

ONTARIO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
Board of Directors Meeting
May 15, 2024
Minutes

Meeting held at the Cornell Cooperative Extension (District Office)

PRESENT

DIRECTORS: Chairman Sam Casella, Ken Livermore, Mark Venuti, Amanda Amadon (4:36), Dale Stell (4:41).

ABSENT: Vice Chairman Jim Malyj, Ed Jackson

STAFF: Megan Webster, Diana Thorn, Tyler Ohle

USDA

FSA: Joann Rogers

NRCS: None

CALL TO ORDER REGULAR MEETING

Chairman Casella called the regular meeting to order at 4:33pm and Mark led the pledge to the flag.

General reports were provided as a quorum was not yet present.

FSA

Report submitted by Joann Rogers

County Committee (COC): The next COC meeting is on Tuesday, 06/25/2024 at 9AM

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; inquiries can be directed to Courtney Kautz or Joann Rogers; [Conservation Reserve Program \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservation-reserve-program)
Fact sheet: [Conservation Reserve Program: CONTINUOUS ENROLLMENT PERIOD \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservation-reserve-program/continuous-enrollment-period)

Disaster Programs:

Dairy/Livestock: unfortunately, there are cases of bird flu/Avian flu in livestock in 9 US states. If anyone receives any reports of this in NY-Ontario County please have them contact the FSA office to discuss; as there are USDA programs to assist with this.

Honeybee losses: if any commercial honeybee producer has weather related losses or Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) have them contact the office for us to review our disaster program with them

Farm Program Loans:

- **Farm Storage Facility Loans (FSFL):** interest rates range from 4.375% to 4.625% 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 \(usda.gov\)](https://www.usda.gov/conservation-reserve-program/continuous-enrollment-period)

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 the district is working with applicant that does not have FSA farm records set up 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 has prepared and mailed maps and appointment cards for producer to crop report

Farm Bill: The 2018 Farm Bill that expired on 09/30/2023 has been extended for 1 year.

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 Technicians: Courtney Kautz, Alexis McDougal and Sarah Potter. We encourage participation from all types and sizes of farm operations, whether you are an Urban or Rural producer/farmer.

NRCS

No Report.

Amanda Amadon arrived at 4:36

Dale Stell arrived at 4:41

MINUTES

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

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

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-01

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 #5 in the amount of \$65,311.85

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

Ken Livermore reviewed and signed the bills earlier today.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-02

TREASURER'S REPORT

Diana reviewed the Treasurer's Report with the Board, which includes the financial statements for April 30, 2024. Megan has reviewed and signed payrolls #8 and #9; the April bank statements; and the reconciliation reports from QuickBooks. All bank accounts are reconciled successfully through April 30th.

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

Motion made by Amanda Amadon, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-03

PRIVILEGE OF THE FLOOR

None

STAFF REPORT

Tyler Ohle

Tyler will mark 5 years with the District in June.

Tyler reported that his office sent out over 100 5-year inspection reminder letters primarily for Middlesex, South Bristol, and Canandaigua. He recently learned that not all municipalities were sending reminders so he is taking that on now.

Tyler is working with the Department of Health to obtain a waiver authorizing him to approve certain types of raised fill systems. The WI Office has had this approval in the past and it would be helpful for Tyler going forward.

Tyler shared that after some irregularities were found, he will now be required to be onsite to observe all deep hole perc tests conducted by engineers in the watershed.

Tyler reported that he is following up on failed systems, working with residents to help them understand the issues and the possible solutions.

Tyler stated that there are a significant number of new systems being installed in the Vine Valley area to correct the past practice of discharging into ground water.

Tyler shared that SUNY Stony Brook has reached out to him to partner on a project to reduce nutrients, particularly phosphorus, in the watershed.

Megan commended Tyler, stating that he is doing a great job.

Mark commented that it is obvious that Tyler knows what he is doing.

