

MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

October 23, 2023

MEETING # 887

Present:

**Scott Ryan**, *Chairman, Grange Member*  
**Brian Holloway**, *Vice Chairman, Farm Bureau Member*  
**Martin Kelly**, *Legislative Member*  
**Richard Kennedy**, *Member at Large*  
**Robert Headwell, Jr.**, *Legislative Rep*

**Corey Nellis**, *District Manager*  
**Karen Klemczak**, *District Clerk-Treasurer*

**PUBLIC COMMENT: NONE**

**CALL MEETING TO ORDER @ PM**

**MINUTES of the September 25, 2023, meeting were reviewed. Martin Kelly made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Robert Headwell, Jr. All in favor, motion carried.**

**TREASURER'S REPORT as of October 22, 2023**

District Checking:	82,802.59
Building Acct:	211,804.84
Canjo 27 (Michalak) C701470	566,523.78
Canjo 28 (Ulman) C701511	148,734.56
Water Quality	1,009.99
Hill Side Farm (Lipiec) C701471	39,125.55
Hoefele C012183	23,452.70
Fisher C012181	592.40
AEM	91,538.74
Ridgedale C701426	274,691.32
Crowe T012325	358.65
Crowe Irrigation CRF C012432	224,350.72
Slate Creek Farm T00335GG	4,435.00
Part C:	134,623.02
Undeposited Funds	1,238.31
Total in all accounts	\$ 1,804,043.86

Review of disbursements (check register 9/24/23 through 10/22/23)

Review of outstanding accounts

Bills to be paid: none

**Martin Kelly 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 Robert Headwell, Jr., motion carried.**

**Old Business:**

- 1.) Field Work** – *Work at both Hill Side Farm and Appleridge are just about complete. Ridgedale is ready to get started. They will start forming for concrete this week and the weather looks like it will be very cooperative. Our AEM projects, Bo Eck should be starting his project soon and Ragozzino's project is moving along well. The county DPW is having encroachment on the road from retained water. Soil and Water is assisting by lowering the water, the county is replacing the culvert so they can extend the culvert adding more land to their right of way to install guard rails for safety concerns.*
- 2.) Elam Fisher Closeout** – *At the previous meeting there was a contractor that needed to be paid before the grant could be closed. Elam Fisher did make that payment. The final paperwork was submitted, and the grant has been closed out.*
- 3.) Tire Recycling** – *Event was once again a success. We had an overwhelming response. There were over 2000 tires pre-registered. We had 1550 tires dropped off and shipped off to be recycled. Many of our Montgomery County residents expressed their appreciation for this program.*

- 4.) **Direct Payments** – *There was further discussion about direct payments to contractors. Corey said it is possible to do direct payments. It would be a board decision if that were something that we would do. Corey did say that the state has recommended that we don't do assignment of payments anymore.*

#### New Business

- 1.) **2024 Plan of Work** – *Martin Kelly made a motion to approve the 2024 Plan of Work, seconded by Robert Headwell Jr., all in favor, motion carried.*
- 2.) **AEM Year 18 – ranking list for project implementation** – *The board was in favor of a ranking system for those applying for AEM money. They did think that anyone applying for money consecutive years should have points deducted. The board would like there to be a \$50k maximum per project. Martin wanted to add more points for a \$20k project and the larger amounts get points deducted. Bob Headwell suggested that the office staff work on a ranking sheet that they feel meets their objectives and once it is complete bring that to the board for final approval.*
- 3.) **AEM Year 18 Resolution** - *Robert Headwell, Jr made a motion to apply for round 18 of AEM seconded by Martin Kelly, all in favor, motion carried.*
- 4.) **Part B Resolution** – *Martin Kelly made a motion to approve the repair of a drainage ditch on the backside of 5 continuous properties that has silted in over the years causing water issues. The ditch will be reshaped, and a new culvert will be installed. Robert Headwell, Jr. seconded the motion, all in favor, motion carried.*
- 5.) **Budget** – *Corey had not asked for any additional appropriations funding for next year. The budget hasn't been passed yet, but the district should be approved for the \$209,000 appropriations for 2024.*
- 6.) **EQIP** – *The current round of EQIP will be closing out, all applications must be in by November 4<sup>th</sup>. There will be another \$20 million put into EQIP next year through the Inflation Reduction Act.*
- 7.) **NRCS Staffing** – *Tom's soil conservationist that was in our office has accepted another job in the Schoharie office. His last day was Friday. Tom will be retiring the end of the year along with Scott Fitscher from the Greenwich office and Tom's boss Jim Pullano will be retiring at the same time. There will most likely be a little disruption within NRCS for a period a time until they get these positions filled.*
- 8.) **Part C** – *Next year the money for Part C will be increasing again. The board and the district staff need to begin exploring options for projects in Montgomery County.*

