SWCD Board of Directors’ Meeting January 4, 2022

Meeting called to order at 1:03 pm.

In attendance:

Directors: Les Rathbun, Ed Lentz, Meg Kennedy, Helene Kraham

District staff: Jordan Clements (District Manager), Dan Zimmerman, Chris Andreassen, Karl Giroux, Mark Kugler

Others: Jennifer Mickle (Director nominee), Darin Hickling (Director nominee), Larry Underwood (District Manager, Del Co SWCD), Bruce Dolph (Vice-chair, Del Co SWCD Board of Directors).

Meg Kennedy was asked to conduct the meeting. Meg welcomed all attendees and asked Dan, Chris, Karl, and Mark to introduce themselves. Meg and others expressed appreciation for the excellent work done by our staff.

Meg reported:

* the state is not providing funding until we re-establish our good standing following the delays, errors, and other difficulties with the 274, 276, and 323 close-outs;
* Larry Underwood has graciously agreed to help the district finish these close-outs and to close out the 275, 277, AEM Muddy River, AEM Echo Valley, 382, and 972 grants;
* we have a Corrective Action Plan that will re-establish our good standing with the state and put us back on solid financial footing long term;
* Larry will coordinate and oversee grant close outs and will be the district’s point person with the state;
* Jordan will continue to manage day to day operations and is assisting Larry by collecting data and documents for Larry to package and submit to the state.

Larry introduced himself and Bruce Dolph and explained that they are here to help us, not to manage or in any way “take over” the district. Larry may also call upon his staff to assist.

Bruce reinforced that Del Co is here to help us, like SWCD districts do.

OC directors expressed appreciation and acknowledged that the amount of effort that will be required by Larry and his staff is beyond the normal assistance provided by one district to another and expressed a willingness to compensate Del Co in a manner to be determined.

Regarding the Administrative position, until a new person is hired, Angelica Palmer will handle the financial aspects of the job remotely and will be given remote access to the district Quickbooks files. Jordan will provide the board with a proposed job description, including discussing proposed changes over the current job description with the OC Personnel Department.

Jordan was tasked with providing the board with recent bank statements, as well as up to date transactions reports, for all district accounts, making sure that there are common identifiers on the district Balance Sheets and the statements/reports.

Jordan will also provide the board with documentation confirming that funds in the account for 252 (hydroseeding) are unencumbered.

Larry confirmed that no extensions were required for the grants having an end date of 12/31 and has begun speaking with Jordan about how to complete the close outs. Understandably, detailed plans for the close outs have yet to be worked out.

The district appears to have funds on hand to carry the district through the first quarter. The county quarterly allocation ($41,250) is expected in February. A Forestry payment of $11,250 is expected from the county in the first quarter. USDA pays us monthly rent ($4.3K).

Larry suggested that the board receive regular reports of anticipated revenues and expenses. Bruce offered to provide the board with samples of financial reports received by the Del Co board.

The NYS Retirement payment is due February 1. We should be able to pay it on time. Jordan said that an extension is available without penalty if needed.

Jordan will confirm with NYS that the farm in the project funded by C011972921 is or is not eligible and will request that determination in writing.

The district staff persons were asked if they had any questions or concerns.

A motion to go into executive session to discuss personnel issues relating to the employment history and matters relevant to employee discipline was made by Meg, seconded by Ed, and passed by unanimous vote.

Without a formal motion, it was agreed that the board would interview each staff person at the January 21 meeting, for which the start time was moved up to 9:00am, to review his performance evaluation directly with him in confidence.

The executive session was adjourned.

Next meetings:

Special Meeting, January 14, 1:00pm, Meadows, Class Room B Regular Meeting, January 21, 9:00am, Meadows, Class Room B

Meeting was adjourned at approximately 3:30 pm

SWCD Board of Directors’ Meeting January 14, 2022

Meeting called to order at approximately 1:00pm.

In attendance:

Directors: Meg Kennedy, Jennifer Mickle, Darin Hickling Helene Kraham, Doris

Moenich, Les Rathbun, Ed Lentz

District staff: Jordan Clements Others: Scott Fickbohm

Minutes taken by Ed Lentz.

Minutes of Jan 4 meeting were accepted.

Meg explained that Larry was unable to attend but had given a report in an email sent prior to the meeting, copy attached. The information in Larry’s email was discussed.

