



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

Amended Minutes

Friday, May 21, 2021

Held in person at the office and GotoMeeting.com

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

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

Members Absent:

Larry Roseboom Sr., Farm Bureau

Guests Present:

PJ Emmerick, Regional Associate Environmental Analyst, NYS Ag & Markets
Scott Fickbohm, Regional Associate Environmental Analyst, NYS Ag & Markets

- I. **Call to order:** Board Chairman, **Les Rathbun** called the regular meeting to order at 10:00 a.m. The Board tabled discussion on grant closeout checklist procedure during the regular meeting. There will be a special meeting to go over grant closeout checklist procedure on Thursday, May 27, 2021 at 1 PM.

- II. **Approval of minutes:**
 - Motion was made by **Kennedy**, seconded by **Lentz** to approve April's board meeting minutes.

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

A list of April's bills to be paid and credit card statements were provided to the Board in advance of the meeting.

 - Motion was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Kennedy** to approve treasurer's report.
 - Motion was made to approve bills paid was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Kennedy**.



Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District

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

IV. District Secretary/Assistant Treasurer Report

Working on USC BMP farm verification data entry, the District can get reimbursed \$22,000 this year. Held the 2021 Virtual Envirothon on April 28. Worcester High School took 1st place and will be going on to compete at the NYS Envirothon. Hoping to have next year's event in person with more participation. Will have t-shirts for 2022 event. Business as usual with payroll and bill payments.

V. Partner Report

Tony Capraro, NRCS District Conservationist, reports they have been busy. The field office team submitted 24 EQIP general applications, 4 RCPP-USC approvals. So far 13 applications are pre-approved. Otsego, Sullivan and Delaware counties are over 75 EQIP applications, 35 applications are pre-approved. Hoping that there are not a lot of cancellations due to the rising costs. 1-year extensions can be applied for in hopes costs will come back down. Working on Round 27 with Jordan for cost share. Jeanine is in the field working on round 22 grants. Evan is no longer working in Delaware. His position is being backfilled with a recent graduate, and he has submitted for 2 more staff in Walton to cover S.O.D. Tony hopes to have 3 more staff by the end of the year in Delaware. NRCS is following CDC guidelines on mask wearing and has posted new guidelines on front door. Told from the top that we can't ask if producers are vaccinated or not. Entry is by appointment only. Michele Farwell discusses concerns with mandating vaccine. Ed Lentz states we should know if we have the authority to enforce.

VI. District Reports

Jordan Clements, District Manager, reports the Ag & Farmland Protection committee is trying to create a conference in Cooperstown to educate about the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. Will be inviting surrounding counties to participate in educating senators and legislators about the Chesapeake Bay TMDL. It's time to apply for more money for the 5-year update. The watershed management plan committee has a county wide position in the works to update watershed plans. Jordan will be meeting with Danny Lapin to further the planning discussion for both. There are culverts noted that need work in the plan, and are also listed in the Emergency Hazard Plan. The District hired two interns, one is a USC Buffer Steward and the other is hired using Part B monies. We had 5 applications for the intern position, Mark helped with interviews. Ended up hiring two recent Cobleskill graduates, and they are out planting a buffer. There bios can be found in the staff meeting reports. Working on Round 5 CRF grants, 1 is approved, one is still in review. The Farmland Protection Plan committee is



Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District

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

working on a legislative meeting near the fall of fame to make it more appealing. Working with Danny on the Butternut Watershed Study.

Forest parcel boundary line is still in dispute we want to make sure the County lawyer contacts the landowner. There are 12 trees and an access road in question. Reaching out to Onondaga purchasing group to get the sale out to bid. The County has a survey on the property but it appears a survey pin may have been moved. We would like to get the sale out to bid. Marking paint costs are high, we are spending around \$300 to order aerosol cans. Previously we've ordered \$400 worth of paint in gallons. Timber prices have improved this year, and there is another sale marked on Dozen Dad's. Michele comments we want to be sure we are following our procurement policy. Historically \$20,000 or more we put it out to bid. We obtain 3 written quotes on everything else. We are following our normal day to day operations. We need to be sure we are following policy as well. Dan has been working with Cornell to setup an experimental deer browsing study, and working on carbon sequestration program.

AgNPS projects are moving forward this summer. One AgNPS buffer is current being planted. Jordan asks Scott if a forested buffer can be changed to a grass buffer in contract. Scott replies as long as its commuted to the system, there is flexibility to change the BMP. Jordan is working on the overpayment he met with PJ, Bethany, Ed. and Les. Jordan reached out to the contractor because the bid was higher than what he billed for. Learning that NRCS should have payed out first and then the District. Hoping a bill may have been left out. The audit on two grants will be starting on June 7th, Jordan has been scanning documents to the auditors. Michele questions the timeline of completion of closeouts and would like to see a checklist. Scott emailed a list of open grants that was requested from the Board which is included below.

