

FRANKLIN COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT DIRECTORS' MEETING

Regular Meeting – Monday, June 8, 2020 at 7:00 p.m.

FCSWCD Office, Malone, NY

Directors:

Bill Wood

Ralph Child

Paul Lauzon

Thomas Derouchie

Edward Lockwood

Steve Gokey

Staff:

Chastity Miller

Donna Wright

Kristin Ballou (via Zoom)

Christopher Ballou (via Zoom)

Ryan Cunningham (via Zoom)

Meeting began at 7:01 p.m. - Quorum present. Meeting called to order by Bill Wood.

1. December 16, 2019 amended board meeting minutes approved.
1st P. Lauzon, 2nd R. Child, all in favor, E. Lockwood abstained. **Carried.**
2. February 25, 2020 board meeting minutes approved
1st S. Gokey, 2nd E. Lockwood, all in favor, **carried.**
3. April 16, 2020 board meeting minutes approved
1st R. Child, 2nd S. Gokey, all in favor, **carried.**
4. **Financial Reports (Donna):**
Financial Reports were reviewed and approved:
1st E. Lockwood, 2nd P. Lauzon; all in favor, **carried.**
Abstract and Vouchers were reviewed and approved:
1st P. Lauzon, 2nd S. Gokey, all in favor, **carried.**
Requested permission to transfer the following for the month of April:
 \$342.70 from Reg Checking to T/A account for monthly employee retirement for balance of April;
 \$1,500.00 from Regular Checking to Retirement savings for April
 \$200.00 from Reg Checking to No-till for April:
Approval requested and reviewed for all April transfers to be made:
1st E. Lockwood, 2nd S. Gokey, all in favor, **carried.**
Requested permission to transfer the following for the month of May:
 \$274.16 from Reg Checking to T/A account for monthly employee retirement for balance of May;
 \$1,500.00 from Regular Checking to Retirement savings for May;
 \$200.00 from Reg Checking to No-till for May.
Approval requested and reviewed for all May transfers to be made:
1st S. Gokey, 2nd T. Derouchie, all in favor, **carried.**
5. **Reports (Chastity):**
NRCS
FY 2020 EQIP Funding - Due to ongoing health crisis, the FY2020 deadlines have been adjusted. Pre-approvals for eligible applications is tentatively scheduled for June 19th. Obligation is slated for August 14th. 20 applications are currently eligible for ranking.
FY 2021 EQIP - Application deadline is July 17th, 2020. Currently have 32 applications.
WRE - Restoration will continue this summer on newly acquired WRE easement in Bombay.
Food Security Act - No backlog at this time.
Administrative - Matt Powers will be taking a position with another federal agency with his last day being Friday, June 19th. He has enjoyed his time with NRCS and thanks everyone for their assistance in the team effort to help the local agricultural community.

FSA

2019& 2020 Agricultural Risk Loss Coverage (ARC)-Price Loss Coverage (PLC): 2019 election/ enrollment period runs through 3/16. 2020 enrollment ends 6/30. Program pays on base acres/pymts triggered(or not) based on n'tl market prices and/or n'tl market prices/county yields depending on program selected.

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP): Signup opened 12/9/2019, deadline to sign up for general CRP until 2/28/2020, while signup for continuous CRP is ongoing.

Non-insured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP): Deadline 3/16 for other spring seeded crops. Basic coverage: \$325/crop with max fee of \$825 within the county. Fee waivers are available for eligible Beginning Farmers, Socially Disadvantaged, Limited resource and Veteran farmers.

Farm Storage Facility Loans: Low interest loans available for a variety of storage structures and handling equipment

Price Support Interest Rates for February 2020 were given.

Farm Loan Program Interest Rates for February 2020 were given.

USDA FSA Farm Storage Facility Loan Price Support Fact Sheet is available in the FSA office.

Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP): Our office has been very busy with this program. CFAP provides financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline or who had losses due to market supply chain disruptions due to COVID-19 and face additional significant market costs. Eligible commodities include:

- Non-specialty Crops: malting barley, canola, corn, upland cotton, millet, oats, soybeans, sorghum, sunflowers, durum wheat, and hard red spring wheat
- Wool
- Livestock: cattle, hogs, and sheep (lambs and yearlings only). Dairy cull cows and bull calves are also eligible.
- Dairy

Specialty Crops

- Fruits: apples, avocados, blueberries, cantaloupe, grapefruit, kiwifruit, lemons, oranges, papaya, peaches, pears, raspberries, strawberries, tangerines, tomatoes, watermelons
- Vegetables: artichokes, asparagus, broccoli, cabbage, carrots, cauliflower, celery, sweet corn, cucumbers, eggplant, garlic, iceberg lettuce, romaine lettuce, dry onions, green onions, peppers, potatoes, rhubarb, spinach, squash, sweet potatoes, taro
- Nuts: almonds, pecans, walnuts
- Other: beans, mushrooms

Currently assisting producers by phone/mail/email. Producers interested in signing up should contact our office so we can review their numbers over the phone and enter their application in the system. Information is also available on farmers.gov/cfap.

