

# *Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District*

*Board of Directors Meeting – Monday, December 9, 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, Isaac Matlock; CNMP, Justin Bach; ERE, George Birth; Forester, Jonathan Crast; Executive Director, Patrick Crast; Administrative Assistant, Rhonda Redder; Executive Director, Patricia Shulenburg; and ERS, Sarah Trick.  
Absent: Chuck Eastman

Chairman Bast called the meeting to order at 5:46 pm after an overview of forest management scale sales by Jonathan Crast. ***Director Boxberger moved to approve the minutes of the November meeting. Motion seconded by Director Kiechle. Carried.***

## **I REPORTS**

**Financial:** November financial reports were reviewed; claims and bank statements were available. Open invoices total: \$110,669.95. ***Director Campany moved to approve the financial reports and sign the Itemized Disbursements Report \$230,155.86; seconded by Director Kiechle. Carried.***

### **Cooperating Agencies:**

SWCC – Ryan: Round 30 has been released and applications are due 2/24; this is double the usual amount. Bond Act funding may be used to support implementation projects. ENMP grants are being ranked; results should be available at the January SWCC meeting, another round is expected to follow. An in-person AEM strategy meeting will be held on 1/16 to discuss the changes, and Cortland will host another session. AEM will be increased from 2 to 3 years with a higher hourly rate. Annual report documents will be sent out soon. AEM Annual Plan of Work will be due in July.

NYACD - Letter from Blanche Hurlbutt: NE annual event will be held 9/21-24/25. NYS Envirothon will be 5/28-29/25. Legislative Days will be 3/3-4/25.

CCE – Isaac: Our new crops and soils specialist starts 1/16. A new grant opportunity is available through NY Farm Viability for beginning farmers; deadline is 1/24. Abby is working with Pro-Dairy to host an Organic Dairy Peer Group Discussion on 12/11.

FSA, JCADC, NRCS: No report

### **Director Reports:**

Kiechle: NYS Annual Farm Bureau meeting was held last week. The contract processing concerns were discussed, and it was brought to Commissioner Ball's attention. Justin explained that the CRF applications were due in May and were required to be "shovel ready". Funding was announced in August, and we learned that our projects were funded. We received a letter dated October 1 which is the official beginning of the contract period; however, we can't expect the contract for another year. Prices and circumstances change from the application period during a lengthy processing time; it may be 18 months or more. There are concerns statewide. Director Kiechle reported that Commissioner Ball explained it is not a funding issue, but an IT program which reviews contracts. There are glitches and not adequate staff. We understand that it is not an issue with Ag and Markets, but a delay due to the state's system.

## Employee Reports:

Justin: Will be preparing 6-7 grant application for Round 30; proposed projects have cost estimates based on preliminary designs. Have 10 CNMPs to write and some in other counties. The increased AEM rate from \$51 to \$70 effective 1/1/26 will enable us to provide more assistance to other Districts. We earned roughly \$15,000 from other counties this year, and I have 4-5 plans to finish.

George: Continuing to work on the designs which are due in February; obtaining cost estimates.

Sarah: We met with UFI to discuss potential scenarios to model. We will meet with DEC in January to get their blessing on potential models and conduct a survey to get public feedback on the scenarios. Modeling is taking longer than we thought. Will help with soil group worksheets and Round 30 applications. We have a Stormwater Coalition meeting this Thursday where we will hopefully renew our stormwater agreement. We are still waiting on signatures for the one-year items for everyone except the county. Once the county makes a legal determination as to whether they require an Enforcement Response Plan they will be in compliance. We met with Black River's board and shared the templates with them again. They planned to catch up on permit requirements, but we haven't received anything further.

Jon: Will be working with TNC on planting plans. Flyers were mailed out to residents within the Sandy Creek watershed, and we received 3 calls today. Landowner intake forms are prepared before the site visits to check access and canopies. Will continue to prepare for spring site prep, mark boundary lines this winter, and assist with soil group worksheets. Working with Justin on CRF planning. Opey clarified that TNC's goal is to reforest fallow fields or old pastures, not ag land. More tree planting opportunities are expected through the next round of CRF.

