

Saratoga County Soil & Water Conservation District
4H Training Center
Minutes of Regular Meeting 12/15/2021

In Attendance:

District Directors:

Janet Bartow – Vice Chairman
Victoria Garlanda – At Large
Joe Grasso– Legislator
Jennifer Koval
Jay Matthews – At Large Farmer
Darren O'Connor – Legislator
Steven Ropitzky –Chairman

District Staff:

Dustin Lewis – District Manager
Scott Monica – Senior Technician
Dan Palemire – Technician

Regrets: Kate Girard

Meeting called to order at 2:59pm by Chairman Ropitzky.

1. **Minutes of November 2021 Meeting:** Tabled until next meeting.
2. **November 2021 Financial Reports:**
 - a. **Receipts/Disbursements Report, Budget vs Actual Report and Vouchers: (Attachment A, B & C) Motion** to approve made by O'Connor, seconded by Grasso, carried unanimously.
3. **Field Report: (Attachment D)**
4. **Cooperating Agency Reports:**
 - a. **NRCS:** Dustin reported that Girard is working on 2 high tunnels (Milton, Clifton Park), working through the EQIP &AMA applications that were due last month. Girard was called to a national NRCS meeting today that was mandatory attendance. Lewis stated he is working with Girard regarding the 50% employee compacity in NRCS office due to covid cases, this only allows 4 people in the office including Girard. If covid cases rise they are considering lowering that to 25% compacity, only allowing 2 people in the office space. This would require some people to work from home or out in the field only.
 - b. **FSA:** Ropitzky reported that Jim Barber from Middleburg has been chosen as State Executive Director, he was the State Executive Director under the Obama Administration.
 - c. **RC&D:** No report.
 - d. **NYSSWCC:** Report distributed by email.
 - e. **NYACD:** Legislative Days is March 1st & will be virtual this year, Ropitzky agreed to attend.
 - f. **CCE:** No report.
5. **Old Business:**
 - a. **Water Quality Coordinating Committee:** Minutes were distributed by email. Lewis reported that SLIPID is looking to create an overlay district around the lake to do more regulation on development. They are reviewing what Lake George has done to manage development & stormwater and match it up to Saratoga Lake needs.
 - b. **Grants:**
 - i. Agricultural Environmental Management – Palemire is working on the closeout for this round. Waiting on reports from Planners for the bigger farm verifications of cover cropping.
 - ii. CAFO – Waiting on State funds, once received we can issue last payments & close account.
 - iii. Septic – 1 project pending payment, will be approved in January. A couple unfinished projects still pending.
 - iv. Roadside Erosion – No action.
 - v. Resiliency Training – Several emergency stream intervention & Culvert Assessment Training completed this year, a yearlong extension was requested to hold Roadside & Culvert Assessment trainings.
 - vi. Micro Irrigation Grant – No action.
 - vii. Records Retention Grant – On hold as the Consultant was exposed to Covid & awaiting test results.
 - c. **Compensation Study Request:** Lewis sent out a copy of what the County sent to the District for review. The County originally sent what others in same positions are making in other Counties, the Board has stated they are not looking to base salary adjustments on other Counties but what employees in similar positions at the County are making. The County replied the closest positions were similar to Planning positions. Bartow asked Lewis about the \$145k in unrestricted funds & wondered if there was a wish list for those funds. Lewis explained the \$145k includes carry over funds for the next year, at least \$50k, as the District does not get income until March. Taking out the

carry over funds leaves \$95k that is unrestricted. Lewis would like to put \$50k aside for a building, \$30k aside as an equipment fund, leaving \$15k that could be used for salary adjustments. Lewis explained that if the County is not able to give us space to put a building, then we may need to purchase property which we legally can do, but the funding dynamics will change. We are at the point where we need to find space for equipment storage. Bartow asked if the Board has the discretion to give out end of the year bonuses? Lewis advised it is the Board's discretion on how to utilize funds, including for bonuses. Bartow would like to explore utilizing unrestricted funds to give out bonuses at the end of the year if we are unable to sustain salary increases/adjustments for staff members. If there is a stagnant budget line for salaries but have excess funds at the end of the year, those funds could be utilized for bonuses without committing to the raises if we are unsure if we have funding. O'Connor asked if we have had any overtime costs this year. Lewis explained that the District has a policy where employees are not paid overtime, employees comp time or take time off. O'Connor advised contacting County HR to explore the bonus route. Lewis stated he would like to know County appropriations for 2022 before making any decisions. Ropitzky agreed it would be smart to wait until we know the County funding before moving forward. Ropitzky requested current staff salary information before the next meeting. Garlanda asked about any increases for employee health insurance for next year. Lewis advised that our insurance costs decreased for this next policy year, should expect a hefty increase for the following year.