Price Support Interest Rates (June 2020):

- Marketing Assistance (Commodity) Loans: 1.125%
 - Farm Storage Facility Loans:
 - 3 Year Loans - 0.25%
 - 5 Year Loans - 0.375%
 - 7 Year Loans - 0.50%
 - 10 Year Loans - 0.625%
 - 12 Year Loans - 0.75%

Farm Loan Program Interest Rates (June 2020):

- Operating Loans 1.375%
- Ownership Loans 2.25%

Ag and Markets - Presented by Ryan Cunningham via ZOOM (March, April and May Reports)

- **AEM Leopold Conservation Award 2020:** NY's 1st recipient will be presented w/\$10,000 award at annual Leadership Luncheon at Empire Farm Days. Deadline was 5/15/20
- **Implementation of High-Efficiency Agricultural Irrigation Water Mgmt Systems:** Approximately \$700,000 available. Deadline was 6/1/2020
- **Implementation of AEM Plans on NYS Grown & Certified Farms:** Approximately \$700,000 available.
- **Source Water Buffer Program:** \$5 million available. Deadline was 6/1/2020
- **Community Resiliency Training Program Funding:** . Open enrollment until February 2022.
Lauren.prezorski@agriculture.ny.gov
- **Riparian Buffer Training-** June 17[&] 18th, contact: lbrinkley@u-s-c.org
- **AGNPS Round 26:** \$15 Million available. Questions: Bethany.Bzduch@agricultur.ny.gov Deadline is 6/15.

- Source Water Buffer Program: \$5 million available. Questions: bethanybzduch@agriculture.ny.gov
Share Point: <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>
- USC wins Arbor Day Foundation Award: Upper Susquehanna Coalition received this National recognition.
- SWCC Meeting: June 2020-date to be determined
- Other Funding Opportunities: US Forest Service GLRI Funding-anticipating up to \$4.2 million in new funds.
Deadline is 6/26/2020 at www.Grants.gov
- COVID Updates: SWCC Share Point has a link, "Announcements" that anyone can access and post their county's emergency/Continuity of Government plans and other steps the District is taking during this emergency. Website with resources/helpful guidance for NY farms/agribusinesses: www.agriculture.ny.gov/coronavirus Ryan hopes everyone, including staff, Board members and our families are feeling well, staying healthy and stated that health and safety to all of us comes first.

Kristin (District Forester):

AEM

- Working on Forest Conservation Plans – 6 completed since February 2020
- Setting up site visits to complete more inventories
- Meeting with more producers with maple operations interested in this program

Meetings/Trainings/Events

- CWICNY
- OSHA

Hydroseeders – lots of interest from towns and the public so far this summer

- 2 acres hydroseeded today for a producer

No-till – rented to 2 producers this spring with a few interested for the fall cover crop planting

Part B – 4 Forest Management Plans – 1 inventory complete

Part C - 2020 projects

School Funding Program \$15,000 (\$1,500/school)

- ADK Education –
- Brushton – generator and tubing supplies for maple operation - complete
- Chateaugay – raised bed gardens
- Malone Central – Water Quality Data Collection Equipment
- Saranac Lake – Farm to School Program Enhancements
- Tupper Lake – Elementary Schoolwide Community Garden Project - complete
- Wilder Farm – Virtual Tour (Switched project)

Invasive Species \$4,000 – Japanese knotweed inventory in Saranac Lake (Allycia)

EAB Monitoring and assessments – \$6,000 - 9 sentinel trees - 3 Bombay, 2 Fort Covington, 3 Chateaugay and 1 Moira.

Still waiting on lures from APHIS to hang traps.

Conservation in the Community \$10,000

Continuing to meet with landowners regarding forestry practice options, water kits, id books

Education (Workshops) \$10,000 (EAB, Irrigation, Pollinator, Soil Health, Multi-species grazing, ag district ag assessment) -

CANCELLED

Rent and Utilities \$18,300

Cooperators Dinner – CANCELLED

Sea Grant NAACC Grant 2019 – 332 assessments complete – finishing up final report

WQIP NAACC – plan of work submitted waiting on contract

WQIP Erosion Assessments – plan of work submitted waiting on contract

Allycia (District Technician):

AEM

All AG Workshops have been cancelled for 2020, but will be on our list for 2021!!

