MONTGOMERY COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF DIRECTORS
September 28, 2026
MEETING # 915

Present:
Scott Ryan, *Chairman, Grange Member*
Brian Holloway, *Vice Chairman, Farm Bureau*
Robert Headwell, Jr, *Legislative Rep*
Richard Kennedy, *Member at Large*
Corey Nellis, *District Manager*
Karen Klemczak, *Office Manager*
Victoria Bray, *Ag Economic Dev Specialist*
Scott Fickbohm, Associate Environmental Analyst

Public Comment:

CALL MEETING TO ORDER 7:33 PM

MINUTES ***of August 24, 2026, meeting were reviewed. Richard Kennedy made a motion to accept the minutes, seconded by Robert Headwell, Jr, all in favor, motion carried.***

REASURER'S REPORT as of September 28, 2026:

District Checking:	***10,978.48***
Building Acct:	***62,963.34***
Building Acct (ICS)	***145,897.38***
Canjo 27 (Michalak) C701470	***4,150.84***
Creek Acres Farm CRF C012551	***369,395.23***
AEM	***252,799.51***
Ridgedale C701426	***58,304.54***
MMT Cattle CAFO (Rnd 1) C012776	***323,187.20***
MMT Otsquago (Rnd 30)	***373,697.38***
Crowe Irrigation CRF C012432	***646.04***
Slate Creek Farm T00335GG	***4,785.46***
Hill Top Acres (CRF 8) T012707	***36,739.36***
Zitone (CRF 8) C012705	***46,929.93***
General Fund:	***27,580.93***
General Fund (ICS)	***348,478.22***
Farmland Protection Reserve Fund	***188,683.94***
Water Quality	***889.22***
Petty Cash	***250.00***
Undeposited Funds	***.00***
Total in all accounts	***$2,256,357.00***

Review of disbursements (check register 8/24/2026 through 9/28/2026)
Review of outstanding accounts

ABSTRACTS # 9-2026: Bills paid, to be paid and transfers.
Motion: by Robert Headwell, Jr. to approve Abstracts #9-2026, accept the Treasure's report, pay all audited bills, approve all salary payment for the next month and/or the next board meeting, 2nd by Brian Holloway, motion carried.

Old Business:

1.) **Field Work**
- Michalak's job is complete and Corey can start closing that grant out.
- Bunker and Subik, both CRF grants are started
- MMT currently has two grants, and we are actively working to complete the projects.
- Brad and Corey will be joining a committee with the Village of Fonda to evaluate the Fonda Reservoir. Their first meeting will be this coming Thursday.

2.) **Farmland Protection Reserve Grant** – We have two projects completely paid out and a third about to be completed. Additional projects are ongoing or are set to begin once crops are harvested this fall. Overall, the program has been going very well.

3.) **Tire recycling –** Our annual tire recycling event will be held this coming Saturday from 8 am – 10 am. We currently have almost 3000 tires registered.

New Business

1.) **Part B 2026 Project modification –** Our 2026 Part B project was initially designated as the Canajoharie High Tunnel. Victoria attempted to initiate this project but was unable to proceed. We have installed a dry hydrant at the Fish and Game Club and would like to reallocate the funds originally allocated for the high tunnel under Part B to cover the costs of the dry hydrant, thereby enhancing our emergency management capabilities. **Richard Kennedy made a motion to amend that project and reallocate the funds to the fish and game club, which was seconded by Brian Holloway, all in favor, motion carried.**

2.) **Part B 2027 resolution –** The Part B project for 2027 is due by November 1st. We are considering a permaculture initiative at Fort Plain School. Brad has previously collaborated with the school, and they need fruit trees and other related materials. This could serve as an ongoing project focused on maintenance, with the goal of establishing a food forest at the school. **Brian Holloway motioned to approve the Permaculture project for Part B for 2027. The motion was seconded by Richard Kennedy. The vote was unanimous in favor, and the motion was carried.**

3.) **Mohawk River Watershed Coalition –** Brad is collaborating with Jake from Fulton County and working with Prism to coordinate the water chestnut harvest scheduled for next spring. He is exploring various funding options, including the Mohawk River Watershed Coalition grant, which has available funds designated for project implementation. Additionally, he has established contacts within Prism and may be able to secure financial assistance from them to support the water chestnut harvest effort.

4.) **Forestry –** Corey would like Brad to begin exploring opportunities in Forest Management. He sees NYS moving in that direction through the CRF and DEC programs, focusing on forest sequestration and forest rejuvenation. He would also like Brad to start engaging with our landowners who own forested land and assess potential forestry opportunities. Corey anticipates that forestry initiatives will expand over the next five years through state programs. He recommends that Brad begin with county forests and develop a management plan, then expand efforts as opportunities arise in the county. Scott Fickbohm mentioned that Otsego County has a forester, Dan Zimmerman, whom Brad could contact to gain insight into their district's forest management activities.

