



Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District

967 CO HWY 33 – RIVER ROAD – COOPERSTOWN, NEW YORK 13326-9222 – PHONE (607) 547-8337 ext. 4

OTSEGO COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

Friday, March 19, 2021

Held remotely on GoToMeeting.com

United States (Toll Free): [1 866 899 4679](tel:18668994679)

United States: [+1 \(571\) 317-3116](tel:+15713173116)

Access Code: 895-898-989

Members Present:

Les Rathbun, Chair, Grange Rep.
Meg Kennedy, Vice Chair, Cty. Rep
Michele Farwell, County Legislator
Ed Lentz, Member at Large
Doris Moennich, Treasurer/Landowner
Helene Kraham, Ag Landowner (Late)

Staff Present:

Jordan Clements, District Manger
Jessica Miller, Admin. Assistant/
Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

Members Absent:

Helene Kraham, Ag Landowner

Guests Present:

Anthony Capraro, District Conservationist, NRCS

I. **Call to order:** Board Chairman, **Les Rathbun** called the online meeting to order at 10:08 a.m.

II. **Approval of minutes:**

- Motion was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Kennedy** to approve February's board meeting minutes.
Roll Call Vote: Rathbun – Aye, Kennedy – Aye, Lentz – Aye, Moennich – Aye, Farwell - Aye. The motion carried.

III. **Approval of Treasurer's Report & Bills to be paid**

A list of February's bills to be paid were provided to the Board in advance of the meeting.

- Motion was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Kennedy** to approve treasurer's report.
Roll Call Vote: Rathbun – Aye, Kennedy – Aye, Lentz – Aye, Moennich – Aye, Farwell - Aye. The motion carried.
- Motion was made to approve bills paid was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Kennedy**.



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Roll Call Vote: Rathbun – Aye, Kennedy – Aye, Lentz – Aye, Moennich – Aye, Farwell - Aye. The motion carried.

IV. Partner Reports

NRCS-

Anthony Capraro, District Conservationist, NRCS reports NRCS is finalizing 25 2021 EQIP applications. 4 RCPP-EQIP applications under USC. 3 are eligible, and 1 application is not. Hopefully we will be awarded a couple. Jeanine has been busy assessing and doing cost estimates that are due April 1st. There will be two positions in Walton opening up, covering mainly Delaware and Sullivan. USDA is currently at 25% occupancy. Staying as we were, 1 person per office. Staff teleworks as needed to keep staff at 1. Statewide meeting on Wednesday talked about marrying EQIP and CSP. CIP- Conservation Initiative Program, with EQIP we address resource concerns, with CSP landowners take it to the next step. Taking open applications for Urban Ag. Oneonta is an eligible area.

FSA- no report

V. District Secretary/Assistant Treasurer Report

Jessica Miller reported she is ready to get back into the office with everyone back, we work best as a team. The tree sale has been going well. We've been processing a large number of tree sale orders. Water Quality Symposium was good, attended clerk's forum, federal and state payroll finances, sales tax, and a notary exam prep class. Angelica will be filing new 941's to correct Medicare and social security tax that was underpaid by \$822.19. New w-2c's were handed out to the affected individuals. We believed we had addressed 414(h) when we moved to the new payroll system but unfortunately it was taxing it incorrectly. Angelica would like to take responsibility for any IRS penalties. Leatherstocking Envirothon exams have been loaded into Google Classroom.

VI. District Reports

Jordan Clements, District Manager, reports sexual harassment training needs to be completed. District law training is due this year, it is good for 3 years once completed. The District met performance measures for 2020 and we received our Part C money. Thanked Meg and Ed for attending legislative days. There is a list of performance measure trainings and meetings that can be attended that will be sent out to the Board. Jess helped with the end of the year reporting and will be taking on a larger portion next year. Jordan took an Urban Ag class during water quality symposium, it's nice to hear there are opportunities right in Oneonta.