Patricia: Attended Administrative Conference and Manager's meeting and learning about our programs. Hope experience at THC, DEC (permit analyst), DOT (bridges road, culverts). Excited to join the team.

## II CORRESPONDENCE

- A. Jefferson County: 2025 Appropriation \*outgoing
- B. Jefferson County: Board appointments
- C. Jefferson County Treasurer: White Ash funds (3)\*
- D. NYS SWCC: Part B 2025
- E. NYS SWCC: Round 24 C701365 & C701363
- F. FLOWPA 2025: Advance received
- G. NYSLRS: Retirement of Patrick Crast

## IV NEW BUSINESS

- A. Hyde Lake: ***Director Kiechle moved to send a letter of support for the Preservation Alliance of Hyde Lake for their research project "Combating harmful algal blooms in Hyde Lake: An integrated approach using comprehensive sediment analysis and innovative biosensing for cyanotoxin risk management. Motion seconded by Director Company. Carried.***
- B. Truck purchase: ***Director Boxberger moved to proceed with the purchase of a diesel Ford XL with plow and tow package up to \$75,000. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.*** We will work with County Purchasing to obtain the vehicle through the state bid process.
- C. Liability insurance: Premiums have increased, two ATVs were added this year. We paid \$11,673.34 in 2024 after renewal credit and dividends were issued in July. ***Director Company moved to renew our liability insurance with Eastern Shore Associates and pay \$14,962.19 for 2025 coverage. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.***

IV NEW BUSINESS - Continued

- D. Gold Spike Trail: The landowner doesn't want the ATVs riding across his land, and there is another route which is highly trafficked with local riders. **Director Kiechle moved to close a portion of the Gold Spike Trail on County reforestation land. Director Boxberger seconded the motion. Carried.**
- E. Engineering: We need an engineer to stamp our designs. We have utilized a retired NRCS engineer for many years; however, he won't stamp NRCS projects. We met with GYMO and drafted an agreement; costs would be incorporated into the grants. **Director Kiechle moved to enter into an agreement with GYMO for engineering services on an "as needed" basis. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.**
- F. Franklin SWCD: **Director Boxberger moved to enter into an agreement with Franklin County SWCD to provide CNMP and design services at the state rate. Motion seconded by Director Kiechle. Carried.**
- G. Jefferson County: The County Attorney finalized the white ash agreement. **Director Campany moved to enter into an agreement with Jefferson County to harvest the endangered white ash. Seconded by Director McBride. Carried.**
- H. Sale of equipment: **Director Kiechle moved to accept the bids and approve the sale of the following items through Auctions International: Beltec H300 Hydraulic 8" Post Auger \$1150.00, Stihl HT131 14" Pole Saw \$165.00, and Jonsered CS2245 16" chainsaw \$85.00. Further, to remove these items from our inventory. Motion seconded by Director Boxberger. Carried.**
- I. Employee handbook: **Director Boxberger moved to amend the employee handbook to add the previously adopted steps for the Executive Director position. Motion seconded by Director Campany. Carried.**
- J. Regenerate NY – Assistance has been requested for tree planting work on Galloo Island. We will provide technical assistance, but nothing further. No action is needed.
- K. Stormwater Coalition: We increased the limit from \$25,000 to \$35,000 and increased the hourly rate to \$65 per hour. Once \$35,000 is reached, the Coalition has the option to cease further assistance from the District or to make an additional payment for the additional hours. **Director Nabywaniec moved to adopt the new terms and renew the agreement with the Stormwater Coalition. Motion seconded by Director Boxberger. Carried.**
- L. Scale Sale: **Director Kiechle moved to approve the agreement with Lyle Mosher for the removal of White Ash on the Spencer Edgar Witchley lot. Motion seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Carried.**

Meeting adjourned at 6:38 pm.

Next meeting: January 13, 2025, at 5:30 pm with a presentation by George Birth

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Director

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Date

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Director

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Date