St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District

1942 Old DeKalb Road, Canton, NY 13617

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

For November 15, 2018, 7:30 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** Robert Andrews, Jr. (Chairperson), Ben Stauffer (Vice-Chair), Chad Colbert (Treasurer), Mark Matthews, Becky Allen, Greg Paquin, and Adam Cook.

**Board Members Excused:** None

**Staff Present:** Raeanne Dulanski (Manager), Aaron Barrigar (Forester), Jevonnah Foster (Technician), and Liz Gallup (Secretary/Treasurer).

**Guests Present:** Kent Frary, NRCS

**I. Call to Order – Agenda** (Attachment A)

**II. Minutes of the Previous Meeting:** *Motion to approve the October 18, 2018 minutes,* made by Stauffer, seconded by Paquin **approved by all.**

**III. Treasurer’s Reports:** Gallup discussed items relevant to the financial information provided to the Board. *Motion to approve October 2018 Treasurer’s report*, made by Matthews, seconded by Cook **approved by all.**

**IV. Reports**

1. **NRCS** – Kent Frary
   1. Frary said that he has been spending most of his time on contract management. He is reviewing compliance with the terms of the contract and processing modifications if required.

7:36 pm Allen entered the meeting

* 1. Frary reported that he went on a site visit for a high tunnel with Dulanski. The project was for a non-profit organization from Ogdensburg who did a great job.
  2. Early sign-up for some EQIP focus areas is still available with a December 2nd deadline.
  3. Frary informed that Board that the unofficial word is that Blake Glover from New Mexico will be the new State Conservationist.

1. **BOL** – Greg Paquin, Chad Colbert
   1. Paquin reported that the County’s budget was passed.
2. **Farm Bureau** – Ben Stauffer
   1. Nothing to report.

Colbert entered the meeting 7:40 p.m.

1. **Grange -** Mark Matthews
   1. Matthews said he did attend the NYS Grange meeting where infrastructure and broad band access was discussed.
2. **AFPB** – Bob Andrews
   1. American Farmland Trust gave a presentation on Smart Solar Siting on November 15th in Gouverneur from 9:00 to 2:00. Andrews reported that it was very informative and that about eighty people from a variety of governmental entities and from multiple Counties attended. A variety of topics were covered such as local laws and zoning pertaining to solar arrays, farmland usage and how municipalities could start one. Andrews reported that there has been a 1,600 acres solar array in Brasher/Massena area proposed. Municipal Farmland Protection Plan Grants from NYS Ag and Markets were also discussed. This may be something that the District could be involved in as a possible Part C project.
   2. St. Lawrence County CCE is taking the lead on planning a forum on services available to the farming community to educate farmers who may be struggling in this economic environment. The forum is planned tentatively for the middle of January. The first planning meeting will be on November 27th.
   3. Andrews mentioned that American Farmland Trust may be working to connect people who may want to get in to farming with people who are looking to get out.
   4. Andrews took this time to express to Colbert and Paquin how sorry he is that they will not be on our Board next year. He thanked them for all of their hard work and how well they represented the District with the Board of Legislators. He then presented them each with a certificate of appreciation for their years of service to the District.

