

January 24, 2023

MINUTES

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

The Directors and staff met in-person and by a Zoom virtual/conference call at the District Office Conference Room, located at 3105 State Route 3, Fulton, NY 13069 at 10:06am on Tuesday January 24th, 2023.

PRESENT:

Jeff Richards, Chairperson
Linda Lockwood, Vice Chairperson
Sandy Tuori-Bell, Member
Tom Bonoffski, Member
Mary Ellen Chesbro, Member

Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager
Erica Schreiner, Sr. District Technician
Laura Romanowicz, Secretary
Sarrah Learned, Environmental Resource Technician

1. **MINUTES - MOTION: TO APPROVE MINUTES FOR December 2022 AS SUBMITTED.**
5 yeas (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)
Made by Director **Bonoffski** and seconded by Director **Chesbro** and carried.
2. **ADMINISTRATIVE - MOTION: TO APPROVE THE BILLS FOR January 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**
5 yeas (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)
Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Bonoffski** and carried.

FINANCIAL REPORT - MOTION: TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR December 2022 AS SUBMITTED.
5 yeas (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)
Made by Director **Bonoffski** and seconded by Director **Chesbro** 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 **January 2023** Payroll Certification for Employees as submitted.

RECONCILED BANK STATEMENTS - Director **Richards** reviewed the **December 2022** Reconciled Bank Statements and initialed.

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Old Business

Attended the full Oswego County Legislature Meeting on 12/15/2022: The 2023 budget passed.

Soil and Water Awning: Buildings and Grounds officially agreed to pay 50% of the replacement costs. Laura is working on moving this forward in the spring of this year.

The terms for 3 board members will be discussed and renewed by the Legislature in March. General discussion followed.

Vacation policy: A summary of the discussion last meeting was provided and it was agreed that this would be discussed at the end of the meeting, if time. Otherwise, it would be tabled until next meeting.

New Business

Oswego County SWCD Policies: This document has been documented to include fiduciary responsibilities with FLOWPA. General discussion followed.

MOTION: TO APPROVE THE 2023 OSWEGO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT POLICIES WITH PROPOSED CHANGES, AS SUBMITTED.

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

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

Nomination and Election of officers

Nominations:

Chairperson: Jeff Richards

Vice Chairperson: Linda Lockwood

Member at Large: Sandy Tuori-Bell

Secretary: Laura Romanowicz

Treasurer: Laura Romanowicz

Election of Officers:

MOTION: THE ACTING SECRETARY CAST A UNANIMOUS BALLOT, ELECTING ALL OF THE AFORMENTIONED NOMINEES.

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

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

State Reporting: All State Reports are due February 15, 2023 and this office will be working on them throughout the next few weeks.

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Vehicle Status: The van was in an accident in late November and has been getting repaired since the beginning of January. The vehicle is now fixed and back at the office as of mid-January. The total expense to the office was \$500, representing our current deductible. General discussion followed.

FOLLOWPA 22/23 Contract and programming:

MOTION: TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH FOLLOWPA FOR THE 22/23 FUNDING AGREEMENT AND AUTHORIZE THE DISTRICT MANAGER, JOE CHAIRVOLOTTI, TO BE THE OFFICIAL SIGNER.

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

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

Director Performance Measures: Regional/State Meetings, Training Plans, District Law Training, Audit. General discussion followed.

Potential Salary Adjustments

DIRECTOR RICHARDS REQUESTED TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION TO DISCUSS PERSONNEL MATTERS.

MOTION: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:34 AM.

MOTION: TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:54 AM.

Director Chesbro made the motion, Seconded by Director Lockwood

MOTION: TO INCREASE EACH FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE'S SALARY BY 4% OF THEIR CURRENT INDIVIDUAL RATE MOVING FORWARD AND PROVIDE RETROACTIVE PAY BACK TO JANUARY 1, 2023.