With respect to the overdue closeouts, Jordan reported that he and Larry have been in discussion and that current plans are for District staff (Karl and/or Mark) to visit the farms to obtain the required signatures during the week of 1/24. Claims for payment will be ready for signature by District Treasurer on 1/21. Explanations for overpayments and other items still needed (see, status table).

With respect to 275 (Hughes), 277 (Mitchell et al) and the AEM (Johnson & Hunt) grants, Jordan reported that construction was completed by 12/31/21 (except as summarized in Larry’s email) and that extensions are not required. The as-builts for Hunt were approved; Johnson is not yet ready to close out.

With respect to 382 (Tauzel) and 972 (Young), extensions will be requested. Scott reminded the board that while AGM is generally flexible wrt extensions, that there are requirements that have to be met and that extensions are not necessarily granted. Items required include an explanation for the delay, a showing that progress has been made (e.g., construction is underway), and a board resolution. Jordan said he will have the paperwork ready for the board at its regular monthly meeting on 1/21. Regarding 972 (Young), the AGM Program Manager, Bethany Bzduch, will determine eligibility.

Following further review of the Secretary/Treasurer job description, Jordan does not think that changes are required. The board will review it and discuss it at the meeting on 1/21. The position will be “exempt”. Darin noted that Del Co’s job description for a Data and Budget Specialist is interesting and that the position and/or specifications should be considered by our board.

Jordan will advise Chris, Karl, Mark, and Dan that the board wants to review their appraisals with each of them starting at 9:00am on 1/21 for approximately 20 minutes each, prior to the start of the regular monthly meeting.

Following discussion of the Corrective Action Plan, Ed agreed to flesh out the Corrective Action Plan with more specifics. See, attached.

Ed also agreed to attempt to pull together the various practice and policy changes that the board has approved over the past couple of months. These include:

* pay only on reimbursement
* pay farmers only with full board approval
* adopt the Del Co checklist for grant closeouts
* review and approve all landowner agreements
* refer substantive changes to agreements to county attorney.

Scott will try to arrange a board training session for a special meeting to be held on February 4 at 1:00pm

Next Meetings:

Regular: Jan 21, 9:00am, Emergency Services Classroom B

Special: Feb 4, 1:00pm, Emergency Services Classroom B

Regular: Feb 18: 10:00am, Emergency Services Classroom B

967 County Highway 33 Cooperstown, NY 13326 (607) 547-8337 ext. 4

**OTSEGO COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

Regular Meeting

Friday January 21, 2022

952 County Highway 33W, Cooperstown, NY 13326

**Members Present:** **Staff Present:**

Meg Kennedy, Chair, Cty. Rep. Jordan Clements, District Manager

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Darin Hickling, Vice Chair, Farm Bureau | Chris Andreassen, Conservation Tech.\* |
| Edward Lentz, Treasurer/ Member at Large | Mark Kugler, Stream Tech.\* |
| Les Rathbun, Grange Rep. | Dan Zimmerman, Forest Tech.\* |
| Jennifer Mickle, Cty. Rep | Karl Giroux, Conservation Tech.\* |
| Doris Moennich, Landowner |  |

Helene Kraham, Ag Landowner

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\* Chris, Mark, Dan and Karl were each present only for separate portions of an Executive Session

I. Call to order: Board Chairman, **Les Rathbun** called the regular meeting to morning at 9:00 am.

* A motion was made by **Mickle**, seconded by **Kraham** to make District Manager, Jordan temporary Chair to perform election duties. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 abstentions- Motion carried**
* Lentz nominated Kennedy - Chair, Hickling - Vice Chair, Lentz - Treasurer. Hearing no more nominations a motion was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Mickle** to close nominations. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 abstentions-Motion carried**.
* A motion was made **Hickling**, seconded by **Mickle** to vote for slate of offices.

**Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.**

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II. A motion was made by **Rathbun**, seconded by **Kennedy** to enter executive session to discuss performance of employees. **Vote: 7Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.** Entered executive session at **9:10am**.

