

FRANKLIN COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS' MEETING

Regular Meeting – Tuesday, December 6, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. in the Conference Room
FCSWCD Office, Malone, NY

Directors:

Bill Wood
Ralph Child
Thomas Derouchie
Dennis Egan

Paul Lauzon
Ed Lockwood

Staff

Chastity Miller
Kristin Ballou
Donna Wright
Devin Normandeau

Mason Stine
Ryan Cunningham (NYSSWCD)

1. Meeting began at 12:01 p.m. - Quorum present. Meeting called to order by Bill Wood.
2. November 15, 2022 Board Meeting minutes – Discussed and approved with correction:
1st P. Lauzon, 2nd T. Derouchie; all in favor, **carried**.

3. **Financial Reports (Donna):**

Financial Reports : reviewed and approved: 1st D. Egan, 2nd R. Child; all in favor, **carried**.

Abstract & Vouchers: reviewed and approved: 1st P. Lauzon, 2nd E. Lockwood; all in favor, **carried**.

Transfer of Funds: reviewed and approved, then requested permission to transfer the following funds:

- \$ 357.70 from Reg Checking to T/A account for November 2022 NYS Ret Emp Cont.;
- \$ 2,000.00 from Regular Checking to Retirement savings Yrly. Ret Dues (January 2023);
- 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**.

4. **Reports (given by Chastity):**

NRCS - (work cell number: 518-605-2508)

- FY 2023 EQIP: 31 applications (Forestry, Wildlife, High Tunnels and irrigation). General pre-approval for EQIP applications 3/31/23 w/obligation deadline 5/26/23. EQIP Act Now (new program) pushes obligation date for High Tunnels/Mgmt Plans ahead of other fund pools. Preapprovals planned for 1/17/23 w/obligation date 2/17/23.
- Ongoing Projects: All surveys complete for next year's construction season. Grazing project still ongoing. Forest Mgmt Plan submitted approved by NRCS State Forester/moving forward w/EQIP/CSP application.
- Food Security Act: All 1026 requests up to date.

FSA Open/staff present to assist producers by phone, electronically or in person

- Dairy Margin Coverage: 2023 calendar year signup continues through 12/9.
- Agricultural Risk Coverage/Price Loss Coverage: 2023 Crop Year signup now through 3/15/2023.
- Acreage Reporting: 12/31 is deadline to report honeybee colonies/maple taps for 2023.;
- 2023 Non-Insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): call FSA for upcoming deadlines;
- Organic Certification Cost Share & Organic Transitional Education Certification Program: late-file application deadline until 2/3/2023.
- Price Support Interest Rates: for November 2022 were given.
- Farm Loan Program Interest Rates: for November 2022 were given.

NYS Ag and Markets (Ryan)

NYS SWCC News:

- Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas!
- Next SWCC meeting scheduled for December 20th at 10 a.m.
- Performance Measures Requirements: Essentially, these requirements are reverting to the pre-pandemic standards.
- Roles of Conservation Plans in Farmland Protection Implementation Grants (FPIG) Projects: AGM has worked w/CDEA to update/clarify the likely role of Districts to prepare conservation plans w/farms to be protected by FPIG.
- CREP Annual Progress Report: Send items to share to Scott.Fickbohm@agriculture.ny.gov by 12/23/22.
- Other Events:
- Western NY Soil Health Alliance (WNYSHA) Annual Mtg: 12/15/22 in Batavia, NY
- NACD 2023 Annual Mtg: New Orleans, Louisiana February 11-15, 2023
- Other Funding:
- Five Star & Urban Waters Restoration Program 2023 Request for Proposals: N'tl Fish & Wildlife Foundation and partners are requesting proposals for 2023. Full proposals due by 1/31/23

Kristin (District Forester)

AEM:

- Working on Forest Conservation Plans; working on plans based on 2021 & 2022 inventory data;

- Continuing implementation of plans w/EQIP funding for 3 producers;
- Meeting more producers with maple operations interested in this program.
- Assisting Clinton County SWCD with AEM Forestry – 1 plan complete/billed; 1 more to complete in 2022 ;.
- AEM 17 Implementation Projects: working w/producers to complete projects; 2 complete/1 in progress/3 waiting until 2023

Part B: 4 Forest Mgmt Plans - 2022 4 Forest Mgmt Plans – 4 plans complete,4 additional inventories complete.

Part C: 2022 Complete and planning for 2023 program.