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

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

REPORTS:

Ryan Cunningham submitted the following report:

New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee

Region 4 Report - January 2023

Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham - Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

New Division Administrative Assistant: Please join us in welcoming Melissa Gordon to the Division of Land and Water Resources as our new Administrative Assistant! We are so pleased to have Melissa

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joining our team. Among her various duties in support of SWCC and Farmland Protection Unit mission goals, you will begin to see emails from Melissa (melissa.gordon@agriculture.ny.gov) that are sent on behalf of the SWCC. Welcome Melissa!

2022 State Aid to Districts - DUE 2/15: All 2022 annual reporting documents (State Aid, Treasurers Report, Annual Report, etc.) are now available on the SWCC SharePoint <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>, under Resources for Districts - State Aid to Districts. All reports are due to the State Committee by **February 15, 2023**. Please contact ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions.

Round 28 AGNPS and Round 6 CRF Plans of Work: Please submit plans of work for projects awarded through Round 28 AGNPS and Round 6 CRF to your Regional AEA for review and approval. Submitting this information as soon as possible can help to expedite the contracting process.

Climate Leadership and Community Protection Act (CLCPA) Scoping Plan: On December 19th, 2022, the NYS Climate Action Council (CAC) voted to approve the CLCPA Scoping Plan. The Scoping Plan provides a road map for how New York State will meet the emission reduction targets set by the law. Chapters 15 (Agriculture and Forestry), 19 (Land Use), and 21 (Adaptation/Resilience) include strategies for the farm and forest sectors to both reduce emissions, increase carbon sequestration/storage and elevate adaptation/resilience. The agricultural and forestry strategies call in part for the expansion of current programs and conservation technical assistance through SWCCDs. Please click the link for the entire scoping plan <https://climate.ny.gov/resources/scoping-plan/>.

NYS SWCC Cost Share Program Procurement Policy: In March 2021, the Procurement Policy and Form utilized by NYS SWCC Cost Share programs was updated. This policy and the updated Procurement Record must be used for projects that were procured after March 2021. For all active contracts, please be sure to collect appropriate proofs of payment for each project invoice. Acceptable proofs of payment are defined in the Procurement Policy.

January SWCC Meeting: The next SWCC meeting is scheduled to convene at **10:00 AM on January 24th**. Further details and an agenda for this meeting will be sent out shortly. Reminder - participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.

Ag Value Assessment Liaisons from Tax and Finance: The Department of Tax and Finance has compiled a county-by-county list of Customer Service Liaisons who are available to help answer questions related to the Agricultural Value Assessment Program: <https://www.tax.ny.gov/research/property/regional/crmlist.htm> Please be patient with the liaisons as many of them will be learning along with you. For questions related to the annually updated soils series or soil classifications, please reach out to Jason Mulford jason.mulford@agriculture.ny.gov. For other questions related to values per acre, landowner issues, and Agricultural Districts, please contact Jeff Kehoe Jeffrey.kehoe@agriculture.ny.gov.

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Other Events

New York Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society Annual Meeting: Farmers and agricultural service providers are invited to attend the Annual Meeting of the Empire State Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society on **January 24, 2023**, at the Cayuga County Soil and Water Conservation District. Participants can expect to learn how technology interacts with conservation efforts for improved water quality and climate resiliency. This year the meeting will be both in person and virtual. To learn more and to register, please visit: bit.ly/EmpireSWCS2023

WEBINAR, Assessing Trends and Advancing Research for Smart Solar: Learn how American Farmland Trust is advancing Smart Solar principles in New York, **Wednesday January 11th, 11:30am - 12:30pm**. The session will include highlighting cutting edge research led by Cornell University and its Sustainable Solar initiative. Please register for the event here: <https://forms.office.com/r/meZcV1Yaph>

