

Washington County Soil & Water Conservation District

Minutes of Regular Meeting June 22, 2020 - USDA Service Center, 2530 St. Rt. 40, Greenwich, NY

Free Conference Call.com

PLAY BACK RECORDING OF MEETING

TEL. 425-436-6309

511779#

Recording 3

Attending:

Board Members

John Rieger, Chairman

Jay Skellie, Director

Kate Ziehm, Treasurer

Cassie Fedler, Director

Staff Members

Corrina Aldrich, District Manager

Lori Sheehan, Office Manager

Rieger Do you have an objection if we get started, then I will call the meeting to order at 7:32 pm
(Call to order at 7:32 pm by Chairman Rieger)

First item on our agenda is the approval of the minutes of the last meeting. Do I have a motion?

Skellie So moved

Ziehm Second

Rieger Any questions, comments, additions or corrections
Not hearing any - all those in favor

Directors I

Rieger Opposed. Motion is carried
Kate you are on next with the most important part of the agenda

(Minutes: **Motion** by Skellie/Ziehm to approve the minutes of the last meeting.
Unanimously carried.)

Ziehm That is right, do I have a motion to accept the treasurers report and to pay the bills

Rieger Well I'll take that as a motion from our treasurer
Do we have a second?

Skellie I will second

Rieger Questions or comments. Additions or corrections.
Not hearing any. All those in favor

Directors I

Rieger Opposed. We are on a roll tonight. Motion carried

(Treasurer's Report: After review and approval of the finances, **Motion** by Ziehm/Skellie to approve the Treasurer's Reports (as a whole) for May and to pay bills as presented.

Unanimously carried.)

Corrina you are next

- Aldrich Sorry I didn't get a report together I have been trying to catch up on getting time in on the performance measure timesheet so Lori and I can start working on budget figures. Everybody has been staying busy, I have been trying to catch up on site visits that were put off in March and April and catch up on paperwork when I am in the office. We are trying to get into the office a little more often. Laura is still primarily working from home and Lori is going to be in the office every day, Bob and Amber are switching off being in the office. Bob actually has to take vacation time before his anniversary date so he will be off quite a bit the next few weeks and I will be in and out of the office between site visits and catching up on paperwork when I am in, and we are just trying to abide by what FSA needs for people. Their requirements, the federal government, is basically still under Phase 1 they are not recognizing what is going on at the local, regional or county level. They are following their own guidelines from the federal government, so they are allowed to have 10 people in the service center at a time. We are trying not to rock the boat and get back to working as much as possible in the office because we need to but do it so that we are not making people anxious. That is pretty much it.
- Rieger Questions, comments
- Skellie Sounds good
- Rieger Okay we have a technician report from Bob Kalbfliesh, Laura Generous and Amber Luke
- Aldrich Oh I forgot to announce the last time that Amber has her CCA designation, she got that about a month ago and her first CNMP that she submitted has been reviewed and she has a conference call I think Thursday this coming week regarding that, and she has to make some minor edits to the wording and some of it was organizational, they have basically approved it, they just want to kind of go through it with her and discuss some things I guess.
- Skellie Corrina I see on Amber's report the inter-seeder grant, is that a State grant
- Aldrich Yes, it is
- Skellie At the county level we have been experiencing some serious delays on grants and whatnots
- Aldrich Is she talking about doing soil samples with ASA
- Skellie No it is just the inter-seeder grant. That is the new machine we are getting, correct
- Aldrich Yes. We have heard from Ryan (Cunningham) that our application ranked high enough to be approved but no press releases have been put out to have an official announcement

