

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

December 11, 2019

MEETING #852

Present:

Scott Ryan, Chairman, Grange Member

Brian Holloway, Vice Chairman, Farm Bureau Member

Martin Kelly, Legislative Member

Richard Kennedy, Member at Large

Corey Nellis, District Manager

Karen Klemczak, District Clerk-Treasurer

Joseph Slezak, Resource Conservationist

John VanDerwerken, AED Coordinator

Scott Davis, District Technician

Thomas Bielli, District Conservationist

Bruce Hopkins, Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations

Sandy Scott, County Executive Director

CALL MEETING TO ORDER 11:00 AM

MINUTES of the October 7, 2019 meeting were reviewed Martin Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Brian Holloway, motion carried.

TREASURER'S REPORT as of December 11, 2019

District Checking:	14,654.02
Building Acct:	80,491.36
MCSWCD Savings (Grants)	92,474.54
Beechnut	7,265.41
Briggs Run C701220	42,398.19
Otsquago C701170	4,946.29
Canjo Creek C701261	254.47
Caroga Creek C701262	54,992.17
South Chuctanunda C701263	85,680.02
Water Quality	988.43
Budnick C701314	174,789.96
John King C701338	3,556.00
MMT C011843	96,473.21
Veit C011842	2,062.13
Saltsman C701372	24,792.41
Kelly CAFO C012082	76,405.33
Trumball C701373	34,799.13
Bolster CRF	4,001.66
Undeposited Funds	261.00
Total in all accounts	\$801,024.73

Review of disbursements (check register from 10/8/19 through 12/11/19)

Review of outstanding accounts

Bills to be paid: NYSLRS - \$46,941.00

Richard Kennedy made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report, pay all audited bills, approve all salary payments for the next month and/or the next board meeting, seconded by Martin Kelly, motion carried.

Old Business:

- 1.) **AEM BMP implementation** – The action plan was submitted for next year which includes 2021 contract year. Two projects were submitted for \$50k each for BMP implementation. We will not know if they are funded until January.
- 2.) **Part C** – Corey would like to take whatever Part C money wasn't spent in 2019, which will be about \$30k and put it into a separate account to be used for projects in the future.

New Business:

- 1.) **NRCS MOA** – Bruce Hopkins, operations manager for NRCS was a guest at our meeting. The MOA is an agreement developed at the national level between NRCS and NACD. There are really two main points of the agreement. The first main point talks about the locally led process which puts the agreement in place that if the district wants to, they can provide leadership for the locally led process which gives NRCS feedback about their programs and helps them develop ranking criteria especially at the local level. When talking about the local level, it is basically the field office that Tom Bielli oversees.

The other main section is the technical standards. This talks about NRCS providing job approval authority to district employees and providing planner certification to employees if the districts want it. Also, if the district is working jointly on projects that involve NRCS technical and financial assistance then things need to be done according to NRCS standards. Brian Holloway made a motion to accept the NRCS memorandum of understanding, seconded by Richard Kennedy, all in favor, motion carried.

- 2.) **GPS Surveying equipment** – Corey presented the board with survey equipment that is available to purchase through Featherstone Supply Inc. The company leases out surveying equipment for a year and then sells it at a discounted price the following year. The equipment that Corey would like to purchase would have been \$40k for robotic surveying equipment a few years ago and through Featherstone they gave a quote of \$11,975 which would be good through 12/31/19. The board decided to table deciding until the February meeting.
- 3.) **EPF Funding** – Environmental protection funding just came out. We did get our notification in the mail, we received funding for Canjoharie Creek, Cayadutta Creek and Holloway Farms for a total of \$700k in funding for EPF. We applied for 5 grants and 3 of them were funded. Plan of work for the grants is due by December 23rd.
- 4.) **PDR** – Bunkers were funded through the PDR grant. Russ Kelly had also applied but because he is a board member for the Town of Glen and did not recuse himself, his application was denied. But there was another deadline put out for March 29, 2020 and John VanDerwerken is working with Mohawk Land Conservancy on a new application for Russ Kelly. Hopefully this time around Russ Kelly will get funding from Purchase of Development Rights (PDR). Another farm interested in applying is Dellavale, however, Mohawk Land Conservancy is not able to help with that one so John is looking to find an alternative to participate.
- 5.) **Tire Recycling/RC&D** – At the last committee meeting of the executive board, Donna Murray had suggested that maybe a consultant could be hired to determine what the needs would be of a tire recycling facility. When Corey attended December's RC&D meeting, he brought it up and Donna said that she did not think that RC&D would be interested in this project. Corey will attend the meeting in January and put a motion on the table that they hire a consultant. We did withhold our annual dues from RC&D this year and Corey does not want to continue paying those dues to RC&D if Montgomery County will not benefit in anyway. He plans on talking to the county to see if the money can be used for other educational programs or if we need to send the money back to the county, but he does not want it to go to RC&D. Richard Kennedy made a motion to stop the annual funding of RC&D, seconded by Brian Holloway, all in favor, motion carried.
- 6.) **Trout in the Classroom** – Scott and Joe worked with Ron Dorn from Trout Unlimited, a local chapter in the Town of Florida, to connect a teacher from Amsterdam High School and a teacher from Fort Plain to set up the Trout in the Classroom. The project is being funded through our 2019 part B funding. It's all set up and ready go. Ron is going to get the eggs and show the teachers how to raise eggs. And in April they will be released out in the stream. It's a good learning experience for the kids. In Amsterdam it is 9th grade students and in Fort Plain it's 10th grade students.
- 7.) **Snowblower** – Richard Kennedy brought up that a few years ago Scott had asked for a snowblower for the office. The board at the time did not want to make the purchase. Richard thought about it and felt that the district could afford to make that purchase. Richard Kennedy made a motion to purchase a snow blower, seconded by Martin Kelly, all in favor, motion carried. There was no dollar amount put forward, it was stated to keep it reasonable.
- 8.) **Scott Ryan/State Committee appointment**– Scott is currently going through the process to be appointed to the State Committee. Scott will be going next week to Saratoga for a round table meeting to learn about the Leopold Conservation Award.