Devin (District Technician)

AEM –

- Tier 2: 2 site visits;
- Tier 3a: Working on farmstead plan and looking at funding options, grazing plan and Silvopasture plan;
- Part C: Soil samples taken for grazing plan. Producer working with us in future for implementation. Assisting producer with EQIP funding for FMP.
- Ag Assessment: Continuing with Ag Assessment worksheets. Completed a multitude this past month.
- Conservation in the Community: Site visit for Forest Mgmt plan.

Mason (District Technician)

- Towns: Met w/Lenny, Hamilton Cty SWCD Tech regarding future projects in the Towns of Franklin & Chateaugay.
- Drone – Listed our old Drone for sale.
- Invasive Species – RE Japanese Knotweed: Organized all data on into workable format. Created coherent map of all currently documented locations. Assessed the northern areas in the county for this invasive species.
- Conservation in the Community – cut down trees w/Chas & Devin to divert high flows of water from an eroding bank.

Donna (Secretary to the Board)

- Performed office administrative duties as requested/required; will continue to keep operations progressing.
- Christmas Tree Recycling Program postcards are here, will label and mail mid-December.
- Reviewing/updating all FCSWCD policies to give Bd members for their review/discussion in January
- Assisted Dustin Lewis, Dist. Mgr. Saratoga Cty SWCD w/clerical reporting as he is without a clerk.
- Updated 2023 Timesheets and other 2023 forms.

5. District Managers Report: (Chastity)

Agricultural Non-Point Source Grants

- Round 24, 16-1– Extension approved, good until 2024. Need to get an update.
- Round 25, 16-3 – Estimates & engineering going; extension approved. Still working on estimates, maybe looking at new manure storage also.
- Round 25, 16-1 – done working on close out paperwork.
- Round 26 – Year 2 complete.
- Round 27 – signed contract waiting to receive back.
- Round 28 – Awarded one! Barnyard and Manure storage. Submitted POW.

CAFO Manure Storage Grants Round 3: Extension approved. Asked planner status.

CRF Rd 6 Applications: Nope, planning for next round; Debriefing 12/7/22.

AEM Yr 17: Contract received, received 25% (technical/90% implementation. Waiting on paperwork approval on 2nd closeout. 3rd project well underway, leave 3 for next summer. Devin is beginning to work on apps for next round.

WQIP Grants: awarded 2 grants for Non-Ag money from NYSDEC (1 Hydroseeding in County; 1 planning culvert assessments). Working on work plans for hydroseeding and completed the plan for culverts.

Malone Rec Park: working with Rec Park for Parking lot NYSDOS grant. Will work on extension next summer.

Village of Malone-Lane Street Pit: working on a revised reclamation plan as DPW Bldg built is not part of the plan.

Mason and Devin worked on dropping trees for a stream protection permit we had and we need to go look at that.

Budget & Funding Plans for 2023 –working on budget and funding plans for 2023 and gathering all info/plans for 2023 projects/programs to match plan of work. Approval needed today.

NYACD –Attended NYACD mtg, been working on issue w/NYS Watershed Coalition trying to change NYS SWCD Dist Law. Email sent to all Bd Members outlining this issue. What are we not doing that these recommendations will change. Manager's mtg 12/9 to come up w/plan of action. Compiled letter as requested by legislators and emailed it to all Legislators, County Manager & Clerk. No responses received back yet. Requested mtg with our locals.

FC Snowmobilers: Continuing to work on organization of Phase 1 & some on rec trails at the county. They seem to be changing where we had trails going so, I'm not sure what we can help with at this time. Hoping all continues to move forward & the process the county has in place will continue to be successful to get what we've worked on for 13 yrs going forward.

Additional Grants/Educational Opportunities: Working on finding some for the district and schools.

Vehicles: Investigating purchasing a new truck and selling the Equinox

Permits: Working on permits for the Rec Park eastern shore and plants. Had someone look at the western side, looking for engineering drawings

Newsletter/Tree Sale: Chas finished newsletter, Kristin completed the Tree Sale flyer, Donna working on labels.

