

June 13, 2023

MINUTES

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

The Directors and staff met in-person at the District Office Conference Room, located at 3105 State Route 3, Fulton, NY 13069 at 10:09am on Tuesday June 13th, 2023.

PRESENT:

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

Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager
Erica Schreiner, Sr. District Technician
Sarra Learned, Environmental Resource Technician
Laura Romanowicz, Secretary
Mike Dowling, Guest

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

FINANCIAL REPORT - MOTION: TO APPROVE THE FINANCIAL REPORT FOR May 2023 AS SUBMITTED.
4 yeas (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)
Made by Director **Bonoffski** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** 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 **June 2023** Payroll Certification for Employees as submitted.

RECONCILED BANK STATEMENTS - Director **Bonoffski** reviewed the **May 2023** Reconciled Bank Statements and initialed.

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Old Business

Alarm System: New equipment was recently installed to allow our fire sensors to communicate with the alarm company.

New Business

Water Chestnut Control Contract: The recent modification to the herbicide treatment program has caused a price increase, resulting in the need to update the payment rate in the 2023 contract. General discussion followed.

MOTION: TO ENTER INTO CONTRACTUAL AGREEMENT WITH CHASE ENTERPRISES FOR THE HERBICIDE TREATMENT OF WATER CHESTNUTS IN THE OSWEGO RIVER AT A RATE OF \$429.25 PER ACRE UP TO A TOTAL OF \$77,694.25.

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

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** and carried.

AEM Invoice from Seneca County

MOTION: AUTHORIZATION TO ISSUE PAYMENT TO SENECA COUNTY SWCD IN THE AMOUNT OF \$4,752.00 FOR ROUND 17 AEM BASE PROGRAM CONTRACTUAL SERVICES PROVIDED TO OSWEGO COUNTY SWCD.

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

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

Vehicle Bid: This office will be working with the Oswego County Purchasing Dept to conduct a bid for a new SUV in 2023.

Round 18 AEM funding: Increased funding for both technical assistance and implementation has been proposed.

Performance Measures: Staff will continue to send meeting notices to the board to satisfy the state/regional meeting requirement. General discussion followed.

Vacation Buy-Back Policy: This topic has been discussed several times, and will be placed at the end of the meeting if there is time.

AEM Project Bid: Presented a procurement packet to the Board for farm 075-0133. The landowner has selected the lowest bidder.

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MOTION: APPROVE ZIMMERMAN BUILDERS WITH THE LOW BID OF \$25,028.00 FOR AN AEM BASE ROUND 17 IMPLEMENTATION PROJECT AT OSWEGO COUNTY AEM FARM 075-0133.

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

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** and carried.

Little Salmon River Watershed Presentation: Mike Dowling, from the Veracruz Yacht Club, provided a presentation on concerns associated with the Little Salmon River watershed. Mr. Dowling made a request to have water sampling conducted within the watershed to determine whether a 9 E Watershed Plan should be developed. The District Manager committed to investigating the concerns further with several agencies. General discussion followed.

Sarra Learned gave the following report:

Conducted surveys for giant hogweed on 37 sites across Hannibal, Oswego, New Haven, and Mexico. Giant hogweed was found on 24 of these sites. Plant locator maps were made and sent to Chase Enterprises for treatment, which began on June sixth. All sites will continue to be monitored throughout the season.

There has been one giant hogweed report to the office from a landowner who has received burns and rashes from his property. A survey of the property confirmed there was no giant hogweed presence and determined the cause of the landowner's problem to be stinging nettle plants.

Have been working with JC and LR to prepare for the arrival of the District's water chestnut interns, whose first day was yesterday, beginning with training that will continue through this week.

Reached out to private boat and canoe launch landowners to reconfirm permission for the 2023 water chestnut season. Met with a landowner to inspect a new boat launch location for interns to have better access to the South Phoenix region of the Oswego River. Received permission to launch from Greene Point Marina in Mannsville, NY to access and remove water chestnuts reported on North Sandy Pond.

Participated as a Team Trail Guide at the New York State Envirothon at Hobart and William Smith College in Geneva, NY.

Continued involvement with the water sampling aspect of the Sandy Creek 9 Element Plan with Jefferson County SWCD.

Attended an Eastern Lake Ontario Dune Coalition (ELODC) meeting via zoom.

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

Erica Schreiner gave the following report:

Following the Oswego County Envirothon, the overall winner, Oswego High School, participated in the NYS Envirothon on May 24 and May 25 at Hobart and William Smith Colleges in Geneva, NY. The team placed seventh out of forty-two teams statewide. JC provided an additional forestry review session and Ed Hogan provided an additional wildlife review session to help the team prepare.

Attended the NYS Envirothon both days to assist with facilitating the event.