Chairman Casella, on behalf of the Board, thanked Tyler for his good work.

CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence was shared.

GENERAL BUSINESS

Megan Webster, District Manager Report

Septic System Replacement Fund Round 4

Megan shared that the State has provided the County with \$400,000 for Round 4 and an additional \$85,000 left over from Round 2. This will be used for awards up to \$10,000 with a 50/50 cost share to replace or upgrade existing systems. Megan, Tyler, Tad and Jamie are working with the County to identify eligible properties and to prepare a letter to send to them.

FLCC Facilities

Megan has attended multiple meetings with the County, FLCC, CCE, Workforce Development and the architects to generate a conceptual plan for a new building. Feedback about initial design is being collected. Once an acceptable design is created, it will be used to estimate costs for determining funding requirements.

Water Resource Council

Partners were asked to provide a list of projects that can be compiled and submitted to Ontario County to show the need for environmental resource focused project funding. The District submitted multiple projects for the list and will work with WRC to create a review process similar to the one used for the existing WRC mini-grants. The existing mini-grants are capped at \$3,000 and the County Planning and Environmental Quality Committee is looking at a possible need to increase funding for environmental projects.

Procurement

WQIP Round 19 and the NYS DEC Watershed grant both involve projects in which the work will require the formal bid process based on our procurement policy (public works projects over \$35,000 require public notice and solicitation of sealed bids). Megan and Katie are working with the Ontario County Attorney's office and Ontario County Purchasing Department to review this procedure.

Motion to approve costs associated with printing the required public notices for the bid process for WQIP Round 19 and NYS DEC Watershed projects in excess of \$35,000.00 in our newspaper of record, the Finger Lakes Times.

Motion made by Dale Stell, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-04

Once the sealed bids are received, we will need a special meeting to open them, review them, and award the project work. Megan will work with the Board to schedule something once we know when the bids will be due.

Grant and Project Updates

AEM Round 18

Megan reported that the contracts for all eight farms are finalized and a voucher has been sent to the State for 90% of the implementation funds. The work at Grimble Hill Farm is already completed.

Motion to approve payout for the Grimble Hill Farm AEM Round 18 Implementation project not to exceed \$5,250.00 per the contract.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-05

AgNPS 24

F & W Farms has worked in the grassed waterway. It will be hydroseeded as soon as the County hydroseeder is operational.

Ag NPS 25

Megan reported that Will-O-Crest has submitted the financial documentation for the Farm Expenditure Summary. They are still waiting on engineer certification. Once the engineer has certified the project, we will make the final payment. Following receipt of the cancelled check for that final payment, we will work on closing this grant which also included a project at El-Vi Farms.

Ag NPS 27

This grant is held by Yates County. Tucker met with Brahms to review an erosion and sediment control project design for the Randall Standish Vineyard. Work should begin in early June. The project at Reifsteck Farm is already completed.

NYS Grown and Certified

FA-BA Farms has finished the manure transfer system.

Motion to approve the final payment for the NYS Grown and Certified project at FA-BA Farms not to exceed \$17,500.00 per the contract.

Motion made by Amanda Amadon, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-06

CRF Round 8

Megan reported that staff are meeting with producers about possible projects. The RFP is available but there are aspects of the program that are unknown and/or ill-defined such as project eligibility for the different tracks, and will the Districts be required to meet the federal audit requirements (and can grant funds be used for these). Staff continue to work with SWCC to gain a better understanding. Grant applications are due June 24th. Megan thanked Joann Rogers at FSA for assistance with information about some of the federal paperwork required for certain tracks in this round. Megan also shared that cover and flare projects at CAFOs may be eligible for an upcoming CAFO grant expected later this year.

Motion to approve applying for and participating in CRF Round 8.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Mark Venuti.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-07

NFWF SOGL

Megan shared that Tucker is still working through the federal requirements for NEPA review. Projects are lined up and ready to begin construction once the contract is finalized.

