

DRAFT
St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
1942 Old DeKalb Road, Canton, NY 13617
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
For May 21, 2020, 6:30 p.m.

Note: Meeting was held via telephone due to COVID – 19. The date and time of the meeting was posted to the District’s website one week prior.

Board Members Present: Robert Andrews, Jr. (Chairperson), Adam Cook (Vice-Chair), Becky Allen (Treasurer), Mark Matthews, Patrick Smith, Kevin Acres and John Burke.

Board Members Excused: None

Staff Present: Raeanne Dulanski (Manager), and Liz Gallup (Secretary/Treasurer).

Guests Present: Ryan Cunningham, SWCC

I. Call to Order and Agenda (Attachment A)

A. Roll call:

Robert Andrews - present
Adam Cook – present
Rebecca Allen – present
Patrick Smith – present
Kevin Acres – present
John Burke – present
Mark Matthews - present

II. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: Motion to approve the March 26, 2020 minutes, made by Cook, seconded by Matthews approved by:

Robert Andrews - Aye
Adam Cook – Aye
Rebecca Allen – Aye
Mark Matthews – Aye
Patrick Smith – Aye
Kevin Acres – Aye
John Burke – Aye

III. Treasurer’s Reports: Gallup discussed items relevant to the financial information provided to the Board. *Motion to approve the March & April 2020 Treasurer’s report, made by Acres, seconded by Allen approved by:*

Robert Andrews - Aye
Adam Cook – Aye
Rebecca Allen – Aye
Mark Matthews – Aye
Patrick Smith – Aye
Kevin Acres – Aye
John Burke – Aye

IV. SWCD Reports: Staff reports are included in Board mailing (Attachment B)

A. Manager's Report – Raeanne Dulanski

1. Dulanski reported that staff has been working remotely and has been doing a good job in her opinion. Voicemails and emails are being monitored and staff has been responding and fulfilling any requests that have come in. The District must follow the various restrictions set by the County, New York State and USDA. We must follow what USDA is allowing their employees to do in the building. Dulanski said she participated in a County COVID call and learned that the County is continuing to work their current work schedules and practices until June 6th, as that is when the Executive Order that put the local municipalities in their current working situation expires. Allen and Dulanski agreed that District will also since that is what the County has decided to do. We are continuing to work remotely, however Barrigar and Foster have started some fieldwork that should have little to no public interaction. Staff is continuing to use the facemask donated by Foster's friend in case of public contact. According to the County call there is a chance that the Governor could extend the Executive order 202.4. USDA has just started getting information this week, but it is very vague and there are no dates. FSA is expecting that most of their staff will be returning to the office next week because the new Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP) sign-up starts next week. As of our last conversation, Frary had not received any information on when NRCS employees may return or what that will look like when they do. Dulanski will continue to gather information and to have conversations with USDA and the County. As she gets the answers needed, Dulanski will continue to develop the District's reopening plan. Dulanski inquired if it was acceptable to the Board if she continued working with Allen, as she has in the past, to determine employee schedules, practices, and to develop a reopening plan for Board approval. The Board indicated they were fine with that approach.
2. Dulanski informed the Board that it was unlikely that the District will have any interns this summer.
3. Dulanski has not heard anything from NRCS about the letter that we sent with the MOA but was notified that our request for an extension on the EQIP portion of the Contribution Agreement was approved. That contract will now expire at the end of Sept 2021.
4. The no-till was picked up and we requested its removal from the District's Inland Marine policy. There were some changes to ensure that everything was covered appropriately, but the entire Inland Marine policy that covered the no-till was not required any longer.

V. Old and New Business:

A. Andrews stated that there were some items for board approval as follows:

1. Dulanski informed the Board that the District has a tablet right now that's used for field work. Unfortunately, one tablet is not enough to balance the amount of time various staff members need one. The cost of a tablet is above Dulanski's limit but is budgeted for. **Motion to approve a purchase of a tablet with accessories at a cost not to exceed \$800** made by Cook, seconded by Matthews **approved by:**

Robert Andrews - Aye

Adam Cook – Aye

Rebecca Allen – Aye

Mark Matthews – Aye

Patrick Smith – Aye

Kevin Acres – Aye

John Burke – Aye

2. Dulanski explained that the District tree expense budget line needs to be increased from \$7,200 to \$9,000 to cover this year's additional cost and a 25% deposit on next year's tree order required by the new nursery we will be using. Acres asked why the District was changing nurseries and was informed that the service, stock availability and increases in costs have caused us to find another that will be a better choice. We utilized the new nursery when our current one ran out of stock on a number of species. Acres asked if it was a NYS nursery and Dulanski replied that it was from Michigan which is in the same zone as the North Country so the species purchased should be hardy for this area. **Motion to approve increasing the tree expense budget line from \$7,200 to \$9,000 to cover additional costs and a required 25% deposit on next year's order** made by Acres, seconded by Allen **approved by:**

