

St. Lawrence County  
Soil and Water Conservation District

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

For

January 17, 2008

Board Members Present: Robert G. Andrews, Jr., Edwin Hadlock, David Martin, Frederick Morrill, Clark Decker, Mary Rutley and Thomas Nichols arriving at 7:46.

Staff Present: Dawn Howard, Katie Maloney, Raeanne Dulanski and James Pullano, NRCS

Robert Andrews, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:35 PM.

*Fred Morrill made a motion to accept the minutes of November 15, 2007 meeting as written. David Martin seconded the motion and all were in favor.*

*Dave Martin made a motion to accept the Treasurer's Reports for November and December 2007. Fred Morrill seconded the motion and all were in favor.*

**Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – James Pullano**

- Jim reported that EQIP sign-up has ended and there were 25 applicants with half applying under the Forestry Focus Area. It is not anticipated that many applications will be pre-approved for funding because the NRCS is seeking “high” quality projects with identified resource concerns. It is the responsibility of field office staff to identify resource concerns and ensure the projects are high quality. Criteria should be consistent and quality assured across county boundaries within the entire watershed. Thus-far, the majority of applications received in St. Lawrence County have had minimal resource concerns identified and are considered a “Low” priority or will not rank high enough to be pre-approved for funding. Additionally, the lack of TSP’s operating in St. Lawrence County limits the number of individuals applying under the Livestock Focus Area because the CNMP requirement cannot be met.
- NRCS's budget has been extended until March 15. There are no programs other than EQIP with a budget at this time.
- Starting January 22<sup>nd</sup>, Marilyn Stephenson from the Albany Area Office will be the St. Lawrence/Lake Champlain Watershed Team Leader.
- Kent Frary has been appointed Acting DC in the Malone Field Office until early March. The DC vacancy in Malone has been advertised.

**Organizational Meeting**

- The Board agreed the meeting night would continue to be the third Thursday of the month. The months that the Board will meet are February, March, May, July, September, October, and November at 7:30 PM.
  - *Fred Morrill made a motion to accept the meeting night. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.*

- Personnel Policy – Currently the District is using the June '04 version. Dawn Howard will finish her review and then the Board will review the new personnel policy.
  - *Tom Nichols made the motion to continue to use the June '04 Personnel Policy until the review of the new policy has been completed. Clark Decker seconded the motion and all were in favor.*
- *Dave Martin made the motion to continue to use the current Investment Policy. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.*
- A new Procurement Policy was discussed. The new policy did not change the amounts or processes, but the format and language.
  - *Fred Morrill made a motion to accept the new Procurement Policy. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.*
- Currently the official bank for SWCD is Community Bank.
  - *Tom Nichols made a motion to accept the official bank as Community Bank, N.A. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.*
- The official newspapers are to be the same as the county. For 2008 these are the Ogdensburg Journal and the Advance News.
  - *Thomas Nichols made a motion to accept. Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*
- Dawn Howard's current authorization to pay bills includes: payroll, postage, telephone, tree programs, fish programs, fuel, and health insurance, as well as up to \$250 for grants, WQCC, and equipment, etc.
  - *Tom Nichols made the motion to continue to authorize Dawn Howard for the listed items. Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*
- Board elections
  - *Fred Morrill nominated Robert Andrews, Jr. to continue as Chairman. Robert Andrews, Jr. accepted, Tom Nichols seconded and all were in favor*
  - *Fred Morrill nominated Edwin Hadlock to continue as Vice-chairman. Edwin Hadlock accepted, Tom Nichols seconded and all were in favor.*
- The Board decided to continue to use the IRS mileage rate (which changed from 48.5 cents to 50.5 cents) and a per diem of \$20.
  - *Thomas Nichols made a motion to accept these rates, Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*

*Robert Andrews, Jr. made a motion to go into Executive Session at 8 P.M.*

*The Board left Executive Session at 8:15 P.M.*

Mary Rutley's personal and family health situation was discussed and the board has decided that they will support Mary over the next few months. Mary may miss the next few meetings, and the Board accepts any absences during these months as excused.

