

Jefferson County Soil and Water Conservation District

Board of Directors Meeting – Wednesday, July 29, 2026

Directors present at the District Office, 25451 State Route 12, Watertown, NY: Jason Bast, Jim Nabywaniec, Dan McBride, and Mike Kiechle. Chuck Eastman arrived at 5:54 PM.

Others: Justin Bach, Executive Director; Katie Spaulding, Office Manager; Sarah Trick, ERS; and Sam Anderson, Forester. Absent: Tom Boxberger & Dick Company.

Following the Spring 2026 Tree Plantings presentation by Sam Anderson, Chair Bast called the meeting to order at 5:30 PM. ***Director Kiechle moved to approve the June meeting minutes; seconded by Director McBride. Unanimous vote - carried.***

I REPORTS

Financial:

June financial reports were reviewed; claims and bank statements were available. Open invoices total: \$24,713.15. Profit and Loss Prevention Comparison was reviewed for the second quarter. ***Director Kiechle moved to approve the financial reports and to sign the Itemized Disbursements Report of \$202,095.96; seconded by Director McBride. Unanimous vote - carried.***

Cooperating Agencies:

SWCC – Ryan Cunningham’s written report was provided to board members.

NYACD – July Directors Report was made available for review.

No reports for: CCE, FSA, JCADC, NRCS

Director Reports:

Kiechle: The Farmland Protection meeting is tomorrow night.

Bast: A federal trial has begun for a lawsuit against a farm in Clayton that is accused of polluting waterways that flow into the St. Lawrence River. Court proceedings have recently begun in Syracuse.

Bach: Active Grants for the 2nd quarter were reviewed. Katie will submit the request to have the following titles submitted through NYS HELPS Program: Office Manager, District Forester, and Technician if permitted (per Board of Directors approval). The Board of Directors were invited to the Managers Meeting being held in November, which counts toward Performance Measures. Director Bast or Director Kiechle may be able to attend and will confirm their attendance the closer we get.

We received our second quarter payment from The Nature Conservancy (TNC). Sam is working on fall tree plantings, potentially 3-4 sites. We plan on ordering 2,000 tree tubes and stakes to have on-site and available for IRCS tree plantings, TNC Planting With Purpose, and fixing tree tubes as needed.

The Request For Proposal has been sent to the Review Committee for approval for the MS4 Mapping grant. It will be sent out to bid next week. We are still waiting for the final closeout payment for AEM 18; NYS is still in the blackout period. Will be working through Tier 3 plans for AEM 19 projects, 2 CNMPs for Jefferson County, and 2 more for Oswego County in the fall.

We have been working on the 2027 draft budget and the Jefferson County Public Benefit Agency Funding Request. We have a meeting scheduled with County Administration on August 18th to review 2027 projections.

Director Eastman entered the meeting at 5:54 PM.

Staff Reports:

Birth: Written report – Working on the MS4 Mapping grant and policies and helping with the county trail maintenance. Finishing up final designs.

Trick: Working on the MS4 Mapping Grant Request For Proposals. Water sampled today. Has Save the River Floating Classroom tomorrow and STEM Kamp on Friday.

Anderson: Completing site visits preparing for fall 2026 tree plantings and working on the planting plans. All stands harvested since 2019 have been re-inventoried. Completed 147 out of roughly 180 plots. Two of the three benches donated to the county trails have been installed at Totman Gulf. Joe from Oswego County SWCD is coming up tomorrow for mentorship. Working on trail maintenance at Winona next week. Some signage has been replaced already on county trails, and inventory continues to be recorded of what is still needed. Will be completing TNC survivability checks in the next couple of months.

II CORRESPONDENCE

**Outgoing*

- A. Jefferson County Treasurer*
- B. NACD
- C. New Life Nursery
- D. FLOWPA 30th Anniversary
- E. Jefferson Co. Letter of Support*

III OLD BUSINESS

- A. Slack Lot – No update.
- B. Driveway – No update.
- C. Internships – The internships are going well; Lucas' last day is next Friday. Selective Insurance does not provide coverage for those under 21 years of age (1 of the interns), so not being able to drive a District vehicle has been a challenge. Having interns this summer has proven to be a great asset to our ever-growing workload, and we are considering hiring a full-time technician next year.
- D. Security/Fire System – Final quotes were reviewed due to the increase in cost with prevailing wage. ***Director Kiechle moved to approve the purchase, installation, and ongoing monitoring of a new security and fire system per the quote provided by NCC Systems, Inc.; seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Unanimous vote – carried.***

IV NEW BUSINESS

- A. TNC Letter of Support: No action needed.
- B. Town of Watertown Letter of Support: ***Director Nabywaniec moved to approve the letter of support for Town of Watertown to apply for the MS4 Vacuum Truck Program; seconded by Director McBride. Unanimous vote – carried.***

C. Health Insurance Opt Out: Due to increasing costs in health insurance and the opt out being a percentage of the family plan, ***Director Kiechle moved to approve the reduction of the health insurance opt out rate to 29% for 2027, and to continue to decrease 1% each year until it's at 25%, and to update the Employee Handbook to reflect this change; seconded by Director Nabywaniec. Unanimous vote – carried.***

D. Draft Budget: The 2027 draft budget was distributed and reviewed.

Meeting adjourned at 6:19 PM.

Next meeting: Monday, August 24, 2026, at 5:30 PM in Henderson.

Director

Date

Director

Date