Robert Andrews - Aye

Adam Cook – Aye

Rebecca Allen – Aye

Mark Matthews – Aye

Patrick Smith – Aye

Kevin Acres – Aye

John Burke – Aye

3. **Motion to approve a transfer from Money Market to Checking for June and July 2020 to cover operating costs up to \$20,000 each month** made by Matthews, seconded by Cook **approved by:**

Robert Andrews - Aye

Adam Cook – Aye

Rebecca Allen – Aye

Mark Matthews – Aye

Patrick Smith – Aye

Kevin Acres – Aye

John Burke – Aye

4. Approval to pay Morse Agronomics for work completed for NMP plans is needed. Acres inquired if Foster will be able to do this type of work in the future. Dulanski explained that she expects she will be able to but requires more experience and training and perhaps a year working with Dale Morse before completing one on her own. **Motion to approve a payment to Morse Agronomics for work performed at two farms under the AEM program in the amount of \$1,672.00 made by Acres, seconded by Matthews approved by:**

Robert Andrews - Aye

Adam Cook – Aye

Rebecca Allen – Aye

Mark Matthews – Aye

Patrick Smith – Aye

Kevin Acres – Aye

John Burke – Aye

VI. SWCC – Ryan Cunningham

- A. Cunningham informed the Board that the NYS Ag Non-Point Source Round 26 that has been extended a couple times is now due on June 15. There are two other grant opportunities available on irrigation and water management and a grown and certified implementation funding grant which are due June 1. Payments on grants have been affected by the COVID 19 situation and the normal black out period that occurs after the state budget passes. Staff is working to process things as quickly as possible.
- B. Cunningham talked about the various requirements needed for Districts to reopen and the problems Districts are facing. Co-located Districts also need to consider what USDA is implementing. He said flexibility is the key because things are changing on a week to week basis. He said he is here to answer questions and is always available for emails and phone calls. Dulanski asked if it was true that 50% of Ag and market staff is actually helping Department of Labor process unemployment claims. Cunningham indicated that it was and that he was working half of his time on his job and half on processing unemployment claims. Dulanski informed that Board that she has not seen any reduction in responsiveness in emails or calls even though Cunningham is splitting his time in this manner.

VII. Board of Legislator report:

- A. Burke reported that the County is dealing with the COVID 19 situation but still has the sales tax discussion ongoing. Acres explained about the ramifications to the County's budget and how it will be hard to handle an estimated decrease in sales tax revenue of 22%. Dulanski inquired as to what the District could expect for an appropriation for next year. Acres said to use level funding but know that it could change. Andrews asked if the budget schedule will be the same and was told so far it looks like it will be. Dulanski said the District would present the budget for fiscal year 2021 in July.

VIII: Action required on NYS Ag NPS Round 26 Grant (Attachment C):

A. Andrews started a discussion to decide if the District should participate in the NYS Ag NPS Round 26 Grant. He requested that any member who may be interested in applying for the NYS Ag NPS Round 26 Grant, to make their intentions known. Smith indicated that he was going to apply for this grant. Andrews said that he would need to recuse himself from any board discussion. Dulanski said, if Smith would like, he could hang up since this was the last piece of business for the Board. Smith agreed and hung up at 7:04 p.m., thereby recusing himself. Andrews asked if the rest of the Board had a chance to read Resolution 2020 -1 and said, if so, then a motion was needed. *Motion to accept Resolution 2020 -1 and to authorize Andrews to sign it* made by Cook, seconded by Matthews **approved by:**

- Robert Andrews - Aye*
- Adam Cook – Aye*
- Rebecca Allen – Aye*
- Mark Matthews – Aye*
- Patrick Smith recused*
- Kevin Acres – Aye*
- John Burke – Aye*

IX. Announcements:

A. Acres informed Andrews that the work being done to increase awareness of the type of farmland used for solar arrays by the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Board has not gone unnoticed. Andrews was pleased that the message was received and said the hope was to increase awareness of the quality of land being used. Acres said unfortunately there isn't much that can be done but at least people know about it.

X. Time and Date of Next Meeting: May 21, 2020, 7:30 PM at the SWCD Office.

XI. Meeting Adjourned: Adjournment, telecom turned off at 7:12 PM, transcript attached. (Attachment D)

Robert Andrews, Jr., Chairperson

Date

Elizabeth J. Gallup, Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

Date

Attachments: A - D