CWICNY: Creating a google account and working on a strategic plan. Need to work on a refund policy

Device Magic: they need a push to update statewide app for RRAMP (Rural Roads Assessments)

2023 Part B and Part C Funding– Discussed Part B and Part C 2023 Funding.

6. **Correspondences**: Grassroots/December 2022, NYACD letter dated November 26, 2022 RE: Proposed draft district law changes being pushed forward by the Watershed Healthy Coalition with attached November 11, 2022 letter from Christopher B. Watkins, Director, Cornell Cooperative Extension
7. **New Business**:
 - Chastity requested of the Board to approve to add/adopt the FCSWCD Monthly Disbursements Policy “An availability period of revenues will be set for 30 days after the first day of the new year to coincide with tax revenues of the municipality under the modified accrual basis of accounting.”
Motion: 1st R. Child; 2nd D. Egan, all in favor, **carried**.
 - Chastity requested of the Board approval to pay 4th Quarter Insurance Stipends:
Motion: 1st P. Lauzon; 2nd E. Lockwood, all in favor, **carried**.
8. **Old Business**:
 - Chastity brought up the 2023 Budget Request, along with Part B and Part C that was tabled from the November 15, 2022 Board Meeting. Discussed and reviewed, then approved by all Board members present.
Motion: 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**.
9. **At 12:29 p.m., Bill Wood, Chair of the Board, asked to go into Executive Session to discuss personnel issues**, therefore staff members left the meeting, leaving in attendance the board members and the District Manager and our Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst. Motion: 1st D. Egan, 2nd E. Lockwood, all in favor, **carried**.
10. **The Board went into Executive Session at 1:00 p.m.** to discuss the District Manager’s position (District Manager exited the meeting), Motion to go into the session made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd T. Derouchie, all in favor, **carried**. **The Board came out of Executive Session at 1:10 p.m.** Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**. The board stated that they agreed to give District Manager a 10% raise. Bill Wood called for a Roll Call of board members present. All in favor were the following board members: R. Child, P. Lauzon, T. Derouchie, B. Wood, E. Lockwood, D. Egan, **carried**.
11. **The Board went into Executive Session at 1:15 p.m.** to discuss the current District Forester position, Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd T. Derouchie. **Carried. The Board came out of Executive Session at 1:20 p.m.** Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**. The board stated they had agreed to give District Forester a 10% raise. Bill Wood called for a Roll Call of board members present. All in favor were the following board members: R. Child, P. Lauzon, T. Derouchie, B. Wood, E. Lockwood, D. Egan, **carried**.
12. **The Board went into Executive Session at 1:25 p.m.** to discuss the first current District Technician, Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd T. Derouchie. Carried. **The Board came out of Executive Session at 1:30 p.m.** Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**. The board stated they had agreed to give District Technician a 10% raise. Bill Wood called for a Roll Call of board members present. All in favor were the following board members: R. Child, P. Lauzon, T. Derouchie, B. Wood, E. Lockwood, D. Egan, **carried**.
13. **The Board went into Executive Session at 1:32 p.m.** to discuss the second current District Technician, Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd T. Derouchie. Carried. **The Board came out of Executive Session at 1:36 p.m.** Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor **carried**. The board stated they had agreed to give District Technician a 10% raise. Bill Wood called for a Roll Call of board members present. All in favor were the following board members: R. Child, P. Lauzon, T. Derouchie, B. Wood, E. Lockwood, D. Egan, **carried**.
14. **The Board went into Executive Session at 1:40 p.m.** to discuss the current District Secretary, Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd T. Derouchie. Carried. **The Board came out of Executive Session at 1:45 p.m.** Motion made by 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**. The board stated they had agreed to give District Secretary a raise from current salary to \$35,000. Bill Wood called for a Roll Call of board members present. All in favor were the following board members: R. Child, P. Lauzon, T. Derouchie, B. Wood, E. Lockwood, D. Egan, **carried**.
15. The **Board to discussed and approved to decrease the Employee Portion of the Health Insurance Premiums from 25% to 20%**. Motion: 1st D. Egan, 2nd T. Derouchie, all in favor, **carried**.
16. At 1:50 p.m. Bill Wood, Chair of Board asked all staff present to rejoin the meeting to advise staff of the above raises.

17. Chastity thanked Devin for bringing in a Christmas tree for the office
18. Bill Wood thanked everyone for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.
19. At 1:55 p.m. the Board went into Executive Session to discuss another personnel issue with District Mgr and all other staff was asked to leave the meeting. Motion 1st D. Egan, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**. The Board came out of executive session at 1:58 p.m. Motion: 1st D. Egan, 2nd T. Derouchie, all in favor, **carried**.
20. At 2:00 p.m. Bill Wood, Chair of Board asked all staff present to rejoin the meeting to advise District Secretary that the Board agreed to give a week's additional paid vacation. Motion: 1st P. Lauzon, 2nd T. Derouchie, all in favor, **carried**.
21. Next meeting will be on Tuesday, January 17, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. (noon)
22. Meeting Adjourned at 2:02 p.m. Motion: 1st D. Egan, 2nd E. Lockwood, all in favor, carried.

Respectfully submitted,
Donna Wright / Chastity Miller
Secretary / District Manager