**V. SWCD Reports:**

1. Technician – Jevonnah Foster
2. Foster finished soil sampling various fields and assisted O’Neil from CCE with soil health sampling. She also did two more Grown & Certified field visits.
3. Foster reported that she went on site visits to check the cover crop growth for the Part C Cover Crop program.
4. Foster has been completing ag values.
5. Foster reported that the District’s drone is fully registered with the FAA. She also informed the Board that she passed her drone pilot license test so is now a certified pilot. Anyone from the office can now fly the drone under her license while she is on site with them.
6. Forester’s Report **–** Aaron Barrigar
7. Barrigar reported that he finished marking the timber sale and has put it out to bid. The bids are due November 30th. He added a small area of Scotch pine to help improve the health of the forest.
8. Barrigar attended the NY ReLeaf meeting for EAB in Adams, NY. National Grid was present and said that they plan on cutting 30,000 trees a year to remove all ash trees from under power lines and in access areas. Onondaga SWCD presented on their program and their plans to cut a number of ash trees to ensure the safety of public areas for local municipalities.
9. Barrigar said that he is going to go and harvest dogwood sticks with Foster and then plant them along the river banks at the Bend in the River Park to finish that project.
10. Colbert asked if there was a plan on how to address EAB in our area. Barrigar said that Massena has a plan in place and that the Town of Potsdam has contacted him about doing an inventory. Other areas do not seem to have a plan; EAB task force is looking into that.
11. Secretary/Treasurer – Elizabeth Gallup
12. Gallup informed the Board that she has been busy with a variety of tasks related to taxes, year end and preparing for fiscal year 2019. She is also researching what items need to be kept permanently from board member and personnel folders.
13. *Motion to approve a transfer from Money Market to Checking for December 2018 and January 2019 to cover operating costs up to $20,000 each month*, made by Stauffer, seconded by Matthews approved by all.
14. *Motion to approve the purchase of QuickBooks 2019 with Enhanced Payroll not to exceed $300.00,* made by Cook, seconded by Paquin **approved by all.**
15. Gallup told the Board that we had received the NYS Retirement bill and that it was under the amount budgeted. *Motion to approve the payment of the NYS Retirement bill of $17,986.00 from the Money Market Account*, made by Paquin, seconded by Colbert **approved by all.**
16. *Motion to approve SLC SWCD Budget approved by the County with 5% increase in St. Lawrence County appropriation and to authorize the 3% increase in staff salaries included to be paid effective January 1, 2019*, made by Stauffer, seconded by Allen approved by all.
17. Gallup explained that in the past the District has reimbursed mileage for Directors who interview job applicants. She informed the Board that she has calculated monies due each Member for these items. *Motion to approve reimbursement of $20.00 per meeting and round trip mileage for meetings attended and mileage for members who interviewed job applicants on August 5, 2018 after approval and signature by each Member* made by Stauffer, seconded by Cook **approved by all.**
18. Gallup explained to the Board that there is a new requirement that everyone has to have a sexual harassment policy and complaint form available. SWCC provided guidance to the SWCD on what needs to be included in this policy. Upon review, Gallup felt that the only major item missing from the District’s current sexual harassment policy, which is found in the employee’s handbook, is sufficient except that we do not have an approved sexual harassment complaint form. She provided a copy of the complaint form that was modified from the one the County uses. *Motion to approve the sexual complaint form to be used by the District in the event that a complaint is made* by Paquin, seconded by Colbert **approved by all.**
19. Manager’s Report – Raeanne Dulanski (Attachment B)
20. Dulanski informed the Board that the District has received another request for assistance with engineer costs under the RCPP Technical Assistance Fund for $5,000.00. It meets all requirements. *Motion to accept the request for $5,000 and to authorize payment upon receipt of monies from RC & D and the receipt of proof of payment from the participant,* made by Paquin, seconded by Cook **approved by all.**
21. Dulanski reminded the Board that Stauffer, Cook & Matthews terms are over at the end of this year. Matthews and Cook would like to be considered for reappointment but Stauffer regretfully had to say he was not going to continue as a board member. After nine years on the District’s Board, he feels it is time to move on and allow another Farm Bureau member to join. He said he really enjoyed the last nine years but additional claims on his time have increased and he won’t have the time to continue.
22. Dulanski told the Board that the project for the 2018 Part B monies has fallen through so she suggested that we change the Part C Bend in the River project to Part B. The District will need to file a change of project form with SWCC. *Motion to approve changing the Part C Bend in the River project to Part B and to authorize Andrews to sign the form as Chairman,* made by Matthews, seconded by Paquin **approved by all**.
23. Dulanski reported that there is a new program called RAMP (Rural Roads Active Management Program) which may provide funding for correcting environment concerns on low use gravel, dirt and paved roads. Best management practices will be used as guidelines when assessing problem roads. Colbert asked if there was money available to pay for the assessments. Dulanski said no but that a grant may be available.
24. Conservation District Employee Association meeting was held earlier this week and there was much discussion about problems other Districts were having with NRCS. Other items discussed were the new sexual harassment policy requirement, staffing retirements and progress on planning for WQS. WQS will have more forestry classes this year since more Districts now have a forester on staff.

**VI. Old and New Business:**

**Old:** Andrews just wanted to make sure that the training in February is scheduled.

**VII. Correspondence:**  Mail was available for the Board’s review. (List of items in Attachment C)

**VIII. Announcements:** None

**IX. Time and Date of Next Meeting:** January 17, 2019, 7:30 PM at the SWCD Office.

**X. Meeting Adjourned:**  Adjournment at 8:52 PM

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Robert Andrews, Jr., Chairperson Date

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Elizabeth J. Gallup, Secretary/Assistant Treasurer Date

Attachments: A-C