

St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District
1942 Old DeKalb Road, Canton, NY 13617
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES
For August 19, 2010, 7:30 PM

Board Members Present: Robert Andrews, Jr. (Chairperson), Ed Hadlock (Vice-Chair), Clark Decker, Tom Grow, Ben Stauffer, and Fred Morrill (Treasurer) at 7:40.

Board Members Absent: Tom Nichols

Staff Present: Raeanne Dulanski (Secretary).

Guests Present: Marilyn Stephenson, NRCS ASTC-FO

I. Call to Order

II. Minutes of the Previous Meeting: July minutes were **approved**.

III. Treasurer's Reports: July Treasurer's reports were **approved**.

- A. Additional funds received this week reported by Dulanski were the NRCS WHIP Contribution Agreement payment and the initial 25% of the Willaig grant.

IV. Reports

A. NRCS – Marilyn Stephenson

1. Jim Pullano is on annual leave this week.
2. Stephenson reported that Astor Boozer, NRCS State Conservationist, has decided to delay Pullano's reassignment as part of the new WRP team and he will remain the DC in Canton when he returns from annual leave.
3. Anne Marie Ziros and Joe Wetzstein, Soil Conservationist, from Plattsburg have been sharing the responsibility of Acting DC this week.
4. There were no temporary detail respondents. The vacancy announcement has been released and is posted on USAJobs.gov. Stephenson provided the Board with a copy of the job announcement. The close date is September 2nd.
5. Stephenson asked for any general comments or concerns that the Board may have about filling of this position.
 - a. Andrews asked what the procedure for filling this position will be.
 - i. Stephenson responded that the process has changed in the last few years due to the new privacy and freedom of information laws. All applicants will apply online. Human Resources will screen those applicants for all people that meet the requirements. The applicants that have met the requirements will be forwarded to the recommending officer; in this case it will be Stephenson, who further reviews the applicants looking at qualifications, experience, calling references, etc. The recommending officer (Stephenson) will then forward their recommendation to the selecting officer (Boozer), who will have the final say in the hiring of the position.

- b. Andrews stated the fact that St. Lawrence County is a pay grade twelve; one concern is that there may be an applicant only interested in coming to St. Lawrence County to get their “high three” before retirement and with the workload here, he does not want a “slacker”.
 - i. Stephenson ensured the Board that she is looking for someone that will take advantage of all Farm Bill programs. She will be reviewing what they have done in the past and she does like to call references.

Morrill entered meeting

- c. The Board had prepared a letter regarding the qualities that they would like concerns while the vacant DC position was being filled. The concerns and comments that they expressed to Stephenson were contained in that letter. The Board signed the letter and presented it to Stephenson.
 - d. Andrews stated that he and Hadlock have had some experience with hiring for SWCD. It has been their experience that people that want to be in and stay in St. Lawrence County do the best quality work.
 - e. Decker added that the people from St. Lawrence County are willing to dedicated time here. The applicant should have a background in the vastness of the County. Decker expressed the desire of someone that has NRCS experience, so the new DC does not have to learn the procedures of a field office.
 - i. Stephenson stated that job announcement went out to all NRCS nationwide and also on the website for anyone that meets the requirements in the announcement.
 - f. Stauffer asked what type of position is it. Can a minimum term be set?
 - i. Stephenson said that it is regular, permanent, full time position.
 - g. Morrill thanked Stephenson for giving the Board an opportunity to discuss their concerns with the filling of the DC position. Morrill also stated that if there was anything else that the Board can do or if she needs additional input to please feel free to call us.
6. Stephenson stated that when the position has been filled and Pullano is reassigned to the WRP team, he will continue to be located in Canton; in fact he will still have the same office.
7. Stephenson reported that there is still money available for WHIP. There will probably be another signup. When Howard returns from leave, discussion on additional WHIP work will be taking place. Andrews stated the SWCD’s concern over the short time frame that was associated with the last WHIP Contribution Agreement; he felt a long time frame would have resulted in additional interest. Stephenson stated that she had no control over the time frame, since it was a National Headquarter driven deadline.
8. Stephenson passed out a copy of the current Operational Agreement.
- a. When this was developed, Howard was able to reduce the amount of square footage that the District needed resulting in a decrease in the amount that was “owed” for rent.
 - b. The last page of the agreement was what the District would do to “pay” for this year’s rent.
 - c. Stephenson has been apprised by Pullano and Howard that the preference for the Board this year would be to cut a check and pay the rent. This is an option; however Stephenson wanted the Board to know that the NRCS does not want the District to feel that they have to cut a check. The

