10/3/2024- Ontario County Board of Supervisors Tour

The 2020 Chevrolet Silverado is for sale on Auctions International. Thank you to Jenny for cleaning the vehicle.

Next meeting: September 18, 2024.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 6:09pm.

Motion made by Dale Stell, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240821-08

Diana Thorn Secretary-Treasurer