#### Committee Reports:

##### **AEM:**

AEM resolution is needed for Round 18 to participate in the program.

We discussed several options and developed questions for an AEM Tier 4 ranking tool. The majority of these questions should be objective to remove opinion or unfair bias from the ranking process. I am looking for board opinion on defensible questions that could be asked regarding:

- Avoiding repeat BMPs on repeat farms
- Avoiding AEM funding for farms that have poorly maintained previously installed practices that were funded through SWCD or USDA within a practice lifespan (for example 10 years)
- Encouraging greater participation among farms that are new to SWCD programs, not necessarily beginning farmers.
  
- Unless funding is still available, farms that were funded in the previous AEM 2-year contract cannot apply in back-to-back funding cycles.

Joseph Slezak  
Resource Conservation Specialist

**FSA:**

We are working on fall acreage reports right now for fall grain, cover crops, and summer seedings as well as garlic. If anyone needs to report, please call Keletha or stop in before November 15<sup>th</sup>. The Continuing resolution we are funded on expires on November 17<sup>th</sup> and most programs have either expired or end the end of the year since we do not have a new Farm Bill or extension yet so we will not be doing our normal fall sign ups until we have a budget and at least extension on the Farm Bill. We still may be able to do some programs that have different funding sources as well as loans.

Sandra L. (Ferry) Scott  
County Executive Director  
Montgomery, Fulton, & Hamilton

**AED:**

**Sundae on the Farm**

We had a very good day. The attendance was estimated to be around 4000 people, and everyone said they really enjoyed it. Vendors said they did well, and we had amazing weather.

**Harvest Connection**

We are working on a commercial to promote the app and website. Currently a rough draft is at Donna Murray with Rensselaer County Economic Development for her review.

**Aspiring Farmer Workshop Series**

This is a workshop that is being planned with Cornell Cooperative Extension that will be held at FMCC tentatively February 17<sup>th</sup>. Geared towards interested homesteader type farmers.

**Holiday Tractor Parade**

This is an idea that came up last year but was too late to have it pulled together. It will be in conjunction with the tree lighting with the City of Amsterdam. The route will be starting on route 5 and going up over the bridge and go down bridge street into south side. It is from 4-6 at night on the 24<sup>th</sup> of November. If anyone is interested, please just let me know so we can plan. There is no cost.

**Grants –**

**USDA- Improvement and Modernization Dairy Grant** opens 10/26-12/7. Focusing on efficiency and being able to bring farm into the future.

**USDA- Milking Handling Dairy Grant** opens 11/30-1/18. Looking at energy efficiency and quality improvements with milk systems.

**USDA- Meat Processing grant.** Working with Hutchison Harvest Inc on this grant. County Grant is still in the process and not open yet.

Becky Ferry  
Ag Economic Development Specialist

**NRCS: No Report**

**Adjournment:**

Martin Kelly made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Richard Kennedy, all in favor, motion carried.

Meeting adjourned @ 8:40 pm.

**NEXT MEETING: December 6, 2023, The Winner Circle, 11:00 AM**

***Respectfully, Karen Klemczak***