

Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, August 12, 2024

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

Chairman Bast called the meeting to order at 5:33 pm. *Director Boxberger moved to approve the minutes of the July meeting. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.*

I REPORTS

Financial: July financial reports were reviewed; claims and bank statements were available. Open invoices total: \$65,000.00. The 2nd Quarter Active Grant Updates Report was reviewed. *Director Campany moved to approve the financial reports and sign the Itemized Disbursements Report of \$297,787.70; seconded by Director Boxberger. Carried.*

Cooperating Agencies

CCE – Abbey: We have two new employees: Colin Hostetter, working in the tri-county region and based in St. Lawrence County, is the Farm Business Management Specialist and Makalya Dickinson, working in Jefferson County, is the new Ag Workforce Development Educator. We also have a new Ag Program Manager starting (Jefferson) in September. Upcoming events: Outdoor Adventure Day at Fort Drum will be held on 8/17; A Community Input Session on large scale solar will be held on 8/20 at the Hilton Garden Inn to collect community perspectives; dinner will be provided. Fast Track to Farming series will resume in St. Lawrence County 9/27-28 with a focus on agribusiness, marketing, livestock, horticulture, etc. Beef Cattle Management for Beginners will be held on 10/1. 4-H Animal Science 101 for youth aged 8-12 will be held 10/22-12/3.

Director Reports:

Boxberger: Will be speaking at the upcoming solar workshop on 8/20 from a local government perspective on behalf of the Town of Watertown.

Eastman: Asked to be on the steering committee; however, chose not to participate. Hope solar sites are installed on the poorest soils, not the best. Expressed empathy for the manure spill in Mannsville as he had a similar incident; DEC response, news cameras, etc. can be overwhelming. Discussed the need for a portable hydraulic pump, specialized for incidents such as this and housed in the southern part of Jefferson County. Pat will reach out to Joe Plummer, Jefferson County Emergency Management.

Campany: Volunteered at the Indian River Lakes Conservancy's Nature Grows Kids Camp, a three-day camp, and taught children about the importance of trees.

Nabywaniec: Two SWCD resolutions have been passed: Forestry renewal and the ash removal agreement.

Staff Reports – Upcoming projects:

Trick: Continue water sampling for Black River and Hyde Lake, work with the municipalities in the Stormwater Coalition, continue NAACC assessments and help Justin with AEM.

Staff Reports – Upcoming projects (Continued)

Birth: Working on the specs for a new project, continue with design work for AgNPS; we have 4-5 upcoming projects due in October that need designs to provide good cost estimates.

Bach: Finished 2 CNMPs, working on others, hopefully 5 will be completed by October. One Lewis County farm is applying for a grant and another in Jefferson. Preparing budget sheets for AEM Tier 4 projects. Working on a nutrient methane grant which is due in October and an older CAFO grant. Helping Sarah with water sampling and NAACC.

J Crast: Marking timber sale in Worth, inventorying white ash, preparing for the red pine sale, boundary work on Williams & Parks lot, mowing, herbicide NRCS project, and working with The Nature Conservancy on reforestation projects for 2025.

II CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Jefferson County HR: Payroll Certification
 - B. FLOWPA: Water Resources Board – FLOWPA gear
 - C. NACD: Dues request
 - D. *WEX
 - E. NYS SWCC: Round 24
 - F. NYS SWCC: New AEAs – Jason Kokkinos and Chastity Miller
 - G. NYS Tug Hill Commission: Invitation to their annual dinner
- *Outgoing

III OLD BUSINESS

- A. Executive Director: ***Director Boxberger moved to enter executive session at 6:03 pm to discuss the employment of a particular person. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.*** Jantzi, Bach, Birth, P Crast, Redder, and Trick left the room. Executive session ended at 6:20 pm and everyone returned to the meeting room. ***Director Boxberger moved to offer the executive director position to Patricia Shulenburg at a starting salary of \$77,251 to be adjusted on 1/1/2025 when full responsibility is assumed. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.***
- B. Fort Drum: Proposed plan of work was reviewed; we are waiting to hear back. Their IGSA team is reviewing our proposal, and we should hear back from them after their meeting on Wednesday.
- C. Performance Measures 1G: Ag Workshop has been approved by SWCC
- D. Slack Lot: History reviewed. Director Nabywaniec reported that County Attorney Paulsen is retiring at the end of August. Therefore, information will be relayed to the legislators to seek a resolution before Attorney Paulsen retires.

IV NEW BUSINESS

- A. Lewis SWCD: The hourly rate and mileage rate have been updated and at Lewis County's request, the agreement has been extended to coincide with the AEM year, 12/31/25. (The previous agreement was for one year.) ***Director Boxberger moved to renew the CNMP/design agreement with Lewis SWCD. Motion seconded by Director Company. Carried.***
- B. Timber Sale: The prospectus was sent to 9 loggers with a minimum bid of \$9450.00, and only one bid was received. ***Director Company moved to accept a bid from Danny Robbins Logging in the amount of \$10,651 for the timber in the prospectus for Washington Park, Stand 27. Motion seconded by Director Eastman. Carried.***

IV NEW BUSINESS - Continued

- C. Black River Watershed Coalition: Working in conjunction with other SWCDs in the watershed oftentimes helps to leverage funding. **Director Boxberger made a motion to sign a Memorandum of Understanding to form the Black River Coalition with Hamilton, Herkimer, Lewis, and Oneida SWCDs. Motion seconded by Director Campany. Carried.**
- D. Draft 2025 Budget: Distributed, but no discussion needed at this time as there are many variables.
- E. Grant Application Policy: History and need for this policy was reviewed. **Director Eastman moved to adopt the proposed Grant Application Policy. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.**
- F. AEM: We have a small manure storage and a bridge/stream crossing to implement. The original agreement was 87.5% paid by AEM and 12.5% paid by the landowner. We knew the costs, planned to do the work ourselves with our equipment, and we notified the participants of the fixed amounts. We were under the impression that we would reduce the landowner portion to 7.5% by acting as the contractor. NYS now realizes the need to allow Districts to build projects as the preferred contractor; however, it can't be changed for AEM 18. NYS can pay 82.5%, but we would need to utilize Part C for the remaining portion. **Director Boxberger moved to allow the AEM Year 18 participants to contribute 7.5% and utilize Part C for the remainder. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.**
- G. Employee Handbook: Proposal to amend the longevity portion of the handbook was presented. **Director Nabywaniec made a motion to amend the employee handbook and adopt the proposed longevity policy. Motion seconded by Director Campany. Carried.**
- H. AEM: 1) **Director Boxberger moved to adopt the contract with AEM #045-6011 to implement a small manure storage structure and establish the cost-share percentage. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.** 2) **Director Campany moved to adopt the contract with AEM #045-5128 to build a bridge across a stream and establish the cost-share percentage. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.** 3) We have chosen to utilize FLOWPA funds instead of AEM as this project is within the Sandy Creek watershed. To minimize costs, we will construct this bridge. **Director Nabywaniec moved to adopt a second contract with AEM #045-6011 to construct a bridge utilizing FLOWPA funds. Motion seconded by Director Eastman. Carried.**

Chairman Bast inquired if the current office space is sufficient if the Fort Drum contract is awarded. We will make the necessary adjustments, and we can continue to operate from this building with some minor renovations, if needed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 pm.

Next meeting: September 9, 2024, at 5:30 pm

Director

Date

Director

Date