Tier 1: Tier one

Tier 2 Site Visit: 1 Site Visit

Tier 3a: 1 Irrigation, 2 Grazing

Tier 5a: 1 Site visit.

AEM Yr. 16: To Date

- Worked with 24 farms
- 13 plans being written

- 4 pasture, 1 farmstead, 7 forestry, 1 irrigation
- 5 finished already and signed off on
- Hours worked since March 2nd 596.25 generating \$25, 047.00

AEM Yr. 16 Grant: All applicants have a contract and have started on projects

AG NPS 26: Deadline for grant is 6/15/2020

- Applying for 3 applications
 - 1 Soil Health
 - Barnyard
 - 1 Manure Storage

AEM Strategy: Deadline for update is 12/2020

- Been plugging away at that and trying to finish it up

Trying to get into the field

Training/Workshop:

- Working on receiving CAA for approved practices
 - Trails and Walkways, Stream Crossings, Heavy Use Area Protection, Diversions, Roof Runoff Structure, Micro and Sprinkler Irrigation and Grass Waterway

Envirothon: NARE/Donations; State: calls; EEF: Donations

Invasive Species Monitoring: Village of Saranac Lake is finished, working on the Town of Saranac Lake

Christopher (District Technician)

AEM

- Attended site visits and assisting with forest management activities

Meetings/Trainings/Events

- OSHA training class completed
- 4-hour Sediment and Erosion Control training completed

Part C

- Assisting with EAB monitoring, girdling trees and marking trap locations

Sea Grant NAACC

- Working on final report, compiling information for Stony Brook and the municipalities.

WQIP NAACC

- Completed NAACC online training, prepping for fieldwork, waiting for signed contract

WQIP Erosion Assessments

- Reviewing Erosion assessment information and erosion control practices, prepping for fieldwork, waiting for signed contract.

Donna (Secretary to the Board):

Weekly: Submit payroll and Deferred Compensation, update timesheet hours on spreadsheet.

Monthly: NYS Taxes, NYS Retirement, Federal Taxes, board meeting notice, minutes from last meeting, reconciliation of bank accounts and preparation of Quick Book reports.

Quarterly: NYS Tax Qtly Report, Federal Tax Qtly Report, Worker's Compensation Report,

Yearly: Disability Ins pd in August, complete Excellus Annual Group Report by September, NYS Retirement Annual Invoice pd in December to get discount, Annual Treasurer's Report, Part A Report , process W2's, W-3's and 1099's with a 1096 attached, Annual Tree Sale.

Typical month (along with the above)::

- Add/update customer address files.
- Assist customers who come into our office.
- Answer the main phone line assisting people to the best of my ability.
- Assist Chastity, Kristin, Allycia and Chris, whenever possible.
- Make regular bank deposits.
- Receipt money received into Quickbooks.
- Prepare for monthly Board meeting.
- Update the Secretary Manual, as needed.
- Completed monthly reports.

March 16th-June 8th

- Obtained registration for the 2002 Hydroseeder
- Entering Tree Sales as received.
- Attended my first WQS in Syracuse.
- Worked from home/or the office throughout this COVID-19 Pandemic.
- Worked with Kristin over the phone entering Tree Sales/invoices as received.
- Mailed out 2020 Tree Sale pick up reminders (3/24/2020)
- Mailed out Plain Sect Newsletter (3/25/2020)
- Mailed Post Cards to customers RE: delivery of Tree Sales due to COVID-19 (4/10/2020)
- Completed 2020 Tree Sale Summary
- Completed 4-hour Erosion & Sediment Control Training
- Delivered free seedlings throughout Franklin County.
- Delivered tree sale orders with Chas.
- Call Insurance Companies for Certificate of Liability Insurance for use of Hydroseeder or No-Till Drill
- Participated in several webinars regarding COVID-19 Phase One Reopening
- Started a Phase One Reopening Employee/Customer Log to list date, name, arrival/exit times and who each employee comes in contact with throughout the day.
- Printed, laminated and posted required signage regarding COVID-19 procedures, ex: Social Distancing, Wash Hands, Face Mask required.
- In process of transitioning FCSWCD from the Silver to Gold Certification with the NYS Retirement System as required. Taken several webinar training sessions and have begun the 3-month transition process (June 1st-Sept. 30th)
- Mailed out the 8 Yr. Opt In /Out Period Ag Dist letters to all landowners.(6/1/2020)
- Weekly Conference Calls with Chas for all staff to report in/advise Chas of what we have done/plan to do and get instruction/direction from Chas.