5.) **Sexual Harassment/Workplace violence - Director annual trainings –** All directors who attended the meeting have completed their required trainings for the year. Tom Elwood was absent from the meeting. We will verify his completion of the training at next month's meeting.

6.) **CRF Round 10 resolution modification –** The resolution for CRF Round 10 has been revised to include the names of the projects that districts will be submitting for this round. **Brian Holloway motioned to approve the updated resolution, seconded by Richard Kennedy. The motion passed unanimously.** A second resolution was required to authorize the application of a CRF grant for Slezak Family Farm. Due to conflict-of-interest considerations, it was necessary to adopt this separate resolution in accordance with applicable policies. **Richard Kennedy made a motion, seconded by Brian Holloway, all in favor, motion carried.**

7.) **Scott Fickbohm Report**

- Statewide manager's meeting is coming up in Syracuse. State committee meeting on the first day with breakout sessions and open discussions. The second day filled with some great speakers talking about climate change, ag assessments, and solar.
- Reminder, there are only two months left for Performance measures to be fulfilled. Make sure the district has everything on the checklist completed.
- CRF Round 10 has just been released
- Time to start looking at the 2027 annual plan of work. It needs to be sent to Scott no later than Nov 1rst.
- Link to state aid to districts forum
- CDEA is having an Administrative Conference Nov 16-17 @ the Queensbury Hotel
- NYACD is having their annual meeting October 26th-28th
- The soil science watch party continues if you have an opportunity to click into that forum
- A North Country storm water tradeshow coming up
- Some various soil health and climate resilient field day happening
- A meeting on October 13th in Cooperstown to bring together recently hired staff to get to know one another and develop working relationships.

8) Ag and Markets Farm Tour – The event was rescheduled from the previous month due to weather conditions. The Montgomery County and Schenectady County SWCDs collaborated to present the Ag and Markets Department of Budget with an overview of funded and completed projects. A total of three projects from Schenectady County,

three from Montgomery County, and one partnership project located on the border of Schenectady and Montgomery Counties were showcased. The tour is scheduled for tomorrow and will be an all-day event.

Committee Reports

NRCS: No Report
FSA: No Report
AEM:

- Working through AEM Tier 1 and Tier 2 for a group of Amish produce farmers interested in the Grown and Certified program. This is for the Mohawk Valley Produce Coop
- No Till drills have been used on 16 farms so far this fall. Approx 300 this fall.
- Successful Ripsowing on 2 farms this fall, 17 acres. Still planning to use in October, seeding Rye, Triticale and Hairy Vetch.

Joseph Slezak
Resource Conservationist

AED:

Sundae On the Farm

- Successfully supported the Sundae on the Farm event, which drew over 300 attendees
- Despite the rain, outreach and engagement were strong, with positive feedback from partners and participants

Walz Pond Road Project

- The Walz Pond Road grant application was not awarded
- Despite this, the site remains a priority. We are exploring alternative funding opportunities and preparing to begin work on the pavilion portion of the project.

Lock 33 Project Interest

- The Minden town board has expressed interest in pursuing a similar project at Loc 33
- Collaboration continues with Vinnie at Economic Development to identify potential grant opportunities and funding pathways.

Part B & Part C Projects

- A new Part B project will need to be selected.
- I will be working with Brad on developing a permaculture garden project in partnership with the Fort Plain School for next year.
- For the current year, we are considering utilizing the dry hydrant at the Fish and Game Club and reallocating previously designated Part C funds to help support the permaculture project.

Agriculture & Farmland Protection Grant Program

- The program is progressing well
- We have closed out several projects, with two paid out and a third about to be completed
- Additional projects are ongoing or are set to begin once crops are harvested this fall.

Fort Hunter Free Library Collaboration

- I have been asked to assist the Fort Hunter Free Library with soil education programming, including soil painting activities
- We may also provide a table at their Mohawk River fish event to support community engagement and education.

NYS Tariff Relief Program

- The tariff relief program continues to advance.
- Several producers have received requests to resubmit documents.
- No payments have been received yet, but once reviews are completed, we anticipate checks to begin going out and I'm hoping to hear from producers.

CDEA New letter & Upcoming Events

- I have been actively working on the CDEA newsletter.

- We are preparing for a Division of Budget tour at Ag & Markets scheduled for tomorrow.
- Workload remains high, with additional grant opportunities under review.

Future Planning

- I am exploring the idea of hosting a listening session, gathering stakeholder feedback, and project ideas.
- I am hopeful that December will provide the opportunity to plan next year's programming more intentionally.

Victoria Bray
Ag Economic Development Specialist

Adjournment: **Meeting adjourned @ 9:00 PM**
NEXT MEETING*: *October 19, 2026 @ 7:30 PM

Respectfully, Karen Klemczak