

January 9, 2024

**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 January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

**PRESENT:**

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

Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager  
Erica Schreiner, Sr. District Technician  
Laura Romanowicz, Secretary

1. **MINUTES - MOTION: TO APPROVE MINUTES FOR December 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**  
**5 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 January 2024 AS SUBMITTED.**  
**5 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 December 2023 AS SUBMITTED.**  
**5 yeas** (in favor), **0 nays** (those opposed)  
Made by Director **Lockwood** and seconded by Director **Bonoffski** and carried.

**2024 MODIFIED BUDGET** - Board of Directors reviewed and approved the 2024 Modified Budget as submitted.

**PAYROLL CERTIFICATION FOR EMPLOYEES** - Board of Directors reviewed and approved the **January 2024** Payroll Certification for Employees as submitted.

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

January 9, 2024

**Old Business**

AEM Project

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 10:06 AM.**

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

**MOTION: TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:46 AM.**

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

Budget and Salary Discussion: Chairman Richards requested a motion to go into executive to discuss the medical, financial, credit or employment history of a particular person or corporation, or matters leading to appointment, employment, promotion, demotion, discipline, suspension, dismissal or removal of a particular person or corporation.

**MOTION: TO ENTER INTO EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 10:46 AM.**

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

**MOTION: TO EXIT EXECUTIVE SESSION AT 11:12 AM.**

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

**MOTION: TO INCREASE EACH FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE'S SALARY BY 3% OF THEIR CURRENT INDIVIDUAL RATE MOVING FORWARD AND PROVIDE RETROACTIVE PAY BACK TO JANUARY 1, 2024.**

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

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

**New Business**

NYS Roth 457 Plan: Another deferred compensation package is being offered to employees. General discussion followed.

**MOTION: TO ACCEPT THE NEW POLICY AS SUBMITTED, OFFERING THE ROTH 457 PLAN TO FULL-TIME, PERMANENT AND PROBATIONARY EMPLOYEES.**

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

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

January 9, 2024

Virtual Option for Board Meetings

Oswego County SWCD Policies for 2024: Minor updates have been applied. General discussion followed.

**MOTION: TO APPROVE THE 2024 OSWEGO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT POLICIES WITH PROPOSED CHANGES, AS SUBMITTED.**

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

Made by Director **Chesbro** and seconded by Director **Tuori-Bell** 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, 2024 and this office will be working on them throughout the next few weeks.

Performance Measure Changes: The SWCC staff announced some changes to the performance measure requirements, which include officially adopting several policies and other minor amendments. General discussion followed.

FOLLOWPA 23/24 Contract and programming: This contract entails primarily water chestnut work, but may be amended to include other projects.

**MOTION: TO ENTER INTO CONTRACT WITH FOLLOWPA FOR THE 23/24 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 **Lockwood** and seconded by Director **Chesbro** and carried.

January 9, 2024

Envirothon Donation Request from the NYS Envirothon Committee: This will be discussed next month.

**REPORTS:**

**Erica Schreiner gave the following report:**

Attended an Oswego County Ag Agency Team meeting to discuss the 2024 Ag Agency Awareness Day.

Continued AEM planning with program participants.

Completed tasks related to farm projects.

Continued work on the AEM Round 17 report.

Maintained the District web site and Facebook page.

Began research for a new web site host.

Completed tasks related to time logs for Part C reporting.

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

Began working on agricultural value assessments.

Began entering all 2023 agricultural value assessments into the master database.

Received confirmation of receipt of a one-time special funding opportunity from Constellation that will be used for environmental education program supplies.

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

Assisted JC with field work for forest management plans.

**Sarra Learned provided the following report:**

Continuing preparations for the 2024 water chestnut season.

Have begun a new NYS-DEC wetland permit application for hand-pulling water chestnuts in North Sandy Pond. Have also begun working on an amendment for our Rice Creek wetland permit for hand-pulling due to an expansion of the water chestnut population at this location.

January 9, 2024

Assisting Joe with in-office work for four forest management plans: conducting environmental reviews, obtaining soils information, creating maps, digitizing field data, etc.

Wrote an article for SLELO PRISM's January newsletter regarding the hemlock woolly adelgid (HWA) biocontrol release at Independence Park that took place this past autumn.

Attended an Oswego County Emergency Management meeting regarding hazard mitigation planning.

Completed 2023 time log and training plan.

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

**Laura Romanowicz gave the following report:**

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2023 941 & NYS-45 reports have been completed, filed, and sent the appropriate parties.

Received FLOWPA's NYS DEC Advance payment for contract C311775 YR 4, Final Advance, which was just under \$950K. Funds have been transferred to the FLOWPA Reserve Account for retainage and advancement payments to be made.

Attended the Notary Public training class in Cortland.

Assisted Joe with Part B forest management plans by providing aerial photos & entering staff hours on the master Part B tracking worksheet.

Received and input staff members 2023 Part C hours, which will be used for year-end reporting.

Completed 2023 year-end financial review and dispersed Part C/Part B funds to district accounts per the approval of Joe.

2024 Tree and shrub documents were released to landowners via USPS/social media/email on Friday January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2024. So far 7 orders have been received.

**Joe Chairvolotti gave the following report:**

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

Went through process to maintain SAF CF certification.

Updated credentials to maintain TSP certification for forestry.

January 9, 2024

Attended meeting with District forestry staff and regarding adding a suite of forestry practices to the next round of CRF funding.

Completed forest management plans for 3 landowners in Oswego County under the Part B funding. The fieldwork for 2 of them was conducted in December, while the fieldwork for the last one was done earlier in the year. The work was completed by 12/31/23 and all funds were spent.

Started the fieldwork for a 2024 Part B forest management plan. Attempting to finish the plan by a specific deadline to allow the landowner access to CSP funds.

Devoted a significant amount of time to one landowner and completed tasks for the project under the AEM program. Attended on-site farm meeting.

Continue to serve with ES on the Farmland Protection Planning Grant committee for the Town of Mexico. The next meeting will be held soon.

Mexico Trail Riders: Continued communications with DEC and the trail club regarding a temporary crossing off Valley Rd. A permit was granted by the NYS DEC and the club installed timber mats in the last week of the year.

This office was asked to be on the LWRP committee for the Town of Granby. General discussions followed.

FLLOWPA: Submitted the colorful request that will be part of the state legislative packet.

Submitted a report to NYACD for 2 invasive species programs.

Director Chesbro brought up the matter of Lake Neatahwanta and the Revitalization project. General discussions followed.

3. **NEXT MEETING** - Tuesday February 13<sup>th</sup>, 2024 @ 10:00am at the District's Conference Room

4. **ADJOURNMENT** - Meeting adjourned at 11:56am.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN**

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

January 9, 2024

Respectively submitted,

Laura Romanowicz

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

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