* + A motion was made by **Kraham**, seconded by **Hickling** to exit executive session and go back into regular session at 11:30am. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.**
  + A motion was by **Lentz**, seconded by **Kraham** to provide pay raises to the staff. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Staff** | **Raise %** | **2022 Pay** |
| Mark Kugler | 5.9 | $46,040.00 |
| Karl Giroux | 7.5 | $43,468.00 |
| Dan Zimmerman | 5.9 | $50,024.00 |
| Chris Andreassen | 8.2 | $56,000 + $3,000 Recognition Bonus |

* + A motion was by **Hickling**, seconded by **Mickle** to follow USDA policies on COVID-19 protocol. It was requested to provide policies received by USDA to the District Board. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.**
  + A motion was made by **Mickle**, seconded by **Moennich** to sign a one-year contract with Otsego Computer Expert (OCX) to provide computer repair services. **Vote: 6 Ayes, 0 No, 1 Abstention** (**Rathbun**). **Motion carried.**

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(607) 547-8337 ext. 4 **III. District Manager Report:**

* District Manager Clements stated that he was out the week of January 10- 14th due to an unknown issue that required surgery. Clements provided the board a doctor’s note explaining the time that he needed for recovery. Clements stated that he has come back and has started doing end of year reporting and Year 16 AEM closeouts. Clements stated that he attended the last Solid Waste and Environmental Concerns meeting. Provided the SWEC committee with an update on what the district has been doing for the last month. Clements stated that the district is in its last year of its 5-year contract with Otsego County providing forestry deliverables. Clements stated that he would provide the board at the February board meeting a copy of a contract that he would like to propose for the next 5-year contract. Clements discussed the standing of the three past due closeouts as well as the standing of the grants that are due by March 1st. It was discussed that Jordan would provide the grants that are due by March 1st to Larry the first week of February. Clements discussed the upcoming legislative days and which board members would like to attend. This year’s legislative days will take place over zoom over a three-day period. Board will decide which legislative meetings they will attend.
* With regard to the hydroseeding grant, Clements reported that a closeout letter could not be found but that Bill Early, DEC, sent an email confirming that the grant was closed out.
* Clements said he would send out the email link for the Water Quality Symposium. There is no fee for staff but it’s not clear if the $25 fee is waived for directors.
* Clements said he would have the year end report, which is due 2/15, to the board by the meeting on 2/4. He will also have the AEM end of contract report ready by that time.
* The board discussed the grants management-related policy changes already agreed upon as per the table circulated by email by Lentz on 1/20/22. The board acknowledged that additional new/revised policies require further dis967 County Highway 33 Cooperstown, NY 13326

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cussion. Clements will re-send the revised Monroe County close-out form to the directors. He will also send out a complete set of district policies.

* The Grant Status Table was reviewed, updated and sent by email to the directors and to Clements and Underwood.
* The Corrective Action Plan (which had been circulated by Lentz by email on 1/20/21) was reviewed and discussed to ensure that we are fully implementing the plan.
* Meg offered to try to expedite legal review of the logging contracts for Taylor Hill and Dozen Dads.
* The board will review Angelica Palmer’s proposal (sent by Clements by email on 1/21/22) for providing bookkeeping services while the district administrative position is vacant

1. **New Business:** 
   * **Resolution 1:** A motion was made to pass a resolution to extend Otsego County Buffer 3 Round 24 of the Agricultural Nonpoint Source Pollution Abatement and Control Program due to changes to the farm operations and aligning multiple funding organizations. Motion to pass resolution was moved by **Kennedy**, seconded by **Hickling**. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.**
   * **Resolution 2:** A motion was made to pass a resolution to extend Young’s Farm Manure Storage Round 2 of the CAFO Waste Storage and Transfer System Program due to changes to the farm operations and the prices due to shortages of material. Motion to pass resolution was moved by **Kraham**, seconded by **Mickle**. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.**

Otsego County Soil and Water Conservation District

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1. **Old Business:**

**•** A motion was by **Lentz**, seconded by **Moennich** to accept minutes from 11/12/2021, 11/24/2021, 12/13/2021, and 12/21/2021. **Vote: 5 Ayes, 0 No, 2 Abstentions** (**Mickle**, **Hickling**). **Motion carried.**

A motion was by **Lentz**, seconded by **Moennich** to accept minutes from 1/14/2022. **Vote: 7 Ayes, 0 No, 0 Abstentions. Motion carried.**

1. **Next Meeting:** Next meeting to be held on **Friday, February 4, 2022 at 1:00pm** (Special Meeting) and regular board meeting will be held **Thursday, February 17, 2022 at 9:30am.**
2. **Adjournment:** Meeting adjourned at 1:45 pm.

Respectfully Submitted,

Jordan Clements

District Manager

January 28, 2022