

**Franklin County Soil and Water Conservation District**

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Malone, NY 12953

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www.fcswcd.org

**MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

**January 21, 2025**

**ATTENDANCE:**

**Directors:** **Staff**

Ralph Child Kristin Ballou

Paul Lauzon             Devin Normandeau

Dennis Egan Allisa Blanchard

Thomas Derouchie Sarah Otis

Shayla Pfendler

1. **Meeting was called to order:** Vice Chairman, Dennis Egan, called meeting to order at 9:46 AM – Quorum present.
2. Dennis Egan turned meeting over to Kristin Ballou for election of officers.

**Motion to nominate Ralph Child to chairman:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

**Motion to close ballot:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

Kristin Ballou turned meeting over to Chairman, Ralph Child.

**Motion to nominate Dennis Egan as Vice Chairman**: made by Thomas Derouchie, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

**Motion to nominate Thomas Derouchie as Treasurer**: made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Dennis Egan, carried.

**Motion to appoint Allisa Blanchard as Secretary to the Board**: made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

1. **Meeting Minutes:** One formatting error to be amended.

**Motion to approve meeting minutes for regular meeting December 18, 2024:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

1. **Board Member Reports:** None to report.

1. **Financial Reports:** Kristin Ballou read through reports presented and reviewed by board. Kristin explained that discrepancies are continuing to be worked on. Kristin explained that Rhonda Jarvis had recently visited to assist with end of year reporting. Abstract and vouchers were reviewed by all members and signed.

**Motion to accept financials:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

**Motion to add Positive Pay to required accounts per Kristin Ballou’s recommendations:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

**Motion to purchase tonneau cover for Chevy truck for $159.99:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

**Motion to pay Life Science Labs past due invoices without interest:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

**Motion to purchase field gear and apparel for staff not to exceed $2,000:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

**Motion to purchase supplies and materials for the environmental education program not to exceed $100:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Dennis Egan, carried.

**Motion for preapproval of Agriculture Environmental Management (AEM) Implementation payments not to exceed, $9,750 for Dominic Dettola, Akwesasne Seed Hub for $ 17,916, Poppydale Dairy for $18,289.80:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

**Motion to pre-approve Ag Nonpoint source round 24, payment pending SWCC approval:** made by Thomas Derouchie, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

1. **Correspondence:** Kristin Ballou discussed National Conservation District letter and read the letter from Sue Hagan, from Lake Champlain Basin Program about Sarah Otis’s exemplary work conducting a Nature Journaling course at Paul Smith’s and the satisfaction from the course participants.

1. **SWCD Business:**
2. **Tree removal and concrete curb update:** Kristin informed the board that tree was removed shortly after Christmas, courtesy of the Franklin County Highway Department and they did a wonderful job. Paul Lauzon asked if the stump would be ground down and Thomas Derouchie explained the Franklin County Highway Department did an excellent job of cutting the tree close to the ground.
3. **Water Quality Symposium 2025:** Kristin informed the board that the Water Quality Symposium for 2025 will be in Rochester, New York, March 11-14. Paul Lauzon asked if the office would be closed and Kristin confirmed that the office will be closed those days as attendance of all staff is mandatory.

**Motion to approve attendance of all staff at the Water Quality Symposium, March 11-14, 2025, and office closure:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

1. **Policy Review:**

**Motion to approve Vacation Policy amendments:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

**Motion to approve Flextime and Telework policy with agreed upon amendments:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

**Motion to approve Agriculture Environmental Management (AEM) policy amendments:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

1. **Meeting Schedule:** Open discussion about meeting dates and times commenced. Both the staff and board members agreed that the third Tuesday of the month at 9 am was the best option for all.
2. **Extension of Ag NPS Round 27-Trumble:** Devin explained the need for the extension of this contract.

**Motion to extend Ag NPS Round 27-Trumble from March 01, 2025 to March 01, 2026:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

1. **Training Plans:** Board members agreed on late winter training before spring, February or March whichever worked best for the trainer. This year training will be District Law. Training plans will be presented for review and approval at the February meeting.
2. **Appointment of representatives:**

**Motion to appoint Kristin Ballou as CWICNY representative and Sarah Otis as alternate:** made by Dennis Egan, 2nd by Paul Lauzon, carried.

