

December 12, 2023

**MINUTES**

**OSWEGO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
DIRECTORS MEETING**

The Directors and staff met in-person and by a virtual video conference call at the District Office Conference Room, located at 3105 State Route 3, Fulton, NY 13069 at 10:03am on Tuesday December 12<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**PRESENT:**

Jeff Richards, Chairperson  
Linda Lockwood, Vice Chairperson  
Tom Bonoffski, Member  
Mary Ellen Chesbro, Member

Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager  
Erica Schreiner, Sr. District Technician  
Ryan Cunningham, NYS SWCC  
Christa Carrington, Oswego County Attorney

1. **MINUTES - MOTION: TO APPROVE MINUTES FOR November 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**  
**4 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)  
Made by Director **Lockwood** and seconded by Director **Bonoffski** and carried.

2. **ADMINISTRATIVE - MOTION: TO APPROVE THE BILLS FOR December 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**  
**4 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)  
Made by Director **Bonoffski** and seconded by Director **Lockwood** and carried.

**FINANCIAL REPORT - MOTION: TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR November 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**  
**4 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)  
Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Lockwood** and carried.

**2023 MODIFIED BUDGET** - Board of Directors reviewed and approved the 2023 Modified Budget as submitted.

**PAYROLL CERTIFICATION FOR EMPLOYEES** - Board of Directors reviewed and approved the **December 2023** Payroll Certification for Employees as submitted.

**RECONCILED BANK STATEMENTS** - Director **Richards** reviewed the **November 2023** Reconciled Bank Statements and initialed.

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**Old Business**

AEM Project at Maple Hollow Farms

Chairman Richards requested a motion to go into executive session for discussions regarding proposed, pending, or current litigation.

**MOTION: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:04 AM.**

Director **Lockwood** made the motion, Seconded by Director **Chesbro**

At 10:14 Mrs. Rebecca Fowler stopped at the office to drop off photos of the project at her farm containing handwritten notes to be given to the Board of Directors and asked that they be returned to her.

**MOTION: TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:43 AM.**

Director **Chesbro** made the motion, Seconded by Director **Bonoffski**

Ryan Cunningham, from NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets, and Joe Chairvolotti, will be meeting with the Fowlers at their farm on 12/13 to review the project, provide technical advice and remind the property owners of the utilization and maintenance requirements associated with the project.

Budget: The county budget along with the appropriation for this office will be voted on at the full Oswego County Legislature meeting. Any adjustments to salaries will be discussed in the new year. General discussion followed.

**New Business**

AEM Technical Assistance from Seneca County SWCD

**MOTION: TO ENTER INTO AGREEMENT WITH SENECA COUNTY SWCD FOR THE PROVISION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR ROUND 18 OF THE AEM PROGRAM AT THE REIMBURSEMENT RATE OF \$51.00 PER HOUR.**

**4 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Lockwood** and seconded by Director **Bonoffski** and carried.

Invoice from Jefferson County SWCD for AEM Technical Assistance: Invoice to be delivered by 12/31.

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**MOTION: UPON RECEIPT OF AN INVOICE FROM JEFFERSON COUNTY SWCD FOR AEM TECHNICAL SERVICES PROVIDED, A PAYMENT UP TO AN AMOUNT OF \$3,000.00 WILL BE MADE OUT OF THE AEM ACCOUNT.**

**4 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Bonoffski** and carried.

Invoice from Seneca County SWCD for AEM Technical Assistance

**MOTION: TO PAY THE INVOICE RECEIVED FROM SENECA COUNTY SWCD OUT OF THE AEM ACCOUNT, IN THE AMOUNT OF \$5,568.00, FOR TECHNICAL SERVICES PROVIDED.**

**4 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Lockwood** and seconded by Director **Chesbro** and carried.

Retirement Bill

**MOTION: TO PROCESS PAYMENT TO NEW YORK STATE & LOCAL RETIRMENT SYSTEM FOR THE 2024 RETIREMENT BILL IN THE AMOUNT OF \$28,237.00.**

**4 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Lockwood** and carried.

Sandy Creek 9 E Watershed Plan Development: May need to utilize some FLOWPA funds in 2024 for modeling and plan development. *General discussion followed.*

FLOWPA 24/25 Request: The request will be focused on water chestnut control.

Envirothon Donation Request from the NYS Envirothon Committee: A donation of \$3,000 was requested from each District to be used towards the National Envirothon. *General discussion followed.* The board requested that staff review finances to see whether a lesser donation amount may be feasible. Staff agreed to bring the information to the February meeting for discussion.

Harassment Prevention Training: Joe Chairvolotti provided a training to board members on the NYS harassment policy, harassment prevention in the workplace, and the steps to follow as employees and a board, should an incident occur.

## **REPORTS:**

**Ryan Cunningham gave the following report:**

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee

Region 4 Report - December 2023

Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham - Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

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### **NYS SWCC News**

**Happy Holidays & Merry Christmas!** The holiday season is here again, a time for remembering our family and friends. Wishing you and all those close to you, a joyous holiday season and a new year of happiness! Travel safe and party smart.