Funding Source	ContractID	Round	County	Project Name	Start Date	End Date	Final Report Due Date	Contract Amount	Project Activity
AgNPS	C701274	22	Otsego	Otsego Creek Watershed Manure Storage and Buffer Project	7/12/2016	12/31/2019	2/29/2020	\$269,922.50	Active
AgNPS	C701276	22	Otsego	Upper Schenewus Watershed Project	7/12/2016	12/31/2019	2/29/2020	\$202,057.88	Active
AgNPS	C701323	23	Otsego	Calhoun Creek Waste Storage & Buffer Grant Cherry Valley Creek Nutrient Management & Buffer Project	7/25/2017	12/31/2020	3/1/2021	\$409,589.00	Active
AgNPS	C701324	23	Otsego	Project	7/25/2017	12/31/2020	3/1/2021	\$363,075.00	Active
AgNPS	C701339	23	Otsego	Otsego County Buffer Project II	7/25/2017	12/31/2020	3/1/2021	\$142,241.00	Active
AgNPS	C701275	22	Otsego	Lower Wharton Creek Barnyard	7/12/2016	12/31/2021	3/1/2022	\$143,086.96	Active
AgNPS	C701277	22	Otsego	Otsego County Buffer Project	7/12/2016	12/31/2021	3/1/2022	\$257,764.00	Active
AgNPS	C701382	24	Otsego	Otsego County Buffer Project III	11/27/2018	3/1/2022	4/30/2022	\$75,275.84	Active
CAFO	C011972	2	Otsego	Young's Dairy	8/29/2018	3/1/2022	4/30/2022	\$385,000.00	Active

PJ Emmerick, Regional Associate Environmental Analyst, NYS Ag & Markets introduces himself and reports he was asked to help with closeouts. If there aren't any other bills we are



Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District

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

trying to concentrate on the overpayment. There is a to do list. The audit has commenced please be sure to make it a priority to respond to the auditors. The closeout with Ag & Markets is happening parallel to the audit. Jordan reports we want to be sure we have all the invoices, he has been pleading with the contractor to meet with him. Jordan explains the grant process. Lentz states the hope is we just paid on invoices we don't have copies of. We have been paying before the farmer pays. Michele asks if other SWCD District's do this? Jordan replied that we make copies of the farmers check to the contractor the same day we write the check to the landowner. Michele discloses as a County Board rep that she has shared Scott and PJ's email about the audit with the County lawyer.

Scott Fickbohm gives a summary on the SWCC report for the month. Wishes he could of attended in person, the Governors office has waved in person meetings until June 9th. Round 27 is out, plan of work is in review for round 26. They are getting back on a regular schedule. There is a webinar on policy changes. Otsego SWCD doesn't have any Round 26 AgNPS grants. AEM Base Year 16 is wrapping up this year. This grant reimburses for the District's time and the implementation projects. There will be changes for Round 17 that are up for discussion, like money for soil sampling. The cost share track is \$100,000. Working on ethics policy and conflict of interest plan. Identification of farmers can now be made 6 months into the year.

VII. Old Business:

Jordan reports County is still working on obtaining the 3 quotes for the generator hookups. The District will be paying for their percentage of the installation costs. The generator will be able to run both buildings but it wouldn't be cost effective to get power across the road, so there will be two. Jordan asks the Board if can stop using pest control service for ants and mice. Michele supports canceling it, and if a pest problem arises to call someone then. Forestry boundary dispute, do we proceed with the sale hoping by the time it happens it's situated? Meg says if we wait we get 12 trees and the access road. Dan has spoken to the caretaker of the property about the line. In 1936 the County had the property surveyed. Th County Board would like to see sales. Michele would like the dispute brought to the PWC to avoid a potential lawsuit. Meg isn't it worth doing a survey for \$80,000 worth in sales? Jordan reports boundary lines weren't maintained, if Joe found paint he would remark them. Jordan received a quote for \$20,000 for the parcel to be resurveyed. Les feels it should be on the landowner to get a survey since the County already has one. Hoping the County lawyer will send landowner a letter to discuss the dispute further. We may leave the trees, and barter use of the access road. EAB is an issue of urgency with getting this sale out to bid. There will



Otsego County Soil & Water Conservation District

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

be a special meeting to discuss the grant checklist in May 27th at 1 pm. June 7th will be the pre-audit meeting.

- VIII. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting to be held on **Friday, June 25, 2021 at 10:00 a.m.**
- IX. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at **11:45 a.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Miller

Jessica L. Miller

Administrative Assistant/Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

June 3, 2021