**Motion to appoint Kristin Ballou as NARE representative:** made by Thomas Derouchie, 2nd by Dennis Egan, carried.

**Motion to appointment Sarah Otis as St. Lawrence Watershed Revitalization Committee Representative and Shayla Pfendler as alternate:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

**Motion to appoint Kristin Ballou as FOIL Retention Officer:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Dennis Egan, carried.

**Motion to appoint Devin Normandeau as AG PAC representative:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

**Motion to appoint Sarah Otis as Water Quality Coordinating Committee (WQCC):** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

1. **Ag NPS 30:** Discussion about support for the district submitting six applications for Ag NPS 30.

**Motion to approve the submission of six applications for Ag NPS 30:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Thomas Derouchie, carried.

1. **Drone:** Shayla Pfendler will be pursuing the unmanned pilots license through the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) in order to fly a drone to take photos for the district.

**Motion to approve funding for the exam fee and study materials for Shayla Pfendler:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Dennis Egan, carried.

1. **Pesticide:** Sarah Otis will be taking the Pesticide Technician Certification exam through New York Department of Environmental Conservation (NYS DEC) in February. Upon gaining one year of experience, Sarah will be eligible to apply for the Pesticide Applicator Certification.

**Motion to approve funding for the exam and associated certification fees for the Pesticide Applicator/Technician through the NYS DEC:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Dennis Egan, carried.

1. **Vacant Board Position:** The open position of a board member was discussed by staff and board members. The consensus was that it would be beneficial if the board could gain a member from the southern portion of Franklin County to cover more area. It was discussed that it could be advertised in multiple ways, such as the newspaper, a post on Facebook, and a posting on the website.
2. **Reports:**

**Kristin Ballou-District Manager-**

**AEM**

* + Working on Forest Conservation Plans as time allows
  + AEM Strategy Meeting and update
  + LCBP Covered Barnyard Project –working on contractor bids
* Part B – 4 Forest Management Plans – 2025 4 Forest Management Plans
* Meetings/Workshops/Other
  + Water Quality Symposium Course planning

**CWICNY**

* + Project site visits
  + USFS Emergency Forest Restoration Program meetings and contract discussions
  + AEM Strategy Meeting
  + Year end reporting

**Grants**:

* + **Ag. NPS Round 24** – working on closeout
  + **Ag. NPS Round 27** – project under construction, nearing completion
  + **CAFO 3** – finalizing closeout paperwork
  + **Franklin County Septic Grant** – application review and closeout document review and approval
  + **Lake Champlain Watershed Capacity Contract** – contract signed and waiting for execution
  + **Nature Conservancy Planting with a Purpose Grant** – advertising program and discussing it with interested landowners
  + **RRAMP and Forest Roads (CWICNY)** – cleaning up financials, tracking projects and payments. Prepping to closeout Round 1. Working with Ag & Markets to develop a different data collection option that will also make the data tracking easier. Anticipated to roll out in the spring.
  + **Smart Growth Grant** – sent Inter-Municipal Agreement and Procurement Policy to County Attorney for review and feedback, awaiting a response

**Allisa Blanchard-** **Secretary to the Board-** No formal report was provided.

**Devin-District Technician**

**AEM**

AEM Round 18 Tier 4 Projects:

1. Not started 6- Closing out
2. Fence and well in 7- Closing out
3. Not started 8- Closing out
4. Not started 9- Not started
5. Access Road started 10- Not started

11- Closing out

Tier 1: 2 completed

Tier 2: 2 completed

Grown and Certified Infrastructure and Technology Grant out 11/27

* Assisted 3 farms with application
* 4 more farms interested

**Ag NPS**

Rd. 24, 16-1 (Oakes) manure storage

* Closing out project

Rd. 27 (Trumble)

* BMP implementation almost completed
* Met with farmer to go over invoices and payments
* Extension

Round 30 (Applications due Feb. 24)

* 4 potential projects:
  + Feed storage relocation
  + Silage Leachate Control System
  + Covered Barnyard/Manure Storage
  + CNMP
* Discussing projects with farms

**CAFO**

Papa’s Dairy Manure Storage

* Closing out project

**CRF Rd 7 CRF Rd 8**

All cover crops certified Developed Plan of Work

Still waiting for state contract CNMPs dropped

**Meetings**

State Programs Advisory Committee-1/1

AEM Strategy Meeting-1/16

**Sarah Otis-District Technician**

**AEM**

* SWCC meeting tune in
* 5 year strategy meeting in Ray Brook

**Part C**

* Connected with Malone Library for kids’ programs
  + Will be hosting a nature detective program February 18th and World Water Day program March 4th
* Taught a nature journaling class for NYS DEC Becoming an Outdoors Woman event at Paul Smith’s College
* Preparing for Women in Stem event February 8th at the Burke Center at Miner Institute
* Had team meetings discussing potential Alcoa grant money that can be used for education and outreach