**Climate Resilient Farming (CRF) Program Round 7:** Congratulations to those Districts who will be receiving funds to help farms via the Climate Resilient Farming Program! Nearly \$16 million will be divided between 31 Districts to implement projects on 116 farms. The funding will help protect and preserve NY's natural resources by supporting farms and addressing the unpredictable conditions and challenges of climate change. Information about Plan of Work development will be available shortly. More info about the Round 7 awards can be found here:

[https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/11/projectdescriptions\\_round7\\_climateresilientfarming.pdf](https://agriculture.ny.gov/system/files/documents/2023/11/projectdescriptions_round7_climateresilientfarming.pdf)

**New State Programs Advisory Committee Meeting:** Please save the morning of **December 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023**, for the inaugural meeting of the State Programs Advisory Committee! This meeting will take place via Webex from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM. This will be a sub-committee of the SWCC that will be comprised of SWCDs and SWCC staff. Our vision for this group is to create more opportunities to discuss SWCC programs, gather program ideas and feedback, identify priority focus areas and much more. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out shortly. Questions can be directed to your Regional AEA.

**December SWCC Meeting:** The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on December 19<sup>th</sup>**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out shortly. All Districts are encouraged to attend and participate in the meeting. Each meeting agenda provides an opportunity for Conservation Districts to provide reports, updates, or feedback to the SWCC. **Reminder - participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.**

**2023 Part C Performance Measures:** The end of the year is rapidly approaching, and you should be checking to make sure that your District is fulfilling its Performance Measure goals. Please contact your Regional AEA with any specific questions.

**CREP Annual Progress Report:** It's that time of year again when New York State reports to USDA on outreach, success stories, challenges and provides suggestions related to the Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP). Please send anything you would like to share or any questions to [Scott.Fickbohm@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Scott.Fickbohm@agriculture.ny.gov) by **12/25/23**.

**NYS Conservation Storyboard:** The SWCC Conservation Storyboard has been updated and is accessible through the SWCC website: <https://agriculture.ny.gov/soil-and-water/soil-water-conservation-committee>. The interactive experience map includes SWCD contact information and conservation project highlights. SWCC encourages districts to submit recently completed

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conservations projects to highlight the important work being completely every year. A submission form can be found at: <https://arcg.is/4ymXS>. To update district contact information please reach out to [Tyler.Knapp@agriculture.ny.gov](mailto:Tyler.Knapp@agriculture.ny.gov).

### **Other Events**

**2023 CCA Training:** Advanced Training track for current CCAs. This virtual training track will commence on **December 12<sup>th</sup> - 13<sup>th</sup>, 2023**. More information and a registration link can be found here, <https://www.nysaba.com/educational-meetings>

**NACD 2024 Annual Meeting:** Registration for The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 78<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting is now open! Hosted in partnership with the California Association of Conservation Districts, the 2024 Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, California, from **February 10<sup>th</sup> - 14<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. To learn more and to register, please visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/>

### **Other Funding**

**Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program 2024 Request for Proposals:** The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and partners are requesting proposals for the 2024. This program seeks to develop community capacity to sustain local natural resources by providing financial assistance to diverse local partnerships focused on improving water quality, watersheds and the species and habitats they support. Full proposals are due by **January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024**. To learn more about the grant program and the application guidelines, please go here, <https://www.nfwf.org/programs/five-star-and-urban-waters-restoration-grant-program/five-star-and-urban-waters-restoration-grant-program-2024-request-proposals>

**NOAA 2024 Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training Grant Funding Available:** The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA's) 2024 Great Lakes Bay Watershed Education and Training (B-WET) federal funding opportunity is now open. This competitive funding opportunity supports projects that provide Meaningful Watershed Educational Experiences (MWEEs) for youth and related professional development for teachers, while advancing regional Great Lakes watershed education priorities. For more information, please visit [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov) and search **NOAA-NOS-ONMS-2024-2008201**. Applications are due by **11:59 pm EST on February 29, 2024**.

### **Erica Schreiner gave the following report:**

An AEM implementation project was completed in early December. A significant amount of time was spent in the field to wrap up the project.

Continued AEM planning with additional program participants.

Maintained the District web site and Facebook page.

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Provided customer technical assistance in the following areas: ag assessment vs. ag district, drainage concerns, general property questions, and questions related to soil types.

Preparing for the start of the ag value assessment program.

Attended a meeting at CiTi in regard to a garden CiTi instructors may want to install on the property to be used by their ag class. The meeting was in conjunction with Cornell Cooperative Extension of Oswego County.

Attended a NYS Fair meeting and completed tasks in preparation for the 2024 display.

Preparing an application for a one-time special funding opportunity from Constellation.

Began planning the 2024 Plant-a-Tree Program and the Oswego County Envirothon.

Provided farm data for the Oneida Lake 9E Plan.

Participated in the Mexico Farmland Protection Board meeting.

Completed sexual harassment prevention training.

