

ST. LAWRENCE COUNTY
AGRICULTURAL AND FARMLAND PROTECTION BOARD

Courthouse, 48 Court Street,
Canton, New York 13617-1169
(315) 379-2292
www.slc farms.com



DRAFT MEETING MINUTES

Wednesday, November 4, 2009, 7:30 PM

County Courthouse, Room 226 A and B, 48 Court Street, Canton, New York

I. Call to Order

- (a). **Roll Call and Determination of a Quorum.** Andrews called the meeting to order at 7:32 PM. **Members present:** Robert Andrews, David Fisher, Jon Greenwood, Dan Martin, Jane Powers, Allyn Tubbs, and Keith Zimmerman. **Members absent:** Kevin Bresett, Clive Chambers, Dan Girard, and Steve McKnight. **Staff present:** Betsy Hodge, Matilda Larson and Kevin Mace. **Others present:** Robert Wilson and Scott Shipley.
- (b). **Adoption of the Agenda.** Due to time constraints, Andrews suggested Betsy Hodge's update on the Board's ag initiatives be delivered following Scott Shipley's presentation. The modified November 4, 2009 meeting agenda was adopted by consensus.
- (c). **Approval of the Minutes.** The August 9, 2009 meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

II. Presentations

Scott Shipley introduced himself and said he wanted to discuss the advantages of installing solar systems for on-site power consumption, and obtain feedback from farmers about the financial feasibility of installing solar panels on farm barns. Shipley explained he has been installing solar panels throughout the North Country for the last eight years, and discussed the advantages of solar versus wind systems for on-site power consumption. Shipley reviewed costs for installing solar panels with and without credits, and financial incentives through USDA's REAP program. Shipley also explained the differences between time-of-use meters, peak power rates, and 3-phase power rates. Fischer about the weight distribution of a solar system on a barn roof; Martin calculated the weight to be approximately 3 pounds per square foot. Fischer asked why Shipley's solar systems didn't include on-site storage. Shipley replied the existing grid serves as the storage system, and explained solar panels generate the most energy during the summer months, and would be used on-site rather than transferred to the grid, because the farm's demand for electricity is at its highest in the summer time. Wilson asked Shipley if there is a financial gain to farmers who install solar systems. Shipley replied with the

decreasing cost for solar panels, solar systems can be a cost-effective source for electricity over the long term. At the conclusion of his presentation, Shipley left business cards with staff.

III. Business Items

- (a). **August 24, 2009 Farm Tour.** Both Greenwood and Andrews said they spoke with Poulin Grain representatives about the upcoming tour, and discussed information the presenters will share with tour attendees. Bordeaux has also committed to being present. Information to be presented will include the: Businesses' service area, number of employees, and the use of rail lines. Burns Trucking will discuss the number of trucks used, number of employees, and its shipping area. Chambers asked if the tour will discuss the current milk crisis. Greenwood recommended the tour acknowledge the industry is going through difficult times, but emphasize why these businesses moved to the area. The tour shouldn't give the impression that Legislators shouldn't invest in a dying industry. Zimmerman added the tour should discuss beyond traditional business practices; it should emphasize the volume of economic activity and its importance to the county. When county legislators ask what the County can do to help the industry, suggestions included addressing property taxes, and establishing and maintaining infrastructure.

IV. Reports

V. Reports

- (a). **Board of Legislators.** Girard was not present to deliver a report.
- (b). **Soil and Water Conservation District.** Andrews reported the Soil and Water Conservation District will remain in the USDA office building. NYS Conservationist Aster Booser recently met with SWCD, and the NRCS will cover their rent. Funds are available for drainage projects, and staff will travel to New Jersey for swamp mediation training. The SWCD is also awaiting State grant money for backed-logged funds. Andrews said the County Real Property Office has scheduled an ag value assessments presentation this coming January.
- (c). **FY2010 Budget Request.** Andrews reported members of the Ag Board met on July 22nd to develop a budget proposal for the Board of Legislators. Larson provided an overview of the budget request. Wilson asked if the budget is still useful if the County only allocates half of the Ag Board's request. Zimmerman replied the Ag Board will take what it can get. Andrews discussed previous community meetings conducted by the Ag Board and a sticky-dot vote. Fisher replied 90% of meeting participants were

government and agribusiness participants, and suggested improving the Ag Board's outreach element to farmers. It was noted that at the budget meeting, Girard suggested pursuing the County's casino revenue compact money to help establish a kill floor and certified kitchen in the county. Wilson said he knows a Madrid farmer who will donate land for a kill floor.

Wilson asked for follow-up on communicating with Scozzafava's office to reduce the Department of Ag and Market's threshold to qualify for agricultural valuations. Zimmerman reported contacting her office, and her staff said they would look into it. It was noted that Scozzafava may attend the ag tour. When asked, Buchanan reported the Come Farm With Us program helped two farmers relocate to the county. Wilson noted last year's funds averaged \$2,000 per relocated farmer. Wilson said he was happy with the development of this year's budget. Martin asked to be excused and left the meeting at 8:43 pm.

- (d). **NE SARE Grant Update.** Buchanan said a direct mailing was sent to the waiting list informing farmers of the recycling grant, advertised the project in local publications, and displayed recycled bales of plastic at the County Fair. The kick off meeting was scheduled during one of the few days of good weather this summer. As a result, no one attended the meeting. The Tri-County RAPP will continue as it received funding from the DEC to acquire a baler. The SARE project will coordinate more on farm demonstrations with the Tri-County project. When asked, Buchanan said manufacturing the new baler will take 60 days from placing the order in Georgia, and is anticipated to arrive in the fall. Wilson suggested a collection point in Morristown that is used for other collections. A discussion followed about potential markets for the recycled plastics. Comments were also made about the problems with the current configuration of the top-down baler.
- (e). **Annual Agricultural Review.** Larson delivered an overview of this year's report, and said TeRiele's request was removed as his parcels were added to Agricultural District 2 in the 1990's.

VI. Other Items

- (a). **Next Meeting.** The next Ag and Farmland Protection Board meeting is scheduled for Thursday, November 5, 2009 at 7:30 pm in room 226 A and B of the County Courthouse.

VII. Adjournment. The meeting adjourned by consensus at 9:41 pm.

Respectfully submitted,

Matilda Larson

P:\PLANNING\Ag & Farmland\Meetings\2009 Meetings\D - November 4, 2009\AFPB Minutes 11.04.09.doc