Participated as a presenter in the annual Volney Elementary School Earth Day event with a hands-on presentation about wildlife sign. Each attendee made a clay animal track imprint to take home.

Participated in the Oswego County Career Summit w/JC. Created a display and staffed a booth about careers at SWCDs.

Toured the CiTi facility with the Business Education Liaison and learned about the various program offered there. Discussed possible opportunities to partner. Example: Creation of a banner for Conservation Field Day by the graphic arts division.

Continued AEM planning with program participants. Several new participants are the result of the Ag Agency Awareness Day held this past April.

Two field surveys have been conducted for agricultural landowners who plan to self-install drainage on their farm. Designs will be given to the landowners in the next month.

Three AEM Tier 4 projects are slated for implementation in 2023. Two participants are still in the process of obtaining bids.

Attended the annual Oswego County Farmland Protection Board meeting to offer comment on parcels presented for inclusion into or removal from the Agricultural District.

Maintained the District web site and Facebook page.

Assisted with printing letters and filling envelopes for the water chestnut herbicide notification.

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

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Began planning the 35th annual Oswego County Conservation Field Day to be held on September 21, 2023 at Selkirk Shores State Park.

Mentioned the continued support of the Conservation Field Day by the Oswego County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs. Sadly, Rick McDermott, the vice-president of the Federation, and his wife were recently involved in a fatal automobile accident. It was noted that Rick was always supportive of District environmental education programs, and District programs in general. His dedication to promoting men, women, and youth in the outdoors will be missed.

Laura Romanowicz gave the following report:

Received the reimbursement for 50% of the awning purchase from Oswego County in the amount of \$1,565.36. Funds have been deposited into the district savings account.

Upon approval from Joe, approximately 700 water chestnut treatment letters were printed, stuffed and mailed to the landowners. Cornell Cooperative Extension assisted with this preparation by running their letter folding machine for our office, which saved the district hours with preparation time.

Prepared the onboarding paperwork and supply packets for the water chestnut interns, and assisted with launching their training which started yesterday, Monday June 12th, 2023.

Drove to Oriskany and picked up the mosquito dunk kits from Bonide. Twenty-one cases were delivered to the Oswego County Health Department with the Mosquito Awareness letter attached. To date, they have delivered all 21 cases to county municipalities. Their partnership and efforts have been a great addition to the district and has streamlined the distribution of this item. General discussion followed.

Joined in on a Zoom call with Joe and the Central New York Regional Planning and Developing Board regarding a potential urban and community forestry grant. At this time, a letter of support was requested from our office.

Attended the NYS Local Retirement System Seminar in Watertown on Friday June 2nd.

2023 Performance Measures: The Bond Act has two virtual listening sessions which count towards the performance measure as a regional/state meeting for board members. Additionally, the SWCC June 2023 Agenda was emailed to the directors for the meeting on Tuesday June 20th at 10am. This meeting has both an in-person and virtual option, which also count as a regional/state meeting for performance measure. Three out of the 5 members will need to complete a regional/state meeting for 2023.

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Joe Chairvolotti gave the following report:

Reforestation Property: Reviewed trees that were of concern to a landowner and will work with highway to potentially remove them.

Began reviewing information to provide to TNC to determine an estimated pay-out for enrollment in their Carbon Program.

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

Several technical requests involving wetlands, gov't programs, ponds, forestry, solar and other topics have been received lately and involve research, mapping and communicating with other agencies.

Assisted a landowner with identification of an Asian Longhorned Beetle suspect. The larva turned out to be from a Pigeon tremex and a second consult from DEC was coordinated to confirm.

Family Forest Carbon Program: Met with TNC staff regarding potential family forest carbon program. An offer to administer the program and accept a retainer to pay for site visits was offered.

Have lined up several landowners that are interested in forest management plans, which will be completed under Parts B and C as well as AEM in 2023. Some may need to be pushed to 2024.

Met with Town of Constantia Supervisor to develop a forest management plan for municipal properties.

Met with Central NY Regional Planning to discuss our potential involvement in an Urban Forestry Grant. Developed a letter of support for an \$8-9 million grant. Our involvement may include technical assistance and education.

The Region 7 DEC forester informed this office that he would be retiring in June. The regional office will be sending requests for mgt plans and tech assists to the District.

Forestry Intern: Advertised for a forestry intern again, but no applications were received.

Prepared and provided a presentation at Warren County SWCD workshop. This was to assist the District as the original presenters were not able to attend the event.

Tree Donation Requests: Will need to develop a policy or form moving forward.

Solar reviews: Reviewed potential solar project sites for municipalities. Initiated conversations with NYS DEC and ACOE.

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Reviewed solar report from Tug Hill Commission.

Provided assistance regarding environmental review for a landowner purchasing IDA property.

Tow Path in Fulton: Developed a design earlier in the year. This has been tabled and will become part of future discussions as part of a larger project.