- Skellie The State is really sitting on a lot of money; not money – a lot of payouts it appears. There are things we are waiting to come through on at the county level that they are telling us – well we don't know when, if some may not come, or they may not be what we thought they were going to be, but I think they are all going to make it eventually. The other money that we deal with for projects - is that all been coming all right – we have most of it on account – right?
- Aldrich We have a lot of it. The State is just coming out of their blackout period as well, I don't know about other parts of the State, but Ag & Markets have a blackout period from April to mid-June. Where you can submit vouchers, but you are not going to get any money until they come out of that blackout period. We just submitted vouchers for AEM projects and for the technical assistance part of it, but pretty much everything else we had done before that time period that we needed to.
- Skellie I was just giving you a heads up if the cash wasn't flowing in like it normally does. At the county level we are waiting on some different things, it is just not coming.
- Aldrich Yes, it seems to be the big question – on the watershed groups minds and the districts minds are they going to be doing the CFA grants. Usually they announce them the end of the May and they are due towards the end of July and nobody has heard anything which is basically opening up another grant round – a round of grant applications. Who knows, everybody is kind of thinking maybe we will hear something in July on that.
- Skellie They extended the income tax reporting deadline too, so they are not normally were they would be at either
- Aldrich Yes
- Rieger Jay - do you have any words of wisdom on that
- Skellie I just know at the county we are making contingency plans on different things, especially one of the big things is the chips money and stuff that we do the roads with; they are telling us – the rumor is - that they are probably going to hold back 20% from what they originally told us at the beginning of the year so we are kind of planning on that. One of the things we were just discussing today – in Cassie's committee – the Ag Committee – I Love NY money flows through that and that is kind of up in the air – we think we are going to get some we just don't believe it is going to be the full amount that we normally get – its anybody's game now – you may have to look at some of your cash flow stuff if there are things that normally come from the State - it may take longer
- Aldrich Yes
- Rieger Any other thoughts or questions. So, there isn't anything else in our technician reports. How about Ryan Cunningham's NYS-SWCC report?
- Aldrich They are going to be having a meeting tomorrow – State Committee meeting. Hoping to listen into that. They are working through stuff, we got three grant applications submitted for Round 26 we are going to keep our fingers crossed .

Rieger Okay, any questions or comments on Ryan Cunningham's report
I'm moving right along here, so if I am moving too fast don't hesitate to howler
Okay, we need a motion for the AEM Round 16 Project in the amount of \$1,500 – this that
correct Corrina

Aldrich Yes

Rieger Do I hear a motion

Ziehm So moved

Fedler Second

Rieger We have a motion, we have a second, questions or comments on this. Not hearing any, all
those in favor

Directors I

Rieger Opposed. Motion is carried
(**Motion** by Ziehm/Fedler to approve AEM Round 16 Engineering Payment to Agricultural
Engineering Services (\$1,500) for Flo Myrick Streambank Stabilization Project.
Unanimously carried.)

Now Lori do we need one motion to approve all three units – the storage unit, the materials
and the two laptops and software, or do they need to be individual.

Sheehan We could do them individual I guess, or the storage unit and materials together because they
are under one grant and we may be able to purchase that under some grant money that is
available.

Rieger Do you have dollar amounts for those 2 items

Aldrich I do not, I haven't done any research on the storage unit yet other than word of mouth. I was
thinking of one of those metal pod type units I believe they are like \$1,200-\$1,400 range.
My thought process was to buy one out right to be able to put the seed and mulch materials
in to have here and have something that was rodent proof basically. Those could come
under Part C or we may be able to get some reimbursement on them from a grant – WQIP,
some of the grants that we got through the watershed organization, but I have not checked in
to what the prices are on that

Rieger How time sensitive is this

Aldrich Well we have the hydro-seeder and if we have some towns looking to use it – it would be
nice to get some seed and mulch on hand and help the towns out by having that and being
able to provide that – if we got some seed and mulch we could get something lined up for a
training on the hydro-seeder with our staff. The sales rep said he would come back out the
first time we use it and be around and run through it with us that way if we have any issues,
he is here to answer questions and get us up to speed

Rieger Do you have a recommendation for the directors

Aldrich As in

Rieger Dollar amount – not-to-exceed

Aldrich Probably \$5,000 dollars would get us some seed and mulch to get started and like I said the information on the storage unit is kind of hear say information, I haven't called on one

Rieger Right

Fedler We have storage units at the fairgrounds. I would think if you reach out to Chris over there, he might have some ideas, I'm not exactly sure what you are looking for, but I would try that as a source – maybe he can help point you in the right direction

Aldrich Well those metal pod units

Fedler You can go on the internet and scope them out and find the best price. Is it something you need right away, or do you have time to look at it and have actual numbers to bring it back to us?

Aldrich I can work on some numbers and bring it back to you

Skellie You would have to spend a whole bunch of money on rent for a month or two if you thought that buying it was what you wanted to do down the road

Aldrich Yes, that is true. I think having 50 bags of mulch on hand – they take up a lot of space

Skellie And the seed, like you said the rodents could get into it

Aldrich Yes, I don't necessarily want to put seed in our storage shed, which is just a wooden shed that is not rodent proof

Fedler I think when we buy them, they are not usually that expensive. I have to agree with Jay. It might end up being cheaper to just buy it out right and have it for year to year use, then paying rent for a couple of months every time

Aldrich Well that was my thought process. I heard through the grapevine type of thing – but I hadn't called anyone yet. So, I will do that

Rieger So do you want to put this off until you can come up with a recommendation for next month

Skellie But I would hate to have them lose a month of maybe using it or training too - John. You are talking the middle of July at that point.

