

Draft

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
1942 Old DeKalb Road, Canton, NY 13617
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
For November 21st, 2024, at 4:15 pm

Board Members Present: Robert Andrews, Jr. (Chairperson), Patrick Smith (Treasurer), Jackie teRiele, John Burke, Adam Cook (Vice-Chair), Kaitlyn Kulp

Board Members Excused: Margaret Haggard

Staff Present: Alivia Bleau (Manager) and Melissa Woods (Secretary/Assistant Treasurer), Jevonnah Foster (Technician), Heidi Knafelc (Technician), and Aaron Barrigar (Forester)

Staff Members Excused: N/A

Guest Present: N/A

- I. **Call to Order:** at 4:17 pm
- II. **Agenda** (Attachment A) – changed order of Agenda Items
- III. **New Business:**

Smith entered at 4:21pm

- A. Discussion on Employee Handbook changes/updates (wording to come to modern times, nursing mothers, per diem rates, cell phones, social media, work area)
- B. ***Motion to accept changes to Employee Handbook as seen in Attachment B, made by Cook, seconded by teRiele, approved by all.***
- IV. **Old Business:**
 - A. Discussion on 2025 Budget.
 - B. ***Motion to accept the 2025 proposed budget with the 3% COL increase for personnel, made by Cook, seconded by Burke, approved by all.***
 - C. Discussion on new Logo and ***Motion to approve the new Logo, made by Smith, seconded by teRiele, approved by all.*** BOD stated they would like to purchase apparel in January for the staff and BOD members. Reach out to Great Northern Printing to see if they can make a “Store” so people could order what they would like.
 - D. Discussion on insurance buy-out policy
 - E. ***Motion to enter executive session at 5:03pm, made by teRiele, seconded by Cook, approved by all.***
 - F. Re-enter normal session at 5:15pm.
 - G. Andrews gave specifics of what to add into insurance buy-out policy.
 - H. ***Motion to approve the insurance buy-out policy as seen in Attachment C, made by Smith, seconded by Cook, approved by all.***
 - I. Bleau provided an update on Endyne Labs, the drop off station is all set up and the pick-up is the second Monday of every month.

Discussion about Roadway Sleuth projects, Andrews stated maybe this is something SWCD can look into and provide as a service to the county. Andrews would like SWCD staff to do some research and see if this is feasible.

Andrews talked about NYS Conservation mailing about different programs that counties are doing and would like SLC SWCD to look into these programs to see if we can widen the services we offer.

V. **SWCD Reports:**

A. **Forester's Report** – Aaron Barrigar

1. Barrigar has been working on AEM and Part B Forest Management Plans, putting up hiking signs, ROW, and marking county land boundaries.
2. Discussion on ARPA bids and what to do moving forward. BOD would like SWCD to give the contractor a deadline to sign the contract. If the contract isn't signed by that date to move to the next lowest bid.

teRiele left at 5:37pm

3. Discussion on what the county is expecting Barrigar to do next year, either finish ROW on the north side of Route 11 or start working on planting trees on county land.
4. Discussion on TNC plans and what the interest is for residence in our county.

B. **Technician Report-** Heidi Knafelc

1. Knafelc reported that she went to Game of Logging training, which was learning to use a chainsaw, had a good time and learned a lot.
2. Knafelc has been working on a few Ag Values, along with hiking signs, ROW, marking county boundaries, and Forest Management Plans.

C. **Technician Report-** Jevonnah Foster

1. Foster stated she has been continuing working on AEM plans, CNMP plans, soil sampling, and AgNPS grant.

Kulp stepped out at 5:50pm

2. Discussion on Kulp AgNPS grant, *Motion to allow Foster and Bleau to finalize and submit close-out documentation for AgNPS Round 28 and reimburse Kulp for AgNPS grant up to \$221,470.00 one SWCD receives the money from NYS Ag & Markets, made by Cook, seconded by Smith, approved by all.*

Kulp re-entered at 5:53pm

3. Foster hasn't heard anything for AgNPS Round 30 yet.
4. Foster hasn't heard from the farm with the CAFO grant, assuming that the project won't be completed and will return that money back to the state.
5. CAFO ENMP grant has been submitted for Smith and Fisher farms.
6. All farms who applied for CRF 8 through SLC SWCD got funded.
7. Cover crop program is finished; we did 300 acres for a total of \$24,900.
8. Foster attended her CCA conference.

