

DRAFT

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
1942 Old DeKalb Road, Canton, NY 13617
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
For March 25, 2021, 7:00 p.m.

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

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

Board Members Excused: None

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

I. Call to Order and Agenda (Attachment A)

II. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: *Motion to approve the February 17, 2021 minutes*, made by Acres, seconded by Matthews **approved by all**

III. Treasurer’s Reports: Gallup discussed items relevant to the financial information provided to the Board. *Motion to approve February 2021 Treasurer’s report*, made by Allen, seconded by Cook **approved by all**

IV. Reports

A. BOL –Kevin Acres, John Burke

1. Burke reported that the County is expected to receive approximately \$21 million in COVID stimulus money and that discussion continues as to what is the best way to utilize it when received, The County is also experiencing “COVID tourism” as people from out of the area are coming here to get their vaccine due to a shortage in other areas of the state.
2. Solar projects and their potential impact on farmers & landowners were discussed.
3. Acres reported that there will be a public hearing about permitting UTVs to utilize the trail system in St. Lawrence County. Andrews asked what was going on with the discussion of changing how the NYS Snowmobile Grant is handled. Dulanski informed the Board that she had provided the County Attorney with the steps and deadlines related to them for each phase of the grant. It looks like nothing will change for the 2020 – 2021 grant year.

B. Grange - Mark Matthews

1. Matthews said that it looks like May will be the first meeting to be held in person.

C. AFPB – Bob Andrews

1. Andrews said that the next meeting will be April 1st and lands to be added to Ag District #1 will be discussed.

D. SWCC – Ryan Cunningham – Report attached (Attachment B)

1. Dulanski went over some items in the report and said that Cunningham told her that he is reviewing a CNMP plan for Foster and it looks good so far. Both Cunningham and Dulanski are pleased with the progress Foster is showing in preparing these plans.

E. NRCS – Kent Frary – Report attached (Attachment C)

V. SWCD Reports:

A. Secretary/Assistant Treasurer’s Report – Liz Gallup

1. Gallup has been busy with the problems caused by the unavailability of various trees offered in our tree sale. This has caused the District to refund money or to swap species for almost half of the orders received.
2. ***Motion** to approve a transfer from Money Market to Checking for April and May 2021 to cover operating costs up to \$20,000 each month made by Matthews, seconded by Allen **approved by all.***

B. Technician’s Report – Jevonah Foster

1. Requests for Ag values have continued to be received but seem to be slowing down.
2. Foster attended Water Quality Symposium virtually this year and liked the classes she attended.
3. Tree program took more of Foster’s time this year because of additional work caused by lack of inventory.
4. Foster had to take the Drone Pilot test since it is required every two years to maintain her license. She passed the test so her license to fly the District’s drone has been renewed.
5. Foster informed the Board that she has completed a CNMP and submitted it to Cunningham for review; she is also working on three more plans and is certifying Tiers 1 & 2 for a NYS Grown & Certified plan.

C. Forester’s Report – Aaron Barrigar

1. The data entry and plan for the Right of Way project is complete for towns along the St. Lawrence River.
2. Tree program took more of Barrigar’s time this year because of additional work caused by lack of inventory.
3. Barrigar also attended Water Quality Symposium virtually this year.
4. Barrigar continues to update the forest inventory and reforestation plan for the County. The Forestry intern(s) will be a big help in completing this project.
5. Barrigar has been helping USDA APHIS with the Black Ash IPM Study.

D. Manager’s Report – Raeanne Dulanski (Attachment D)

1. Dulanski provided an update on the COVID status for the office, now allowing 50% of building staff at one time.
2. Dulanski reported that drought levels in the County continue to remain high and may be a problem for this year’s growing season.
3. Dulanski informed the Board that all Part C monies have been fully earned and the District received \$112,874.08 this year. This amount is about \$1,000 lower than last year since all Districts fully qualified because of the reduced requirements due to COVID.