GLC SNRP

The Erosion & Sediment Control project at Rockefellers on Middle Rd in the Town of Gorham is underway and should be completed soon.

Motion to approve payment to Rockefellers not to exceed \$16,998.91 per the contract.

Motion made by Dale Stell, seconded by Ken Livermore.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-08

We are still waiting on a final determination from SHPO for the project on Wells Curtice Road.

NYSDEC Finger Lakes Watershed Grant / Seneca Pure Waters SNRP

Megan reported that Tucker has done the survey work for the Wallace/Jensen Basin in the Town of Geneva. He is working on a final design and budget. We did receive the \$10,000.00 grant we applied for from Seneca Pure Waters SNRP to utilize on this project. We will need to go through the formal bid process before we can move forward with the work.

WQIP Round 20

The 2024 Consolidated Funding Application was just released. Megan and Katie will be reviewing projects with municipalities and partners to plan submissions. Applications are due July 31st.

WQIP Round 18

This roadside stabilization grant with the Towns of Canadice and Bristol is in process. The Town of Bristol has installed Flex-A-Mat on Ganyard Rd and we are waiting on the paperwork from the Town to begin the payout process.

FLOWPA

Megan submitted a Schedule A to the County Planning Department for \$5,000.00 for hydroseeding materials to be used to stabilize projects. The Finger Lakes Land Trust has committed \$2,000 in match funding to the 2024 Part B Vernal Pools project on their land so FLOWPA funding will not be required.

GLRI HWA

Megan shared that West Wildlife will be treating hemlock trees in Grimes Glen next week as part of the final HWA work for this grant.

Eastern Finger Lakes Coalition

This group is working on a final Scope of Work with NYS DEC. They are also creating a Watershed Coordinator position that will be hired through the Cayuga County SWCD. Administrative funds included in the 2024 NYS budget will cover the cost of this position. Doug Kierst, Executive Director of Cayuga County SWCD will be presenting to SWCC at the May 21st meeting regarding the Coalition.

Drinking Water Source Protection 2

The City of Geneva is working with NYS Department of Health on a Drinking Water Source Protection Plan. Megan will serve as part of the stakeholder group. This is in addition to the Town and Village of Naples where Megan and Tyler are serving as part of the stakeholder group.

Tire Recycling

The Town of Seneca event went well. Over 900 tires were registered. The District is working with Seneca Meadows to clarify tire size requirements as a small number of tires was refused after this event. We are also working on renewing our certification to haul the tires.

Cornell Local Roads Training

The Roadside Stabilization workshop on May 8th went well. Megan will present at a Highway School event in Ithaca on June 5th.

Upcoming events:

Rain Barrel Workshops:

May 18th Town of Farmington with OWSC

May 23rd at The Woods with CLWA

SWCC meeting – May 21st (online attendance option available).

Pasture Walk – June 28th at Tamberlane Farm (we will be partnering with CCE, Beef Producers and Farm Bureau).

Motion to approve expenses related to the pasture walk education/outreach event at Tamberlane Farm not to exceed the budgeted amount of \$1,000.00.

Motion made by Ken Livermore, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-09

Regional Managers Meeting – June 11th in Cortland.

Reminder to please let Megan know if you attend any of these or related meetings as such attendance counts towards our performance measures.

Megan shared with the Board that we have reached the end of the Civil Service Probationary Period for Alaina Robarge. Megan will be filing the required paperwork to move Alaina to permanent status. Chairman Casella complimented Alaina on the excellent work she does on the District's newsletter and stated that he shares it with NYACD and NACD. Megan acknowledged this and thanked all staff for their assistance with the newsletter.

Next meeting: June 19, 2024

ADJOURNMENT

Motion to adjourn at 5:24pm.

Motion made by Dale Stell, seconded by Amanda Amadon.

All in favor, motion approved.

Resolution #20240515-10