Barrigar, Knafelc & Foster left at 6:00pm

VI. **Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

Motion to approve the October 17, 2024 minutes, made by Burke, seconded by Smith, approved by all.

A. **Treasurer's Reports:** Melissa Woods

1. Woods helped Bleau calculate and submit CFP for EQIP/WRP to NRCS for Q2 and Q3.
2. Woods went soil sampling with Foster and Foote from NRCS.
3. Woods stated that she looked into the insurance and the rates are only going up 3.6% instead of the 13% the company thought it might. Also reached out and asked open enrollment dates.
4. ***Motion to accept and renew Health, Vision, and Dental Insurance for 2025, made by Cook, seconded by Kulp, approved by all.***
5. Woods stated she worked on BOD meeting dates for 2025, ***Motion to approve 2025 BOD meeting dates, made by Burke, seconded by Cook, approved by all.***

6. **Motion to pay NYS Retirement Annual Invoice for \$34,501, made by Cook, seconded by Kulp, approved by all.**
7. **Motion to pay BOD Mileage reimbursement for a total of \$1,132.30, made by Smith, seconded by Cook, approved by all.**
8. **Motion to pay Farm Bureau Dues for \$110.00, made by Cook, seconded by Burke, approved by all.**
9. Woods received the audit letter early this year and we can sign and send back now so it is done for next year. **Motion for chair to sign Audit Engagement Letter for 2025, made by Burke, seconded by Cook, approved by all.**
10. **Motion to allow Woods to transfer up to \$45,000 from Money Market Savings account to the Checking account to pay for December expenses and \$40,000 for January expenses, made by Smith, seconded by Kulp, approved by all.**

Motion to approve the October 2024 Treasurers Reports, made by Cook, seconded by Burke, approved by all.

VII. Reports

A. Board of Legislators –John Burke

1. Burke reported that the county is updating the office for the aging.
2. Burke also reported that the new radio system upgrades will cost approximately \$16 Million and then another million to keep the system running in case some of the towers go down they don't all go down.

B. Ag and Farmland Protection Board - Bob Andrews

1. Andrews reported their next meeting is the first week of December.
2. Andrews stated they haven't had a meeting since SWCD's last meeting, but the topics of conversation will be Solar Farms, the methane digester project and the Ag census.

VIII. SWCD Reports:

A. Manager Report- Alivia Bleau

1. Bleau met with NRCS employees from a few counties to discuss fiscal year 2024 and the application process.
2. Bleau did the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce Trunk or Treat for outreach.
3. Bleau attended the CART meeting, Hamilton County SWCD meeting also had a team meeting.
4. Bleau and Barrigar worked on the BID contract with Covell Tree Service.
5. Bleau also worked on drafting strategic plan, worked on finishing up the new logo, creating a new Point of Sale Policy, NRCS performance/financial reports, and worked on travel/reimbursement policy revival/sheet.
6. Bleau attended the Admin Conference and has the Managers Meeting coming up Dec. 3rd & 4th.
7. Discussion on BOD meeting attendance and time of meetings.

IX. Correspondence: Mail was available for the Board's review.

X. Announcements: None

XI. Next Meeting: January 23, 2025 4:15 p.m.

XII. Meeting Adjourned: **Motion to adjourn at 6:38 p.m. made by Cook, seconded by Smith, approved by all.**

Robert Andrews, Jr., Chairperson

Date

Melissa Woods, Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

Date