Assisted JC with timber marking.

**Sarra Learned provided the following report, which was read by Joe Chairvolotti, and covers the time frame since the October 10, 2023 Directors meeting:**

Created various water chestnut maps and provided season data and photos for JC's annual reporting to NYS-DEC and FLOWPA.

Reviewed all 2023 water chestnut data and materials. Created a GIS shapefile showing what was hand-pulled this season. Created final season maps. Worked on filing away paperwork, saving digital copies, saving field photos, etc. Preparing some materials for the 2024 season.

Uploaded water chestnut season information and population data for areas treated via herbicide or hand-pulled onto iMapInvasives for SLELO and DEC.

Returned to the water chestnut wetland permit applications for hand-pulling in various waterbodies in Oswego County. Edits have been made to the applications and handed over to JC for a final review.

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Wrote letters to be sent to landowners of the waterbodies for signature of permission for the project as part of the application process.

Attended the SLELO PRISM Autumn Partner Meeting, held at Keewaydin State Park in mid-October.

Have maintained conversation with staff at SLELO to discuss writing an article for their winter newsletter regarding the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) biocontrol release at Independence Park. Shared field photos from the release with SLELO staff.

The HWA biocontrol release of 1,500 *laricobius* beetles at Independence Park took place in mid-October which was attended by JC. The Hemlock Initiative's lab had an extra 500 beetles which were released at the park last week and attended by myself.

Continued involvement with the water sampling aspect of the Sandy Creek Nine Element Plan with Jefferson County SWCD in October.

Attended the Oneida Lake Nine Element Plan Watershed Advisory Committee meeting held via Zoom in early November. Sat in for and relayed meeting notes to JC.

Entered field data points from the Parish timber sale into the forestry program Two Dog for JC.

Completed the District's sexual harassment prevention training.

Provided technical assistance through customer phone calls and emails and by providing various maps and environmental reviews as requested.

**Laura Romanowicz provided the following report, which was read by Joe Chairvolotti:**

Received the FLOWPA 20/21 retainage payment in the amount of \$22,300, and funds have been deposited into the District savings account. The District also received the advancement payment for FLOWPA 22/23 in the amount of \$72,900, and those funds have been deposited into the district's FLOWPA grant account.

Attended the FLOWPA full board meeting in November

Completed the annual sexual harassment prevention training with all staff

Tree and shrub documents are currently being reviewed by all staff for approval. There are 538 pre-addressed envelopes that ready to be sent out, and an email template has been drafted.

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**Joe Chairvolotti gave the following report:**

Reforestation Property: Completed the layout of the skid trails and log landings, and completed some additional marking. Final calculations of volume and value have been completed. The notice is finished, but the sale will be delayed until 2024 to avoid conflicts between potential bidders and snowmobiles as Churchill Rd is part of the trail system.

Assisted landowners and municipalities with general technical, water quality and forestry related advice.

Communications with Brooks Forestry and Resource Management regarding Regenerate NY. We will be working on uploading applications and the associated tasks over the winter for a spring deadline.

Changes to SAF certification requirements.

Provided information to the SWCC as needed regarding adding a suite of forestry practices to the next round of CRF funding. Attended 1 SWCC staff meeting to discuss the additional opportunities.

Received an invite to the Oswego County Emergency Management meeting, which is today. Sarra is attending on behalf of the office.

Provided assistance and completed tasks for one particular project under the AEM program.

Participated w/ES in a meeting for the Farmland Protection Planning Grant committee for the Town of Mexico.

Village of Pulaski Drainage Grant: On hold until mid-winter to allow for contractors to take advantage of the 2024 field season.

Oneida Lake 9 E Plan: Providing assistance as needed. Asked Erica to provide generic farm data for the purpose of modeling within the watershed.

Sandy Creeks 9 E Plan: Sampling has been completed. Modeling and writing will be completed in 2024.

**FOLLOWUP:**

Modification of FLOWPA 20/21- The workplan was amended to include both water chestnut control as well as water monitoring.

Final report- Completed a final report with results, maps and photos. A copy was provided to the board to view.



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Mexico Trail Riders: Conducted fieldwork and completed a design for a temporary crossing at the Valley Rd site. The design and request were submitted to NYS DEC and communications have taken place.

Town of Williamstown NOIA: Submitted amendments as detailed in the NOIA. Requested payment from Town of Williamstown for design and engineering expenses from other Districts.

HWA at Independence Park: Sarra attended a secondary release led by NYS Hemlock Initiative.

Urban Forestry Grant - NYS DEC.

3. **NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 10:00am at the District's Conference Room

4. **ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting adjourned at 11:59am.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN**

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Lockwood** and carried.

Respectively submitted,

Erica Schreiner  
Acting Secretary

cc: Directors  
NRCS/Area Office  
Ryan Cunningham/NYSSWCC  
FSA & NRCS/Oswego Field Office  
Betsy Sherman-Saunders/Clerk of the Legislature  
Raven Ahart/Deputy Clerk of the Legislature