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The District received 2 CRF grants, one for composting, and one for micro-irrigation for vegetable farms. Karl and Jordan met with both farms and they are excited. Plan of work contract is in progress. Hopeful that the farm tour can be in person to highlight these projects.

AgNPS extensions, few AEM projects, and 2 AgNPS projects that need to be completed this year. Trying to keep numbers down in the office, and try to remain good partners. Jordan would like to request bringing his staff back into the office Monday through Friday to be more productive and run smoother. Asked Kate and Tony's thoughts on it and Tony just requested the staff wear masks. Field season is here and the staff won't always be in the office. They have also recently made covid vaccines available to public employees. Jordan asked the Board their thoughts. Michele encourages staff get the vaccines, follow state guidelines with masks and group sizing, Meg commented that the County has not brought all County employee's back yet at 100%. Jordan comments we have 6 feet apart desks, and the only pinch point is between Jess and her desk, but masks are worn. Tony comments that USDA policy states that USDA can't tell District to follow our rules since the office is owned by the District. Michele comments masks should be worn in the office even at individuals' desks. Ed Lentz comments that he's not sure if it's too soon or not to bring everyone back. Questions if we should wait another month. Jordan comments we have the Tree Sale and the Envirothon coming up that we will need all hands-on deck. We are closed to the public still, just would like to bring all staff back. The nurseries are sold-out of seedlings so we won't have extras available, but we need the staff in to wrap them all. The Board agrees to wait another month to be safe. Jordan will check with Penny to understand the Family First Coronavirus Response Act. Ed Lentz asks why can't we mandate the vaccine, and that the Board needs to think about mandating the vaccine. Tony stated that the USDA cannot require staff to get the vaccine due to cultural and religious reasons. Meg asks Jordan to ask Penny about mandating the covid vaccine. Jordan discusses that he added more to the District's Emergency Pandemic Policy. The Health Emergency Plan is due by April 1st. Michele and Ed would like to have an emergency meeting to pass the Plan first.

Jordan will be submitting more projects for AgNPS and CRF. Chris is on the cusp of certification, he has mistakes to correct on his 3rd plan. They will email once his certification is complete. We will have to change his title once complete. Jordan thanked Tony for helping Chris with NRCS planner certification as well. We will need to discuss salary change as well. Positives from legislative days, Jordan talked with Oberacker and Salka's assistants and they were both supportive of the SAM grants that the District was awarded but never received. They are trying to get the Governor to fund half of them. Jordan sent them the award letters,



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and there is still a chance we may never see the money, but they are trying to push the SAM grants ahead.

VII. New Business

Need to renew contract with OCX Computer Experts, \$1,500 will provide 40 hours of service for the year. We have used him for the last 5 years and he shows up the day we call him. Jordan would like a motion to extend the contract.

A motion was made by **Farwell**, and seconded by **Lentz**, to extend OCX Computer Experts contract for another year for \$1,500.

Roll Call Vote: Rathbun – Aye, Kennedy – Aye, Lentz – Aye, Moennich – Aye, Farwell - Aye. Kraham – Aye. The motion carried.

Jordan also asked the Board for support to extend CO11972 CAFO Round 2 grant. Cement prices are nearly double. Jordan will check with Ag and Markets to see if prices are a justifiable reason for an extension.

A motion was made by **Farwell**, and seconded by **Kennedy** to pass a resolution to extend CO11972 CAFO Round 2 until 2022.

Roll Call Vote: Rathbun – Aye, Kennedy – Aye, Lentz – Aye, Moennich – Aye, Farwell - Aye. Kraham – Aye. The motion carried.

BVA is doing a virtual riparian forest buffer seminar and Ed will be there to represent the District for any questions.

VIII. Next Meeting: Next meeting to be held on **Friday, April 16, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.**

IX. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at **11:51 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Miller

Jessica L. Miller

Administrative Assistant/Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

April 01, 2021