Rieger Exactly

Aldrich Well the way the weather is right now there is not a lot of benefit for us to rush right out and try and hydro-seed something right now

Rieger So are we all comfortable with leaving that for the time being then

Aldrich That is fine. I should have done a little more homework – I had gotten sidetracked on other things. Trying to play catch up like everybody else

Rieger Okay then moving on
Two laptops and software, Lori would you like to give us a little background

Sheehan Well if we are going to proceed with teleworking, we will need to get laptops for Corrina and Bob, they don't have that capability they just have desktops. Bob needs mapping and a few extra things on his, actually the last time we got him a desktop it was around \$1,800, so I would think \$2,000 or less for each would cover the cost

Rieger So you are looking for a motion to approve two laptops and software at a maximum of \$4,000

Sheehan Yes

Skellie So Moved

Rieger You have heard the recommendation – what is your pleasure

Skellie So moved

Rieger We have a motion; do we have a second

Ziehm Second motion - Kate

Rieger Questions or comments

Sheehan Once we connect with the IT people at the county maybe we could work out something cheaper but if we are going to still work through the service center we need the VPN, the last time we got computers through them we have to get all the software and programs available to use with their server and programs, so that is why when we are all done with that they are a little more costly.

Skellie Well please talk to the county because the new person there seems to be excellent – right Cassie

Fedler Yes, I was going to say the same thing, she is very good

Rieger Any other questions or comments. We have a motion and a second. All those in favor

Directors I

Rieger Opposed. Motion is carried.
(Motion by Skellie/Ziehm to approve purchase of two laptops and software for teleworking capabilities (\$4,000 maximum expenditure). Unanimously carried.)
Okay, moving onward
Scheduling of the next meeting before we go around - Jay and Cassie

Fedler We are looking at July

Rieger Yes

Fedler The 13th does that work - no wait a minute that is town board

Skellie Are we going to continue phone conference or are we going to get to where we can have in-person, get 6-foot distancing – just asking

Rieger I have no preference whatsoever. Kate what is your thoughts

Ziehm My thoughts are – I think we are very fast over the phone but I don't know if there is as much chat and good conversation, so I would think that if we could get together in person next time it might be a good time to connect and then we would go back and do a couple of meetings over the phone

Rieger Cassie what is your thoughts

Fedler Well I love the ones over the phone but if you are looking for a day, we have to go over our schedule

Rieger Jay what are your thoughts. It doesn't matter, this is convenient, especially this time of year as Cassie well knows, but as Kate says the interaction that we have in person is good too. It doesn't matter to me one way or the other, like I said this time of year, quick and late is easy for me

Fedler I know

Ziehm Maybe through the summer continue phone meetings then once we get into the Fall, we get back into seeing each other

Sheehan Its Lori - just one thing I think by August we probably need to have a face-to-face when it gets closer to budget time to really discuss things and look at numbers before we have to go up to the county in September and hopefully the directors will have a little more guidance

Skellie I hope we have guidance by then

Fedler I've been asking if there is going to be something past Phase 4, as of Wednesday it will be three weeks, I have been asking at our re-opening committee meeting, Bob keeps trying to get the State to answer him and they don't have any answers. Three weeks ago, we started asking and we don't get anywhere

Sheehan Maybe they are not going to have the budget meeting in September, maybe they are going to push it out further, but I think before we get to close to that we should all sit down together, face-to-face to discuss things more in detail

Aldrich I agree with Lori

Rieger Will September be adequate, or do we need to push it back to August

Sheehan Normally the meeting is in September at the county

Fedler Usually the last week in September is when – the last full week, this year Dan moved it as far into the first week in October is when we meet every day. I would caution you on asking us for any money though

Aldrich Well we are not going to try and ask for more

Skellie What do you think Cassie, do we need an in person in August or sneak a meeting ahead of your committee meeting

Fedler We can sneak one in ahead of time. In September my meeting won't be until the 22nd and they might do that one for the joint one with the budget for ag & planning we have plenty of time to meet for Soil & Water before that

Rieger So what we are looking at is perhaps an early meeting in September to finalize what we feel will be the budget for 2021

Fedler Yes

Rieger Jay, what are your thoughts on that

Skellie I think that is good. Probably the fresher it is – in my head anyway as we go over it when we get there, we can help with you guys doing the presentation. As Cassie says – I think there is going to be some things getting going before that just because we don't know where we are going to land here – things are all over the place

Rieger Kate

Ziehm I think that sounds fine – that sounds good

Rieger I think the biggest issue we are all facing is it all boils down to dollars and cents and I don't think any of us at this point in time have any idea what that's going to be. Jay, Cassie are you in agreement on that