2023 Water Quality Symposium: The New York State Conservation District Employees' Association and Soil and Water Conservation Committee are thrilled to announce the 2023 Water Quality Symposium in Syracuse, NY. **March 14th - 17th, 2023**. Registration is due no later than January 23rd, 2023. Please note that this year, **each County Soil and Water District will receive one free admission coupon for one staff to attend the full week**. Registration packet available here:

<https://www.nyscdea.com/training-sessions/> Online registration form here:

<https://forms.gle/GWidbu9G6aQiZp2aA>

NACD 2023 Annual Meeting: Registration for The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 77th Annual Meeting is now open! Hosted in partnership with the Louisiana Association of Conservation Districts, the 2023 Annual Meeting will take place in New Orleans, Louisiana from **February 11-15, 2023**. To learn more and to register, please visit

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScRMcacKQGe22Q2RjVKF2knpcugUTP4ZZII17rl1Gx-eDFieA/viewform>

Other Funding

Five Star and Urban Waters Restoration Program 2023 Request for Proposals: The National Fish and Wildlife Foundation and partners are requesting proposals for the 2023. 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, 2023**. 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-2023-request-proposals>

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Shannon Bozeak submitted the following report:

November 8, 2022 - December 13, 2022

NRCS NE 5 Team: Cayuga, Onondaga, Oswego Co SWCD Board Report

Shannon Bozeak (District Conservationist), Scott Travis (Resource Conservationist), Miranda Ciardulli (Resource Conservationist), Don Quinn-Jacobs (Soil Conservationist), Dinika Huff (Program Assistant)

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)

- Started processing EQIP applications, high tunnels and forest management plans are being completed first as part of ACT NOW directive.
- Cayuga: 3 high tunnels, 1 reduced tillage, 2 Soil erosion, 1 cover crops, 1 Ag chemical mixing facility
- Onondaga: 2 high tunnels, 2 forest management plans, 1 grazing
- Oswego: 2 high tunnels, 2 forestry, 1 grazing, 1 cover crops

Implementation/Payment of EQIP Contracts:

- **Cayuga:**
 - *Installing Livestock pipeline -No payment yet
 - *Completed design for 2 WASCoBs with Underground outlet (Cayuga Lake)
 - *Completed survey for WASCoB with Underground outlet (Cayuga Lake)
 - *High Tunnel System (Lake Ontario) -\$12,393.47
 - *Cover crops (Seneca River) - \$14,050.52
 - *Cover crops (Owasco Lake) - \$1273.86
 - *CARP (Coronavirus assistance relief payments) -
 - \$2778.46 (High tunnel, Owasco Lake)
 - \$3085.34 (High tunnel, Owasco Lake)
- **Onondaga:**
 - *Completed survey for Silage Leachate and VTA
 - *Completed design for Livestock watering system, access road and roof runoff structure.
 - *CARP (Coronavirus assistance relief payments) -
 - \$2873.94 (High tunnel)
 - \$3085.34 (High tunnel)
- **Oswego:**
 - *CARP (Coronavirus assistance relief payments) -
 - \$3704.62 (High tunnel)

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- \$1440.68 (High tunnel)

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

*Documentation for **2022 payments** is being provided to NRCS:

Onondaga - 5 Current Contract

Cayuga - 21 Current contracts

- \$36018 (Cropland) - Cayuga Lake
- \$7521 (Cover crops) - Seneca River
- \$10426 (Cover crops, no till) - Seneca River
- \$39529 (Cropland) - Seneca River

Oswego - 5 Current Contracts

- \$2408 (Cover crops)
- \$709.20 (Grasslands)
- \$1726 (Forestry)
- \$2929 (Forestry)

CSP Renewals- had a previous contract that is expiring and are eligible to renew. Currently processing contract development and obligation.

*Cayuga -2

*Onondaga - 0

*Oswego - 1

Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

***Onondaga:**

- In progress of installing (1 ac.) pollinator habitat (site prep completed).
- In progress of planning/designing 2 grassed waterways. Survey has been completed.