Committee Reports:

AEM:

- Finalizing CNMPs for Wayne Conard and Owen Potter. The plans should be ready for Round 26 AGNPS.
- AEM Year 15 began in May and ends on December 31st. As of 11/27/2019 we have earned \$41,349 through the program.
- Year 16 which runs for 2 years will begin on January 1st. \$110,000 available + up \$100,000 for implementation money with a max of \$50,000 per farm.
- Continuing to maintain records for nutrient management application on farms working through EQIP and AEM projects.

No Till

- 534 Acres in 2019
- 230 Acres 2018

Part B Conservation Project 2019

North Chuctanunda Water Sampling Project

- We worked with SUNY Cobleskill to continue their water sampling program on North Chuctanunda Creek at 4 sites.
 - Site 1 South of Dam in Hagaman
 - Site 2 At the Mill Dam at Harrower Pond
 - Site 3 Shuttleworth Park
 - Site 4 Second Ave and Forest Ave (by new Trail)
- A written report will be provided from Cobleskill.

Trout in the Classroom

- A tank, chiller, filter and all supplies needed to raise Trout from eggs until release were distributed to both Amsterdam Highschool and Fort Plain. We worked with Trout Unlimited to bring the Trout in the Classroom program to these 2 schools. Last year we connected St Mary's Institute with Trout in the Classroom.

Eagle Trail

- Staff helped clear and establish a trail in the Town of Florida. The Eagle Trail is a new three mile walking trail that has opened between the Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site Yankee Hill Lock MVGO pedestrian bridge and Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site. The trail is on New York State Canal Corporation land and has been developed and adopted by the Friends of Schoharie Crossing. Partners; Schoharie Crossing State Historic Site, the Montgomery County Soil and Water Conservation Service and the Adirondack Mountain Club Foothills Chapter and the Friends of Schoharie Crossing for the trail development.

Joseph Slezak
Resource Conservation Specialist

AED:

- MCAMP Grant:
 - Round 1 closed out. Round 2 has two competed and 2 processing out of 9 projects.
 - We should here by the end of this week weather or not we were funded for Round 3.
 - Courses set up with Nicole Tommell and CCE (assuming we are funded) Starting February 5 and ending on the 18th with application deadline set for 4/30.
- Dairy Transition:
 - Russ Kelly application is being finalized and completed for the round in 2020
 - Going to look into Dellavale, Mohawk Land Conservancy says they can't, so we are looking to find and alternative.
- Farm and Home Safety day 2020:
 - Planning on cutting number of stations down so it easier for the students to process and the day is easier to fit into a school schedule, hopefully making it available to more schools (reached back out to Amsterdam).
 - Look to add at least 2 conversation stations so there will be a nice blend of safety and conservation.
- Part B:
 - Community Garden/green space in Amsterdam on Route 5.
 - Refer to application
- Sundae on the Farm 2020:
 - Ridgedale Farm – Wayne Conard expressed interest in 2020, reconfirmed that he was willing to host while we were at his farm 2-3 weeks ago.

John VanDerwerken
AED program coordinator

NRCS:

- Due to storms that came through on Halloween, state conservationists did issue an emergency watershed protection program for several counties and Montgomery County was included in that. The program requires a municipal sponsor and as of now there has not been any that have come forward for Montgomery.
- The working group is going to be a little more important with the NRCS programs. Counties were getting frustrated when questions would arise, and the questions would get sent to Syracuse and then they never got a response back. Now that funding is going to be more focused on the local level, Tom's "team", which include 6 counties will have more input into how that funding is used as far as ranking goes or the priorities, as long as all the counties agree.
- There are 25 active contracts for various programs in Montgomery Co. In comparison to other counties, there are 23 in Washington Co, 15 in Fulton Co, 13 in Saratoga Co and 7 in Hamilton Co.
- Interviews were done for the Soil Conservationist position in Fultonville. Bruce and Tom have made their selections and they let the national human resources team know. They are hoping to have someone in the position at some point in 2020.

*Thomas Bielli
District Conservationist
Fulton, Hamilton, Montgomery, Saratoga, Warren & Washington Counties*

FSA:

- Sandy Scott will be the new CED for Montgomery County. By mid-January Sandy should be full time in the Montgomery County office.
- CRP has just come out, there was a three-day training in Auburn. They opened continuous sign up and general signup, which in Montgomery County there won't be much interest in because CREP would pay better than continuous or general. CREP is not opened yet, there are some changes to how CREP will work. One of the changes is looking at the practice incentive payment always done at the end of a contract. Now as each component is done, payment will be made. The farmer would pay their 50% cost share and you would receive the practice incentive payment at the same time instead of waiting until the end. There are still some hiccups that may need to get worked out.
- Another project that farmers have been waiting on is the Grassland Program. That is not be opening until March and there is no information on what the changes will be to that program.

*Sandy Scott
County Executive Director*

Adjournment: Meeting adjourned @ 12:20 PM

NEXT MEETING: January 27, 2020

Respectfully, Karen Klemczak