**Permits**

**Mines**

* Completed and submitted Scott Robinsons Upstate Pit expansion
* Started helping the Village of Malone with Lane Street Pit permit renewal

**Wetlands**

* Observed wetland on landowners property in Saint Regis Falls for potential bridge permit – definitely not possible

**WQIP**

* Receiving bids for hydroseeding mulch

**Workshop**

* Non-Tidal Stream Protocol Certification for NAACC Assessments
* Started studying for pesticide applicator license

**Meetings**

* CWICNY
* World Water Day

**Shayla Pfendler-District Technician-**

**Part C**

Planting with Purpose (The Nature Conservancy)

* Meeting on 1/14, 3 potential candidates
* Moving forward with developing planting plans for interested landowners

Municipal Assistance

* Salt Reduction Program received applications from: Village of Saranac Lake
* Tire Recycling locations and interest: Chateaugay set, Village of Saranac Lake & Town of Franklin interested; Potential in Brushton/Moira? Or the Franklin County Highway Garage

2025 Tree Recycling

* 17 total trees recycled
* Trees donated to goat farm instead of town collection to chip

2024 Part C Final Report

* Collecting data for narratives of projects completed and calculating expenses for reporting

**NAACC Culvert Assessment training**

* Non-Tidal Streams Protocol 1/8/25
* Terrestrial Passage Assessment 1/8/25
* To complete: Culvert Condition Assessment TBD

**2025 Tree Sale**

* 46 Orders to date
* Had to order more white pine and white cedar

**Social Media**

* Updated Facebook with newsletter, Tree Sale, tree recycling process

**NARE**

* 2025 School email complete, awaiting final adjustments from website

**ALCOA Foundation Grant**

* Had a meeting to brainstorm ideas within office, awaiting meeting with Alcoa Foundation representative
* Requesting assistance with - Education Program, Envirothon, Community Workshops (beekeeping, food longevity, gardening, etc), pollinator garden (Bangor potentially), tree planting (street trees), tree planter, signs in park for interpretive trail, education and engagement

**Meetings and Site Visits Attended**

* CWICNY
* AEM Strategy
* Chateaugay to look at culvert
* Burke to look at tree health issues

**Ryan Cunningham- NYS SWCC**

The New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee (SWCC) has released the 2024 annual reporting documents for districts, including State Aid, Treasurer’s Reports, and Annual Reports, all of which are due by February 15, 2025. These documents are available on the SWCC SharePoint site. Districts should submit claims for payments prior to the "Blackout Period," which starts April 1, 2025, and lasts until June/July 2025, with a February 21 deadline for advance payment requests. Additionally, the SWCC has announced a total of $25 million for the Round 30 Agricultural Non-Point Source Program, with $14 million from the Environmental Protection Fund and $11 million from the Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act, with applications due by February 24, 2025. The next SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee (SPAC) meeting will take place on January 8, 2025, with both virtual and in-person options. AEM Strategy 2026-2030 Regional Meetings are scheduled, with locations and dates across New York, but registration closed on January 7, 2025. The NACD 79th Annual Meeting will be held in Salt Lake City from February 8–12, 2025, and the 2025 Water Quality Symposium is scheduled for March 11–14, 2025, in Rochester. SWCC also encourages submission of CRF Round 8 Plans of Work and announces other funding opportunities, including the Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program and a $15 million DEC Community Reforestation Grant Program, with applications for both due by March 12, 2025.

**NRCS-USDA**

**2025 Contracts**

High Tunnels

* 4/8 Pre-Approved
* 2 Will be considered ineligible due to Farm Records

**FMP**

* 1/1 Pre-Approved

**CSP**

* Still processing applications
* 2nd sign up will be due in March

**NRCS Job Opening**

-Resource Conservationist panel has been chosen, position will be filled shortly.

1. **Meeting Adjourned at 11:27 am**

**Motion to adjourn meeting:** made by Paul Lauzon, 2nd by Dennis Egan, carried.

**Next meeting**: February 18, 2025, at 9 AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Allisa Blanchard

Secretary to the Board