***Cayuga:**

- Completed a site visit for interest in filter strips and grassed waterway in Cayuga Lake

Watershed

Food Security Act workload

- Overtime has been permitted until the end of the year to complete UHEL workload backlog.

Sarra Learned gave the following report:

Completed NYSDEC freshwater wetland permit applications for the water chestnut program to allow for hand-pulling within wetlands and their 100' buffer zone. Applications are currently in their draft phase

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for The Oneida River, Ox Creek, Little Salmon River, Sage Creek, and The Salmon River Estuary. Once these receive their final updates and edits, they will be sent to Joe for review.

Met with Joe last week to discuss the 2023 water chestnut program including permitting, mapping, funding, treatment, the intern crew, timelines, and logistics.

Continued conducting field work at Independence Park to correct the previously mentioned discrepancies in GPS locations for trees that were treated against hemlock woolly adelgid. The corrected data has been producing the accurate locations that we need for efficiency in the field when these trees go through their second round of treatment in the next few years.

While working at Independence Park, multiple trees were found to be broken from recent storm events and left lying across trails and causing damage to a portion of one of the boardwalks at the park. I documented the damage with photos, GPS'd the locations, and reached out to the coordinator of Oswego County Parks and Recreation to bring awareness of the trail disturbances so that appropriate trail maintenance may be carried out.

At the end of December, assisted Joe in the field by recording inventory data and notes for a forest management plan. Entered inventory data into excel for the NED2 forestry program.

Assisted Erica by gathering field photos for Facebook posts related to field work for forest management plans, permitting for the water chestnut program, and other miscellaneous finds while in the field.

Continued researching and studying material to prepare for the civil service exam.

Working on researching and reviewing grants for funding opportunities that may be suitable to improve our District's programs or for new work such as culvert assessments.

Assisted customers by creating maps, conducting environmental assessments, and obtaining soils reports as needed.

Erica Schreiner gave the following report:

Attended the January meeting of the Oswego County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs and provided an update on District environmental education programs for 2023.

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Submitted and received approval for the removal of one AEM Tier 4 project and the inclusion of two new ones in AEM Round 17.

The amount earned for staff time for AEM in 2022 was \$29,784.

Submitted an AEM voucher in the amount of \$51,275 which represents staff time earnings above what was received for up-front funds, along with 90% in up-front funds for Tier 4 projects.

Three Tier 4 projects are slated for implementation in 2023. Met with two of the participants to review draft designs.

Continued AEM planning with program participants.

Attended an initial stakeholder meeting for the Sandy Creeks Watershed 9 Element Plan project.

Maintained the District web site and FaceBook page.

Provided customer technical assistance in the following areas: ag assessment vs. ag district, general property questions, historical farm records, soil testing, and water supply.

Continued planning the 31st annual Oswego County Envirothon to be held at Camp Hollis on May 4, 2023. Eight of the nine school districts in the county have indicated they will participate.

Continued planning the Oswego County Envirothon Workshop to be held at CiTi BOCES on March 29, 2023.

Assisted JC with field data collection for two forest management plans.

Finalized the outline and prepared hand-outs for the presentation, given along with JC, to Oswego County assessors regarding agricultural value assessments.

Met with staff to review the difference between the Agricultural District and Agricultural Value Assessment programs.

Shared a printed copy of the Cooperator Database with the Directors. It contains the names of over one-thousand, mostly agricultural, landowners who have a property folder on file. The files contain records of work completed such as water quality improvement projects, tile drainage, and pond installation. The earliest file is from May 1950.

Began entering the 2022 agricultural value assessments into the database.

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Began processing agricultural value assessments for the current year.

Began assembling information to contribute to the annual report for Albany, as well as for the in-house annual report.

Laura Romanowicz gave the following report:

4th Quarter 2022 941 & NYS-45 reports have been completed, filed, and sent the appropriate parties.

2022 tax documents, (W-2's/W-3/1099/1096) were reviewed, distributed and mailed on 01/18/2023.