- d. **Part C Performance Measures 2021:** Lewis advised we have met all the Performance Measures for 2021. McCarthy sent out sexual harassment training info, looking for acknowledgements for Board members who have not already submitted it for employee files. Garlanda asked for the email to be resent to the group, Lewis resent the email to the Board.
- e. **T&S 2022:** Product has been ordered, working on brochure to put in Town Halls & stores.
- f. **APOW 2022:** Our State AEA recommended 2 changes to be added & reapproved. A **motion** was to approve the 2022 APOW with the recommended changes was made by Bartow, seconded by Garlanda, carried unanimously.

6. **New Business:**

- a. **Envirothon 2022:** Lewis stated he is unsure if we will be able to hold it in person next year. We have been able to receive some donations, good fund balance to start the event. Next month will send out poll to see if the schools to see if they feel we will be able to have it in person. We may have to offer it virtually if needed again.
- b. **Board of Directors Position Terms:** Tabled until next month. Lewis thanked O'Connor for his time on the Board as he will no longer be with us after this month. Lewis advised he was always welcome to come to our meetings as a resident. A **motion** to ask the County for the same slate of Board members was made by O'Connor seconded by Koval, carried unanimously.
- c. **Budget 2022:** At this time we usually know the exact amount of County Appropriations we are to receive for the next year but we have not been notified to date. Lewis has sent an email to the County Administrator asking for that amount, in the meantime we will operate under the approved budget & make any changes if needed at next meeting.

7. **Other Business:**

- a. **District Manager review** was pushed off due to this meeting being a zoom meeting. Ropitzky requested that a separate meeting by zoom with Bartow and Matthews to handle the review. It will be held prior to the next Board meeting date.
- b. **Mask Mandate** – Ropitzky asked with new mandate if employees are required to wear masks all day. Lewis advised that anyone in the building is required to wear a mask but employees sitting at their desks, not assisting customers & at least 10 feet away from each other he is not enforcing it. Ropitzky wanted to make sure we were not leaving ourselves open to any liability or criticism with the new mandate.

8. **Correspondence: (Attachment F)**

- 9. **Next Meeting Date and Adjournment:** The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, January 19, 2021, at 3:00pm. Meeting adjourned by at 3:51pm.

Respectfully submitted: _____

Shannon J. McCarthy, Secretary

Steve Ropitzky – Chairman

ATTACHMENT A:

Saratoga County SWCD Receipts and Disbursements NOVEMBER 2021							
	Operations (Checking/Money Market/Accrued Liabilities)	Petty Cash	WQCC	Envirothon	Roadside Erosion	Welcomstock CAFO	AEM Projects
BOOK BALANCE as of 10/31/2021	\$256,377.83	\$250.00	\$4,082.53	\$1,456.58	\$7,822.71	\$231.23	\$678.31
RECEIPTS							
District Tree & Shrub Program	\$350.00						
Interest	\$5.16			\$0.04			\$0.02
Gifts and Donations				\$625.00			
No Till Drill Rental Fees	\$75.00						
4 Hour Training Fees	\$825.00						
County Appropriation	\$31,471.50						
State Grants	\$4,804.50						
State Reimbursements	\$6,000.00						
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$43,531.16	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$525.04	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.02
DISBURSEMENTS							
Office Manager	\$3,088.40						
District Manager	\$5,206.40						
Technician(s)	\$7,142.80						
Conservation Practice Supplies	\$125.00						
Employees Travel/Training	\$64.96						
Telephone/Internet	\$2,121.04						
Office Supplies	\$458.75						
Meeting Expenses	\$129.96						
Postage	\$3.71						
Bank/Credit Card Fees	\$66.54						
Part C Project Materials	\$832.76						
Gas & Oil	\$387.03						
Health/Dental Insurance	\$4,781.74						
Retirement Benefits	\$31,878.00						
Employer Share FICA/Medicare	\$1,116.41						
LGMRF Grant	\$330.12						
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$57,733.62	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
BOOK BALANCE as of 11/30/2021	\$242,175.37	\$250.00	\$4,082.53	\$1,981.62	\$7,822.71	\$231.23	\$678.33