4. The District's new Ford 150 has arrived and Dulanski said she would like board permission to sell our 2018 Ford 150 via Auctions International. **Motion to approve placing the 2018 Ford 150 truck on Auctions International for sale approval at the May board meeting and to authorize Dulanski to complete all necessary paperwork, made by Matthews, seconded by Acres approved by all.**
5. The District's Ag NPS Round 26 grant application was selected for funding. Out of 110 applications, 46 were awarded and the District ranked 27th of those. We now need to open a separate bank account for this grant. **Motion to open new bank accounts for the NYS Ag NPS Rnd. 26 Grant with a transfer of \$1,000.00 from the Money Market Account. Once funds from NYS have been received, authorization to transfer the \$1,000, and any applicable interest, from the grant account back to the Money Market Account made by Cook, seconded by Matthews approved by all**
6. Dulanski gave an update on this year's Envirothon and explained how it will be held virtually and that it will be co-hosted with Herkimer County SWCD.
7. Dulanski told the Board about a program she would like the District to do which would utilize Master Naturalist volunteers as citizen scientists to gather information about invasive species on County Reforestation Land. This would be a mutually beneficial program; volunteers will get needed hours for their certification program and the District will get the location and extent of invasive infestations. The only cost may be some staff time which would be charged to Part C monies. **Motion to approve the project County Reforestation Land Invasive Species Mapping Program as outlined in the project description made by Cook, seconded by Matthews approved by all but Allen.** Allen recused herself since she may benefit from this program.
8. Dulanski told the Board that the District would like to do another year of the Part C SLAM project. **Motion to approve using Part C monies to fund the Reducing Outlier Populations of EAB and the Progression of Ash Mortality as outlined by the project description made by Burke, seconded by Acres approved by all. Motion to authorize Dulanski to sign landowner agreements for the project Reducing Outlier Populations of EAB and the Progression of Ash Mortality made by Cook, seconded by Matthews approved by all.**
9. Dulanski provided an update on the status of the Wetland Easement Contribution Agreement. **Motion to authorize Dulanski to submit paperwork and sign paperwork for an extension or new contribution agreement with USDA-NRCS for easement monitoring. made by Cook, seconded by Allen approved by all.**
10. Approval to pay the Morse Agronomic invoice of \$1,716.00 for work on two plans completed and to pay approximately \$800 for a third plan to be completed later. **Motion to authorize the payment of up to \$2,800 for AEM work to Morse Agronomic. made by Acres, seconded by Burke approved by all.**
11. Dulanski said that staff feels it would be advantageous to purchase another drone since the one we currently have is not performing as it should. Foster and Barrigar explained what a new drone could accomplish to improve District capabilities. **Motion to approve the purchase of a new drone and to trade in the District's drone for an amount not to exceed \$1,200.00 made by Matthews, seconded by Cook approved by all.**

VI. Old and New Business:

- A. Dulanski provided an update on the Public Employer Health Emergency Plan required by NYS that she had provided to the Board for review. She completed the plan by using a template that was provided and with discussions that she has had with other Districts.

Motion to adopt the proposed Public Employer Health Emergency Plan and to authorize Andrews to sign. made by Cook, seconded by Matthews **approved by all.**

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

VIII. Executive Session – entered at 8:22 p.m.

Motion to enter Executive session to discuss personnel evaluations made by Acres, seconded by Allen **approved by all.**

Exited Executive Session at 9:10 p.m.

Andrews said that Board had discussed Dulanski’s evaluation and a summary of Dulanski’s performance evaluation was given. All comments were very positive. The Board is also very pleased with all staff members.

A number of motions were made:

Motion to end Foster’s probationary period made by Acres, seconded by Allen **approved by all.**

Motion to adjust the salaries of Barrigar and Foster by a \$4,000 increase and Gallup by a \$2,400 increase made by Allen, seconded by Burke **approved by all.**

Motion to allow Dulanski to continue to work from home as advised by physician, subject to review in a year made by Allen, seconded by Acres **approved by all**

Motion to adjust Dulanski’s salary by a \$4,000 increase made by Allen, second by Burke **approved by all**

Motion to adjust all budget lines associated with the salary adjustments made by Matthews, second by Acres, **approved by all.**

Dulanski mentioned that the no-till/inter-seeder reimbursement program is now taking applications and the announcement has gone out.

IX. Announcements: None

X. Time and Date of Next Meeting: May 20, 2021 – location and time to be determined.

XI. Meeting Adjourned: Motion to adjourn at 9:23 p.m. made by Allen seconded by Acres **approved by all**

Robert Andrews, Jr., Chairperson

Date

Elizabeth J. Gallup, Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

Date

Attachments: A – E