Fedler Totally

Skellie 100%

Rieger And if anything, my crystal ball tells me – we are all going to be in for a tough year when it comes to finances

Skellie I guess Lori I would say – I will fight for you I can tell you that, but you guys need a contingency plan in case they go across the board. Cassie and I are trying to make sure that everything kind of stays fair. There have been meetings going on and not everybody is playing the game here, so Cassie read them the riot act and told them to have everybody at the table. So, I am just saying, nobody has been asked to yet, but you might need to have some kind of backup plan, I got the feeling we are going to go status quo – with no more, no extras this year, I don't know. That is kind of the feeling I get to make it through this year

- Fedler Of course the way they change their minds at the State level – and what they are doing day to day; they change their minds the same day let alone the same week, especially the later in the summer we may have more knowledge. They may actually wait 24 hours before they change their minds
- Skellie One of the things that they have done to us - they have stopped sending us the check for our Social Services program that we get every month and 65% of that comes from the Federal government, yet the State is sitting on it and that totals for Washington County are \$850,000 to \$900,000 a month, so we are having to cash flow that
- Aldrich Yes, so they are sitting on it so they can get the interest off of it instead of you guys; not that you get interest off of it because it is probably in and out
- Fedler The other thing I would think – I guess I would look at the program, last year they had a big push and cut some people 10% and said we will make it up to you next year, we are cutting you this year and next year we will cut somebody else. So now those departments are going to be in even tighter shape going forward. I guess you might want to look somewhere – I wouldn't lead with it as a card going into the budget that we could cut here and cut here. I would start with...this is what our original plan had been...to have this - this and this – the things that you wanted and make that point and then say but I think we can survive on what we have but realize that they may ask you to cut. I would lead with this is what we wanted but we made the cut already, don't start where you want to end up
- Aldrich Yes
- Skellie I think because it is such a really small total amount in the budget and fortunately for Soil & Water the county isn't your only source of income, so I think they would leave you alone, especially if you are saying we know things are tough and we are just going to try to hold right where we are status quo
- Aldrich Yes
- Sheehan That would be great if they just maintained us
- Aldrich Yes, that is kind of what our game plan is. We are not going to ask for more, but we would like to stay the same. We can come up with some figures if they want to cut us 10% too
- Skellie Like Cassie says – don't offer it out there, if they come back and say you need to
- Fedler You want to be prepared if that happens – none of us what that to happen, but if it does – you want to be the one saying this is where we cut it. I always have a problem with that when they come in when they don't run a department and they want to start making changes because they think it works. It is better to have your contingency plan yourself
- Skellie Believe me you are talking to two people who have both chaired the DPW and that's a big target and right now we are trying to keep the superintendent calmed down – they are hitting her from all sides
- Fedler It is ridiculous, it really its fair – they just go right after everything

Rieger Okay – it could be a gloom and doom

Skellie So a phone call meeting next month

Rieger I would think

Aldrich Historically we haven't had a board meeting in August because of the fair but maybe we have another phone call meeting in August, or we decide in July

Skellie I think we can decide in July

Rieger I would think that we should be planning budgetary things in July without a doubt and when we get into August if we need it, we can have it, if we don't, we don't need to have it. So, planning on July -Jay and Cassie do you have a date that is good for you

Fedler I don't know what night Jay's meeting is, but the 13th is out for me. If you want to go to the next week, I can do it any night the next week

Skellie That would probably work for me too

Fedler The 20th, how's the 20th at 7:30

Rieger Jay are you okay with that

Skellie That will work for me as far as I know

Rieger Are you okay with that our esteem Treasurer

Ziehm I am okay with that, so we will plan on 7:30 pm on Monday, July 20th

Fedler Yes

Rieger Sounds like a wonderful plan. Okay can we go around the room one more time and see if there is anything else, we have missed. Corrina

Aldrich I hope it rains on Wednesday

Rieger Lori do you have anything

Sheehan No I am all set – thank you

Rieger Ok, Mr. Jay

Skellie I think I am all good – thank you

Fedler I'm fine – thank you

Rieger And last and certainly not least – Kate

Ziehm I'm okay

Rieger With that I will entertain a motion to adjourn
Fedler So moved
Ziehm Second
Rieger We have a motion, we have a second, all those in favor
Directors I
Rieger Opposed. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 8:08 pm

(The next Board meeting will be held on July 20, 2020 at 7:30 p.m. via conference call.)

(Motion by Fedler/Ziehm to adjourn the meeting at 8:08 p.m. Unanimously carried.)

Lori Sheehan, Secretary

Director

Reports Attached: *May Treasurer Report, District Technician Reports, NYS-SWCC Report*