ATTACHMENT B:

BUDGET TO ACTUAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2021			
	BUDGET 2021	ACTUAL NOV 2021	ACTUAL JAN - NOV 2021
RECEIPTS			
District Tree & Shrub Program	\$40,000.00	\$350.00	\$38,170.51
Fish Stocking Program Sales	\$3,500.00		\$1,417.62
Interest	\$95.00	\$5.16	\$93.07
Sales	\$3,500.00		\$1,104.88
Sale of Equipment	\$29,000.00		\$38,600.00
Gifts and Donations	\$0.00		\$0.00
Ag Update - Soil Group Worksheet	\$1,800.00		\$1,845.00
Sales Tax Credit	\$0.00		\$32.68
Fees	\$3,805.00	\$900.00	\$6,632.56
County Appropriation	\$125,886.00	\$31,471.50	\$125,886.00
State Grants	\$15,960.00	\$6,000.00	\$13,202.00
State Reimbursements	\$204,218.00	\$4,804.50	\$221,871.63
Federal Grants/Reimbursements	\$0.00		\$0.00
Sales Tax Received	\$1,200.00		\$718.77
IFRSM M&U	\$0.00		\$1,500.00
Payroll Liabilities	\$0.00		\$0.00
FUND BALANCE TRANSFER NEEDED	\$12,000.00		\$0.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	\$436,748.00	\$43,531.16	\$454,856.90
DISBURSEMENTS			
Directors Per Diem for Meetings	\$1,200.00		\$180.00
Office Manager	\$40,100.00	\$3,088.40	\$34,999.90
District Manager	\$67,086.73	\$5,206.40	\$55,748.80
Field Technician (Senior)	\$50,816.90	\$3,953.60	\$44,361.52
Field Technician	\$40,866.31	\$3,189.20	\$35,931.70
Furniture and Fixtures	\$0.00		\$0.00
Office Equipment	\$1,000.00		\$1,137.72
Motor Vehicle Equipment	\$38,000.00		\$0.00
Field Equipment	\$1,000.00		\$0.00
District Trees Expenses	\$28,786.15		\$24,710.85
Fish & Pond Stocking	\$2,500.00		\$1,074.99
Fuel and Stakes	\$0.00		\$0.00
Conservation Practice Supplies	\$1,544.02	\$125.00	\$1,908.58
WQCC	\$0.00		\$0.00
Directors Travel/Training	\$1,200.00		\$189.39
Employees Travel/Training	\$4,000.00	\$64.96	\$628.96
Telephone/Internet	\$3,400.00	\$2,121.04	\$3,399.75
Office Supplies	\$3,300.00	\$458.75	\$2,803.55
Meeting Expenses	\$750.00	\$129.96	\$814.42
Personal Expenses	\$1,500.00		\$50.00
Auto Field Liability Insurance	\$4,500.00		\$4,715.16
Workers' Compensation/Disability Insurance	\$3,500.00		\$2,652.73
State National Dues	\$0.00		\$0.00
State Fair	\$100.00		\$100.00
Postage	\$500.00	\$3.71	\$132.17
Bird Item Expenses	\$1,000.00		\$1,566.00
Credit Card Fees	\$1,000.00	\$66.54	\$1,494.92
Part C Project Materials	\$25,000.00	\$832.76	\$14,677.61
Repairs - Truck & Field Equipment	\$500.00		\$30.00
Gas & Oil	\$4,500.00	\$387.03	\$2,839.67
Health Insurance	\$59,742.24	\$4,781.74	\$53,004.88
Retirement Benefits	\$33,000.00	\$31,878.00	\$31,878.00
Employer Share FICA/Medicare	\$15,500.00	\$1,116.41	\$12,720.77
Sales Tax Disbursement	\$800.00		\$678.04
Payments to Cooperators and Others	\$0.00		\$6,039.00
State Grant Expenses	\$0.00	\$330.12	\$3,880.12
TOTAL DISBURSEMENTS	\$436,748.00	\$57,733.62	\$347,373.69
NET TOTAL	\$0.00	(\$14,202.46)	\$107,483.21

ATTACHMENT C:

2021 MEETING VOUCHERS - DECEMBER							
ACCOUNT #	PAYEE	EXPLANATION	AMOUNT	DATE PAID	CHECK #	AMOUNT PAID	BALANCE DUE
General 137	Blueshield of NENY	Health/Dental: December 2021	\$5,625.56	12/02/21	10311	\$5,625.56	\$0.00
General 138	Monaco's Auto	NYS Inspection: 2021 Chevy	\$10.00				\$10.00
General 139	De Lage Financial	Copier Lease: December 2021	\$131.25				\$131.25
General 140	Jettner Information Services	2nd & Final Grant Payments	\$6,500.00				\$6,500.00
General 141	Saratoga County Gas Account	Diesel: May 2021	\$19.98				\$19.98
General 142	Bank of America (Scott's Card)	Part C	\$38.92				\$38.92
General 143	Bank of America (Dustin's Card)	EZ Pass Replenishment, Monthly Payroll Fee, Gas for Chevy	\$81.93				\$81.93
		TOTAL VOUCHERS	\$12,407.64			TOTAL DUE	\$6,782.08
Bills to be Paid Before Next Board Meeting:							
General	Blue Shield of NENY	Health Insurance - January 2022	\$5,625.56				
		TOTAL	\$5,625.56				

ATTACHMENT D:

November/December 2021 Field Report

- 6 ag assessments (Ballston, Milton, Charlton, Clifton Park, Saratoga)
- GPS field tile flags Thomas Rd (Northumberland)
- Assembled stormwater training booklets & delivered (Saratoga Springs)
- AEM cover crop signs
- AEM 16 Final report
- Met with Clifton Park rep to look at drainage issue, log jam and beaver dam removal site
- Site visit on Ashdown rd to assist with an overflowing pond
- **November**
- Hydro seeder into winter storage
- AEM No-till drill into winter storage
- Designed field tile for Thomas Rd horse farm (Northumberland)
- Ag assessment (Malta)
- Ag assessment (Ballston)
- AEM no-till (Glenn, Smith Bothers Dairy)
- AEM cover crop signs
- AEM round 17 grants (Ariels, Knights)
- AEM round 16 cover crop grants verifications
- MAP – Erosion control blankets install (Town of Saratoga)
- Attended SLPID meeting about possible overlay district (Stillwater, Malta, Saratoga, Saratoga Springs)
- Worked with records retention grant contractor on office files.
- Held a 4-hour Erosion and Sediment Control class in Malta
- Site visit to Saratoga Boat Launch to monitor progress on erosion controls (Saratoga)
- Site visit with Pete Nichols of Schoharie County to check on two possible stream bank erosion issues in Ballston Spa.

CORRESPONDENCE - Saratoga County SWCD
December 15, 2021

E-Mailed:

- November News from New York FSA
- Rockland County SWCD Newsletter
- Conservation Clips – 11/19/2021
- NYACD Letter - 10/31/2021
- Monitoring Federal COVID Funding
- Job Announcement
- New England's Small, Diverse Farms are a Boon for Shrubland Birds
- eResource – 11/23/2021
- Happy Thanksgiving!
- NACD Forestry Notes – 11/26/2021
- A Thanksgiving Message from NYS Comptroller DiNapoli
- Chris Watkins' retirement Open House
- Invasive species report for ISAC
- eResource – 11/30/2021
- Webinar tomorrow -- Grant Opportunity - Urban Waters/Five Star Additional urban forestry/EJ funding available
- DEC Summer Camps Sponsorship 2022
- FW: AGNPS Contract Administration and Plan of Work Webinar
- Essex County SWCD Conservation District Technician Announcement
- NRCS Watershed Programs - Infrastructure Bill
- Conservation Clips – 12/03/2021
- CDEA Fertilizer Tablet Sale 2022
- Farmer Discussion Group Meetings
- Revised Sponsorship Instructions
- DiNapoli: MTA Needs to Refocus Attention on Overdue Upgrades
- CDEA News needs your news
- Conservation – The Gift that Keeps Giving
- NYS Soil and Water Conservation Committee Meeting: December 21, 2021
- eResource – 12/08/2021
- National Conservation Planning Partnership (NCP) Update – 12/08/2021
- AGNPS Contract Administration and Plan of Work Webinar
- DON'T forget Legislative Days!!
- 2021 Projects for Legislative Booklet???
- December 2021 SWCC Report
- Conservation Clips – 12/10/2021
- USDA Funds Innovative Approaches and Technologies to Improve Conservation on Private Lands
- NYS Pension Fund Commits \$2 Billion to Climate Transition Index
- Fall 2021 Edition of NACD's The Resource
- eResource – 12/14/2021