



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

Thursday, September 17, 2020

Held at office and offered remotely on GoToMeeting.com

United States: [+1 \(646\) 749-3129](tel:+16467493129)

Access Code: 598-120-085

Members Present:

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

Staff Present:

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

Guest:

None

I. **Call to order:** Board Chairman, **Les Rathbun** called the online meeting to order at 10:38 a.m.

II. **Approval of minutes:**

- Motion was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Roseboom** to approve August's board meeting minutes.
Roll Call Vote Kennedy-Abstain , Lentz- Aye , Roseboom - Aye , Moennich - Aye , Kraham - Aye. Rathbun - Aye. Opposed: None. 5-1 The motion carried.

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

A list of August - September'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: Kennedy-Aye , Lentz- Aye , Roseboom - Aye , Moennich - Aye , Kraham - Aye. Rathbun - Aye. Opposed: None. The motion carried.



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- Motion was made to approve bills to be paid was made by **Lentz**, seconded by **Kennedy**.
Roll Call Vote: Kennedy-Aye , Lentz- Aye , Roseboom - Aye , Moennich - Aye , Kraham - Aye. Rathbun - Aye. Opposed: None. The motion carried.

IV. District Secretary/Assistant Treasurer Report

- Worked with Angelica twice this month on 2019 4th quarter audit.
- Reconciling accounts in QuickBooks.
- Assisting with the 2020 virtual farm tour, the staff and I have been very busy preparing the files for the editor.
- Continuing to file, pay bills, run payroll, and reporting as necessary.

V. District Reports

District Manager, **Jordan Clements**, reported the following:

Jordan entered the meeting after attending the public works meeting where Jordan invited Gabriel from the Nature Conservancy to present on the working woodlands program. The working woodlands program was stalled due to the workload of the County in the past. With this program the County could cover their investment on the forestry program. It would not cost us anything to participate. The nice thing about it is we could also match up to \$80,000 in log sales. Gabriel is still presenting in the public works meeting, but Jordan wanted to jump into the board meeting.

Grant Updates

Ag Non-Point Source projects have construction issues due to the lack of materials, can't find them to purchase, or the cost is prohibitive, especially the cost of concrete.

WRP-CRP USDA Contracts

The District has held WRP and CRP contracts with USDA NRCS for many years. The CRP program has changed a lot. The payments are not the what they once were. Talking to Tony Capraro there is a need for assistant with the EQIP program. If we get an EQIP contract worked out the District could get paid for EQIP projects. The new contract would be another avenue for funds to work on projects. Initial 3-year contract is not official yet. If the board is supportive and approves we could have 3 cost share programs.



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SWEC Meeting

The SWEC meeting yesterday was a very good meeting. Allen Ruffles let Jordan talk about how staffing would be, referring to the budget, and how he would go bare bones just to keep his staff on.

AEM

The 2020 virtual farm tour footage should be sent back soon. The Plan of Work for AEM is due in November. Jordan is working on the POW and Closeouts.