6. **District Managers Report:**

Agricultural Non-Point Source Grants

- Round 24.1– Working on engineering plans, planning on construction this summer.
- Round 24.2– Engineering is complete, bidding is out now, construction soon.
- Round 25.1 – Plan of work complete, waiting on contracts, planning on summer construction.
- Round 25.2 Cover Crops – Contract received.

CAFO Manure Storage Grants Round 1

- CAFO: 33 – Constable- Closed out, waiting on last voucher from the state to pay the rest of contract.
- CAFO 35 – Chateaugay –Engineering and planning, construction this summer 2020.

CAFO Manure Storage Grants Round 3

- Round 3 – Contract received, hoping for engineering soon.

WQIP Planning – Culvert Assessment & RRAMP (Kristin)-waiting on contracts from NYS DEC

WQIP Round 12 Hydroseeding Grant – complete and paid from the state! Going to apply again on the CFA's as soon as they come out, hopefully this month.

FCRTA- working on ATV easements and planning. Next meeting will be July 7th at 6pm at the office. Goal: get GEIS done and open trail. Our goal for 2020is to get the GEIS done and to open a trail.

SLRWP- progressing. Last meeting was 4/15/2020 via WEBEX with about 35 people attending. We are still working on the billing I sent earlier this year and I will begin working on a new one for the rest of 2019 after adjustments are made to the other bill. The actual project will be complete by 12/2020 and the final Characterization Plan has been uploaded to the website. Consultant is working on the prioritization plan.

Policy for COVID-19 – Policy and Employee Acknowledgement Form prepared.

Meetings– Zoom meetings, managers meetings, and watershed meetings attended.

Assisting lake associations with planning project compilation of projects they can use

Applying for grants – with everyone, AGNPS Rd26 and NYS Grown & Certified

Water and Soil questions

COVID-19 – Office has been open by appointment only, which has allowed the staff to continue to work on projects from home, completed some field work and working with the public.

8 Year Review Franklin County Ag District – Donna mailed all landowners an Ag District form to determine if landowner still wanted their property in ag district or if they want to opt out or the add land into the ag district. A total of 2,418 parcels containing 116,366.31 acres are in the Ag District throughout Franklin County.

7. **Correspondences:** Franklin County Manager letter dated 5/26/2020 (no further payments in 2020 to our district/will do their best to support us in 2021); NYACD monthly update letters for January, April and May; Grassroots editions for March, April and June; National Association of Conservation Districts 2019 Annual Report; 2019 Chemung County SWCD Annual Report Newsletter; Indian River Lake Conservancy Winter 2020 Newsletter; NYS Legislative Commission on Rural Resources 2019 Spring Issue; NYS Soil & Water Part B 2019 Conservation Project Financial Assistance Letter.
8. **New Business:**
- Chastity discussed the Franklin County SWCD COVID-19 Policy and Acknowledgement form and that the main door to the building is currently still locked as NRCS and FSA are still working under Federal Guidelines and their offices are not open to the public;
Discussed and approved,
1st P. Lauzon, 2nd S. Gokey, all in favor, **carried**.
 - Chastity requested a transfer approval of \$50,555.40 from our Checking account to our AEM Yr. 16 account
Discussed and approved.
1st E. Lockwood, 2nd P. Lauzon, all in favor, **carried**.
Chastity brought to the board's attention an error made by the Community Bank with one of our accounts and we had to transfer from our Checking account to our NARE account \$750.00 to correct their error.
 - Chastity requested \$4000 to order more seed for the Hydroseeder, if needed.
Discussed and approved
1st S. Gokey, 2nd E. Lockwood, all in favor, **carried**.
 - Chastity discussed with the board our 2020 Tree Sale Summary, explaining at this point we made a profit of \$4,006.93, however we are waiting for a bill from Fulton County SWCD for hauling fees for transporting our tree orders to Saratoga County for Kristin and Chris to pick up and bring here.
 - We received a letter from the County that we will not receive the rest of our county allocations for the rest of the year due to budget issues at the county level.
9. **Old Business:**
- NYACD 2020 Assessment Invoice for \$1500.00 – Discussed and tabled again until next meeting

Next meeting will be on Monday, July 20, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the AG Service Center, Malone, NY.

Meeting Adjourned at 8:03 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Wright / Chastity Miller
Secretary / District Manager