- NRCS would like the District to consider continuing to do in-kind work; which the NRCS prefers when a District is capable to do the work. Pullano's current workload provides work that the District can do.
- d. Decker asked what the rate for secretarial work for Administrative support will be.
 - i. Stephenson stated that staff space for one person has been provided in exchange of Administrative support that the District provides.
 - e. If the Board decides to provide in-kind work instead of paying cash, she will work with Pullano and Howard to come up with a list of in-kind work. She would like to continue to handle the Operational Agreement this way, however if the Board decides after discussions that they would like to pay with cash, please send something in writing.
 - f. Dulanski asked if the Board decided to pay, when would the check be due? Stephenson stated January 1st of the next calendar year.
 - g. Andrews stated that he likes the stability of paying the rent and having it done with. Then if work comes up, doing a Contribution Agreement to complete the task.
 - h. Stephenson stated that there is a large workload here and people have been helping, it is a challenge not to have more staff, however it is not from a lack of asking. When there is only one person in the office only so much can be asked of that person.
 - i. There is time to work on this agreement.
9. Stephenson reported that the NRCS organization structure has changed. There are no longer watershed teams; NRCS has gone back to having Area boundaries.

B. NYACD – Decker

1. Decker reported that very few resolutions were received. There is still time to submit resolutions.
2. The annual meeting will be held October 17 – 19 in Utica. Nichols, Decker, Howard and Dulanski will be attending this year's combined meeting and Administrative/Managers Conference.
3. NYACD is accepting nominations for their annual awards.

C. AFPB – Andrews

1. USGA has been on Andrew's farm to pull water samples as part of their study this year. He wanted to make sure that Stephenson was aware that this was going on in the County.
2. AFPB Farm Tour will be tomorrow. 38 people will be attending; this includes Stephenson, Hadlock and Grow. He believes that the results of their community meetings will be available at the tour.
3. Cooperative Extension and Farm Bureau will be helping AFPB with some of the issues that were brought forward from the community meetings.
4. In response to the Massena ag issue, AFPB has sent a letter to the people involved that they will be willing to mediate for them if they would like to get together and talk about their issues.
5. The ag plastic baler will delivered to St. Lawrence County soon. It will be unloaded off the trailer at Leberge and Curtis with their loading ramp. RAPP now has three organizations interested in purchasing baled plastic.
6. Morrill reported that the NYSAC's Blue Ribbon task force had their first meeting. They are strong supporters of agriculture in NYS. NYSAC have a magazine and

the next issue is going to have an ag focus and they are looking for articles. Morrill is going to try and write an article on ag in St. Lawrence County.

7. Decker stated that he feels that Matilda Larson of SLC Planning Office is doing a wonderful job for AFPB. All the information that he received on the Ag Tour has been very nice. Andrews agreed that Larson does a wonderful job.

V. SWCD Reports

A. Manager's Report – Dulanski for Howard (Appendix A)

1. *Motion to save money on Dulanski's attendance at the NYACD meeting /Admin/Manager Conference by staying at a different hotel and commuting in for the classes* **Approved.**
2. *Motion recognizing the Executive Boards approval to open the NYS NPS Round 15 Willaig grant bank account* **Approved.**
3. *Motion to have Morrill sign the bank's form to increase the District's additional insurance on the bank accounts to \$525,000* **Approved.**
4. Morrill state that Howard did an outstanding job at the Board of Legislator's meeting presentation about the Massena ag issue.

VI. Old and New Business

- ### A. Brain Storming Session - *Motion to put together a subcommittee to discuss the future direction of the District and hold conversations with staff members about ideas and suggestions* **Approved.** Decker, Andrews and Stauffer volunteered to be on the subcommittee.

VII. Correspondence: Black River-St. Lawrence RC&D Project Updates: July 2010, and DEC Clean Sweep NY information available for Board review.

VIII. Announcements: None.

IX. Time and Date of Next Meeting: October 16, 2010, 7:30 PM at the SWCD Office.

X. Meeting Adjourned: 9:40 PM

Robert Andrews, Jr., Chairperson

Date

Raeanne Dulanski, Secretary/ Assistant Treasurer

Date

Attachments: Appendices A