All 480 Tree and Shrub envelopes were mailed the end of December 2022. Individuals that provided an email address have received a fillable form. Have already received a great response of orders and have receipted in 32 orders and approximately \$3,100 in revenue. The flowers and the fruit tree species have been doing surprising well compared to previous years. Had a daylily issue with one of the nurseries, yet was able to order another color with a different nursery. All landowners were contacted regarding the last-minute change.

Received reimbursement funds in the amount of \$3,190.00 from Oswego County - Youth Bureau for 50% of the Hemlock Woolly Adelgid treatment. Funds have been deposited into the District Savings account.

Received reimbursement funds for \$1,800 from the Lake Neatahwanta Reclamation Committee for the restoration of the Lake Shore Road settling pond. Funds have been deposited into the District Savings account. General discussion followed.

Received the 2023 Part B funds in the amount of \$6,000. Funds have been transferred from the district checking to the Part B savings account.

Joe Chairvolotti gave the following report:

Assisted landowners and municipalities with general technical, water quality and forestry related advice, both remotely and on-site.

Introduction to new DEC analyst and explained District's role in technical assistance and review of regulatory features.

Part B Project for 2022: In December of 2022, completed the fieldwork for 2 forest management plans and developed narratives. Also completed 1 revision on a large parcel to ensure the landowner is eligible for EQIP funding. A special thanks to all staff members for their assistance in the field, with mapping, and/or aerial photo research. This funding source was closed and transferred as appropriate.

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The management plan revision previously mentioned involved working with the landowner, their consultant forester and NRCS. The landowner submitted an application to NRCS for funding to conduct various practices to improve the forest health and wildlife habitat as part of an EQIP contract.

Part B Project for 2023: Conducted 1 site visit with a landowner in preparation of developing a forest management plan.

Kasoag Lake Culvert: Met with Town of Williamstown Highway Superintendent to go over a design to replace a culvert on Kasoag Lake that was developed and stamped recently. We will be completing a stream/wetland permit for the Town.

Town of Oswego LWRP: In the past I've discussed that this office was mentioned in the LWRP for the Town of Oswego. There are some items that involve stormwater. General discussion followed.

Mexico Trail Riders: This club reached out to me regarding a flooded area of the trail and potential project. This office began the environmental review process and started reaching out to the regulatory agencies. The project has since been tabled.

Oneida Lake 9 Element Plan: Public meeting is scheduled for January 24 at 7:00 PM (virtual). Invites have been sent as appropriate.

Sandy Creek 9 E Plan: Participated in several committee meetings. In December, invites to a public meeting were distributed as appropriate to various stakeholder groups. The meeting was held on January 17 in Sandy Creek with approximately 55 attendees both in-person and virtually. Focus group meetings are scheduled throughout the day on January 31.

Silver Lake: Laura and I have finalized the budget to utilize remaining funds. This information has been sent to the SUNY Research Foundation. We're waiting on project budgets to be revised before submitting a proposal to DEC.

FLOWPA: Participated in a meeting with Assemblyman Barclay's office to provide information on the FLOWPA program as well as District plans for 2023.

Attended a 2-day district managers meeting in December coordinated by the CDEA.

Reviewed 2022 training plans submitted by staff and have provided each employee with updated ones for 2023.

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Director Chesbro mentioned that she was approached by an engineering firm regarding brown fields and asked if any of the staff were aware of any sites that could be potential projects for a grant through the Planning Department. I agreed to reach out to the Department and obtain more details.

Director Bonoffski brought up our current vacation policy and an example from a state agency. General discussion followed. Joe agreed to compile policies from the County and other Districts to facilitate the next discussion. This topic was tabled until more information can be obtained.

3. **NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday February 14th, 2023 @ 10:00am at the District's Conference Room
4. **ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting adjourned at 11:48am.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN

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

Respectively submitted,

Laura Romanowicz
Secretary

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