

Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, June 10, 2024

Directors present at the District office, 25451 State Route 12, Watertown, NY: Jason Bast, Tom Boxberger, Dick Campany, Mike Kiechle, Dan McBride, and Jim Nabywaniec. Others: AEA, Ryan Cunningham; CCE, Abigail Jantzi; ERE, George Birth, Forester, Jonathan Crast; Executive Director, Patrick Crast; Administrative Assistant, Rhonda Redder; and ERS, Sarah Trick. Absent: Chuck Eastman

Chairman Bast called the meeting to order at 5:30 pm. ***Director Boxberger moved to approve the minutes of the May meeting. Motion seconded by Director Kiechle. Carried.***

I REPORTS

Financial: May financial reports were reviewed; claims and bank statements were available. Open invoices total: \$73,194.75. ***Director Boxberger moved to approve the financial reports and sign the Itemized Disbursements Report \$122,362.36; seconded by Director Kiechle. Carried.***

Cooperating Agencies

SWCC - Ryan: CRF Round 8 applications are due 6/24; 4 tracks were reviewed. There are funds remaining from the CAFO Waste Storage grants; another round (CAFO Enhanced Nutrient and Methane Management Program) will soon be released focused on cover and flares for methane reduction with 100% funding. Applications for uncovered storage structures will not be funded. Next meeting is 6/18. The National Envirothon will be held 7/28-8/3 and volunteers are needed. More information will also be coming soon for another ecosystem-based management grant.

CCE - Abbey: We are hiring several specialists: Crop and Soils Specialist, Ag & Natural Resources Program Manager, Food Systems Marketing Specialist, and an Ag and Workforce Development Educator. Sue Gwise is retiring at the end of the week. Upcoming events: Beekeeper Forum will be held on 6/20 and 7/18. A Walk and Talk will be held on 7/10 at TI Park. In follow up to the Fast Track to Farming series, a commercial vegetable production workshop will be held on 7/27. Jefferson County Fair is 7/9-14; 4-H and FFA youth projects will be showcased. Ag trivia night will be held at the fair on 7/12 to benefit 4-H memorial scholarships; the cost is \$25 per team, up to 6 people; cheese will be auctioned off between rounds of trivia. A Twilight Pasture Walk will be held on 7/31 at Northrop's Farm to discuss pasture management, rotational grazing, soil health, weed ID, etc.

NYACD, FSA, JCADC & NRCS: No report

Director Reports:

Boxberger: Attended a workshop on agrivoltaic farming. Although there are often restrictions from grants, solar farms can utilize or lease the land and generate revenue while continuing to benefit from the tax advantages. Spacing requirements may be needed to keep the land in agricultural use.

Nabywaniec: County Administrator, Bob Hagemann, is retiring; an official announcement is coming soon.

McBride: AES is hosting a public meeting on Tuesday, June 18, at 5 pm at the Croghan Fire Hall to discuss their proposed Sugar Maple Solar Project.

Executive Director: We are busy writing CRF grants and preparing for AEM. Sarah is working with the Stormwater Coalition, and Jonathan has been marking timber. Beginning next month, employees will be reporting on their upcoming work between board meetings.

II CORRESPONDENCE

- A. WSB Security awareness training: Completed
- B. MVP: Increased rates for 2025
- C. Verizon: Rate increase
- D. IRLC: Newsletter

III OLD BUSINESS

- A. Executive Director Vacancy Update

IV NEW BUSINESS

- A. Inventory: **Director Boxberger made a motion to dispose of water quality inventory items with no value and to sell the Nikon Coolpix camera at the best price. Motion seconded by Director Campany. Carried.** (Upstate Freshwater Institute will assist with the analysis.)
- B. The Nature Conservancy (TNC): The scope of work was reviewed for a pilot program to assist non-ag landowners that don't qualify for other programs with a goal to enroll 20 landowners and reach out to 100 landowners. We would develop planting plans for interested landowners. **Director Nabywaniec made a motion to proceed with TNC on the administration of this project. Motion seconded by Director McBride. Carried.**
- C. Fort Drum: We have been approached with a conservation opportunity to assist with the management of their natural resources. We will meet with them on June 12.
- D. Oneida SWCD: **Director Boxberger made a motion to renew a one-year agreement with Oneida SWCD for engineering services. Motion seconded by Director Campany. Carried.**
- E. Black River Watershed Coalition: Lewis and Hamilton SWCDs are seeking to establish a coalition for grant writing leverage; grants would be administered through the FLOWPA Coordinator. **Director Kiechle made a motion to enter a Memorandum of Understanding to form a Black River Watershed Coalition with Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, and Oneida SWCDs. Motion seconded by Director Boxberger.**

Chairman Bast and CNMP Justin Bach recused themselves from CRF 8 discussion as they are applicants or related to applicants. Both left the meeting room at 6:12 pm and returned at 6:43 pm.

- F. Climate Resilient Farming – Round 8, Track 4: **Director Kiechle moved to submit a grant proposal for Round 8 of Climate Resilient Farming for \$373,200 for tree planting on 4 different farms. Motion seconded by Director Boxberger. Carried.**
- G. Climate Resilient Farming – Round 8, Soil Health – Track 3: **Director Boxberger moved to submit a grant proposal for Round 8 of Climate Resilient Farming for \$587,723 for a custom applicator to inject manure twice per year. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.**
- H. Climate Resilient Farming – Round 8, Soil Health – Track 3: **Director Kiechle moved to submit a grant proposal for Round 8 of Climate Resilient Farming in the amount of \$368,480 for a custom applicator who services farms in the area to obtain a frac tank and injector bar to act as a mobile pit. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.**

Chairman Bast again left the room at 6:48 pm to recuse himself from the discussion and vote. Secretary Kiechle presided.

- I. Climate Resilient Farming – Round 8, Soil Health – Track 3: **Director Boxberger moved to submit a grant proposal for Round 8 of Climate Resilient Farming: 4 farms, 3 years cover crops for each, total of 9600 acres of no-till, for three of four grants totaling \$1.5 million, plus an equipment portion of \$300,000, to include a fixed rate for cover crops. Motion seconded by Director Company.** Discussion held regarding the District’s liability for equipment purchased through grants we administer. Multiple ideas were considered, and it was decided to wait until an equipment grant is awarded to decide how the funds would be dispersed and allow adequate time for legal consultation. **Carried.**

Director Bast returned at 6:52 pm and presided.

A request has been submitted to SWCC for the Ag Workshop held in April to be approved for Performance Measures 1 (participation in State, Regional, and National meetings and functions) as the workshop was open statewide and attendees represented counties throughout at least one-third of NYS.

Meeting was adjourned by Chairman Bast 7:03 pm.

Next meeting: July 8, 2024, at 5:30 pm

Director _____ Date _____ Director _____ Date _____