Great Bear Shoreline Project: Requested by Barclay's office to move this forward. Completed rough design and set up a meeting with DEC, ACOE, Barclay's office and Friend of Great Bear.

Camp Zerbe Trail Project: Attended a meeting and conducted 1 site visit. Informed county committee of my communications with DEC regarding trail expansion into the wetland. The project will now involve installation of a frisbee golf course and this office will assist with some of the design, ensuring clearance of regulated areas and any necessary BMPs.

Provided presentation to the Town Highway Depts in Oswego County regarding our services as they relate to municipalities.

Sandy Creek 9 E Plan: This office has participated in water sampling as well as delivery of samples.

NAACC Assessments: Obtaining equipment and continuing planning discussions with Jefferson County SWCD. Work will begin in the Sandy Creeks Watersheds first to be included in the 9 E Plan that is currently in progress.

Dam Removal in Mexico: Developed a letter of support for a grant that is associated with dam removals and engineering. Offered to conduct NAACC assessments in the watershed.

HWA Biocontrol: Developed notifications letters and packets of information for landowners in close proximity to Independence Park, the Town of Scriba and Sithe Energy. Sithe provided a green light and releases may occur soon.

EAB biocontrol: We were provided with the release schedule for Rice Creek and will participate when available.

Giant Hogweed: Approached by the NYS DEC to assist with coordinating mowing of a large giant hogweed site in Cayuga County. Obtained necessary information for DEC as this office was historically involved.

Silver Lake: Sub-contract with SUNY RF was amended and signed. Completed an application for cattail mitigation and discussions are moving forward with DEC. A letter of non-jurisdiction from ACOE was received and the application was withdrawn.

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Water Chestnut Herbicide Treatment: Provided a written update last meeting. The delay and modifications to the program have raised the cost of the program by \$10-15,000 between contractor expenses and staff time. The 21-day comment period associated with our permit application is over, but the DEC review of our permit application is still in progress. The DEC requested extra sampling be conducted to ensure there are no downstream issues. A few calls have been received by this office. One concerned landowner contacted me and after a brief meeting at this office, she may be arranging some hand-pull work at SUNY Oswego.

Water Chestnut Hand-pulling Program: Staff prepared for the intern training week, which started on 6/12. Obtained a work permit for hand-pulling water chestnuts in the Oswego River from the Canal Corp and submitted an application to the NYS DEC for harvesting water chestnuts in the same waterbody. This office is working with OLA to conduct a hand-pull event near Oneida Lake.

Pulaski Drainage Grant: Laura and I requested an extension, which was approved.

Set up table top display at the Spring OLA meeting

Conversations and meeting with the Veracruz Yacht Club members regarding a request to conduct water sampling and planning efforts in the Little Salmon River watershed.

Attended Summit Career Fair with ES.

Attended stormwater coalition meeting hosted by CNY Regional Planning

FOLLOWPA: Worked with Erica and Sarra to submit sites for FOLLOWPA tour.

Developed presentation for Envirothon Forestry Review and participated in the event.

Vacation Policy

Topic 1: In December of 2022, 2 employees were about to lose annual leave that was above the amount allowed to be carried over into the next calendar year. The excess time was frozen by the board at the end of last year and then discussed and tabled several times over the course of 2023. Workload is the primary reason for the inability to use all leave time. General discussion followed.

MOTION: COMPENSATE EACH OSWEGO OCOUNTY SWCD EMPLOYEE UP TO 100 HOURS PAY FOR THEIR 2022 ANNUAL LEAVE THAT WAS IN EXCESS OF THEIR RESPECTIVE ALLOWABLE CARRY-OVER, FROZEN BY THE BOARD ON DECEMBER 13th, 2022. THIS PAY-OUT WILL BE A ONE TIME ACTION AT EACH EMPLOYEE'S RESPECTIVE 2022

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HOURLY RATE AND SUBJECT TO TAXES. THE AMOUNTS ARE AS FOLLOWS: ERICA SCHREINER (20.5HRS, HRLY RATE: \$30.21, TOTAL: \$619.31), JOE CHAIRVOLOTTI (100 HRS, HRLY RATE: \$33.66, TOTAL: \$3,366.00).

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

Made by Director **Bonoffski** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** and carried.

Topic 2: A second matter of developing a policy that could alleviate the loss of vacation time on a go forward basis has been discussed several times throughout this year. The recommendation provided was to develop and adopt a policy that allowed full-time employees to receive payment in lieu of up to 40 or 80 hours of annual leave. General discussion followed. This topic was tabled until a future board meeting.

3. **NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday July 11th, 2023 @ 10:00am at the District's Conference Room
4. **ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting adjourned at 12:44pm.

MOTION: TO ADJOURN

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** and carried.

Respectively submitted,

Laura Romanowicz

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