New Proposed Budgets

The board was provided a excel spreadsheet with 3 proposed budgets based on estimated county cuts. Discussion on proposed budget. Trying to be reasonable and understanding. Perc tests and Ag. Assessments have been busy, so the revenue will be increased for 2021. The 4-hour sediment and erosion training will be held in 2021. Typically, host training for 40-80 people we could drop costs we could have it at the County building and not have it catered by the hotel. Contractors have to have training for certification, and typically we have always provided lunch, but we can cut costs. As far as the tree and shrub program it may actually make more sense to have cost savings checked, shipping may be cheaper than hauling trailer to PA, or vice versa. Misc. Sales is different from year to year based on how many walk-in animal boxes we sell. We could try to encourage more outside sales. Increased Envirothon donations in budget, will continue to ask for donations for the event. County allocation is the same for forestry, didn't ask for more allocation, rent is fixed, and will need to be discussed later on before the lease ends. Winter through spring is always busy with ag assessments, so the budget is conservative with that. Ag Plastic with the County has kept \$18,000 aside with hopes recycling will come back with a new market. NYACD planning allocation is set to bring someone on for planning if awarded the grant that is being offered again. Stream program line item is set to \$0. It is just not the appropriate time to push the stream program. ESI training will be held in 2021 in the Mohawk River Watershed. Placed \$30,000 in NRCS EQIP line item, CRP contract dropped for not being popular. OCCA has \$5,000. Performance measures budget for the next year is still set at \$120,000. Part B \$6,000 is set aside for a project. Part A \$60,000 we receive for having outside agency funding, which we get from our County allocation. Goes through the remainder of lines in the budget. Can't be for certain on miscellaneous grants. We know are expenses are what they are. Budget also shows 40% cut to County allocation and how expenses will be adjusted accordingly. One of the benefits of having Karl on staff is he does the oil changes. Our newsletter won't be printed and mailed, just digital. We could also be more efficient with fuel usage, and could car pool with NRCS



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more, and not take multiple vehicles to one site or nearby location. Office supplies could be reduced to bare minimum, and could shop around for better prices. Training opportunities like Water Quality Symposium helps meet our performance measures but can be costly. Therefore, if classes aren't worth attending for certain staff they won't attend for the whole week. Can also have people drive back and forth instead of staying at the hotel to save money. We can make due with what we have for office equipment and field equipment. We will be better able to project our budget once we know our carry over closer to the end of the year. Jordan has the ability to spend over \$5,000 without the board's approval. Grants being awarded vary, can't factor in jump in AEM earning potential. The District could handle up to a 40% cut and maintain staff, but anything more than that we would need to make cuts. Districts are being told different things by their counties as far as potential cuts go. Meg Kennedy mentions to Jordan that some counties aren't being cut because they are less dependent on sales tax revenue, our county is much more dependent on reimbursements and sales tax. Understands you'd want to keep staff to move forward. Meg is in support to allocate what we need to keep going forward. Jordan understands cuts will be made, and asks the Board if they have any questions on the budget. The biggest gap is not knowing the carry over. Michele Farwell spoke to let people know she was on the line, she was at the public works meeting. Ed Lentz mentions he can't match profit and loss to budget. He says when the Town looks to change their budget they compare it to the last 3 years to see if it's in line. Jordan has the old budget and is in the process of converting the budget to the budget in QuickBooks. The 10% increase on personnel needs to be fixed. Next step is to make budget corrections and revised budget to line up with QuickBooks before next meeting.

Partner Reports

NRCS- Could not attend meeting due to time change.

FSA- Did not submit a report.

VI. Other Business

Jordan Clements reports the following:

Reached out to permits in DEC. The maps for Cherry Valley ESD were mailed out to DEC. Next DEC will make a site visit and there is understanding the work has already been done for awhile now. By far this has been the best movement going forward.

Jordan invites the Board to attend the 2020 virtual farm tour on October 14th, 2020 at 10am-12pm.



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The watershed study update is that Erica finished the physical assessment, and it should be completed by the end of September. OCCA's component has also been completed. FEMA opened up an Emergency Management Plan. Culverts in the Butternut were put into the grant to be replaced. They are ranked by severity. Letters of support will be needed from towns and villages. Michele listened to the working woodlands presentation earlier and feels the committee would like to keep working forward on it. Not having an easement requirement makes everyone feel more comfortable about it. Log sales revenue was discussed, and timber prices are beginning to go up. Pushing for Dan to setup log sales on ash. The FMP's Dan's written contain recommendations. It seems the County Board would like know if log sales are in the future.

VII. Next Meeting: Next meeting to be held on **Thursday, October 15, 2020 at 10:00 a.m.** hopefully face to face.

VIII. Adjournment: Meeting adjourned at **12:08 p.m.**

Respectfully submitted,

Jessica Miller

Jessica L. Miller

Administrative Assistant/Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

September 29, 2020