- Board elections were finished.
  - *Clark Decker nominated Dave Martin as Treasurer. Dave accepted, Edwin Hadlock seconded and all were in favor.*

**Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD) – Dawn Howard (In addition to written report)**

- Forestry Report – Aaron Earl was not able to attend, Dawn Howard gave Aaron's report.
  - Sale on the new County sand and gravel pit will be inventoried by Aaron and put up for sale in cooperation with Bill Dashnaw at the Highway Department.

- Sale # 2 – 2007 is waiting for a freeze before harvesting starts. Located on Lake Ozonia Rd, Area # 23.
  - Sale # 1 – 2008 is tallied and in the hands of the Purchasing Office. This is Area # 9, Town of Parishville, County Route 58 and Russell Turnpike. 218 mbf.
  - Sale # 2 – 2008 will likely be within Area # 11 in Stockholm, on the Sheldon Rd. Scotch Pine market has picked up and we will take advantage of that modest gain to open up some of our plantations for new growth.
    - Discussion was held on market prices.
  - Aaron had a luncheon with Professor John Rosales, PhD of St. Lawrence University. He may have two to three college level interns, seniors, for one eight-hour day every other week for five weeks. They would be practicing inventory, stand marking, boundary maintenance and other associated activities for their environmental course. The exact schedule is tentative, but Professor Rosales wants to make their time as valuable to the District as it is to the students.
    - Discussion was held on the interns. They will not be paid and the college will cover any liabilities. The Board was pleased with the idea of college senior interns.
  - Aaron has started working on Ag Value Assessments.
  - Forest Management Plans are 40% completed. Inventory is at 80% completion.
  - Aaron has also started studying for the Certified Forester Exam, and will take the test as soon as it can be scheduled.
- Technician Report – Katie Maloney, District Technician gave her report.
    - Bagged and shipped 214 soil samples to lab for analysis out of 264 total samples taken. Waiting on three producer's payments to ship the rest of the soil samples.
    - Analyses have been returned from the lab and Katie has been entering that data into Cropware software along with other information for NMP development.
    - Of the 19 plans in the AEM to EQIP Too grant, Katie has completed two NMPs and one farmer has cancelled his contract.
    - Currently working on meeting with remaining 16 producers, collecting information and developing their Nutrient Management Plans
    - Rough calculation for the amount of time that a plan takes to be completed after soil analysis has been returned:
      - 40-50 hrs per plan on average.
      - Will take about 16 weeks to complete. Katie hopes to be quicker so that the Nutrient Management Plans can be distributed in the spring so the information can be utilized for the upcoming planting season.
        - Discussion was held on how important Nutrient Management Plans are now that fertilizer prices are extremely high.
        - Discussion on how much time Katie has in on the Plans. Can we get an Assistant Technician for Katie?
        - Discussion on the future NRCS rent agreement that will need to be worked out. Can we go beyond the rent, do more and end up having NRCS pay the District?

**NYACD** – Tom Nichols reported:

- The Board of Directors for the State Association met Sunday, January 13 and Monday, January 14. Tom spoke with Ron Alvarado, NYS NRCS SC, and Ron told Tom that he had signed off and that NRCS will be filling the open technician position in the Canton field office.

- Tom thinks that Dawn and the Board should work together and figure out what role an Assistant Technician would have at the District, then give Dawn the authority to post the position as soon as we are in a financial situation that would support this.
- Tom reported that NRCS is still closing some offices that were previously discussed.
- Tom stated that he will work with NRCS and SWCDs and get practical training that is more convenient for the Districts, so that we can get the most money out of the new State Performance Measure requirements. He would also like to hold several Division meetings a year and have training at them so that they would meet two of the State requirements in one shot. This would lead to lots of Division participation and meetings with lots of discussion and maximum funding.
- Tom learned that NRCS must account for all computers tapped into their system. It is costing a lot of money to have all those computers licensed. NRCS's goal is to get each office down to 1.1 computers per each NRCS staff member. They are updating the computer system to decrease the number of computers that are listed on the system, but are not actually there. Part of the plan is to start charging the Districts \$3,100/yr to have each of our computers on the NRCS system to help cover the licensing and technical support costs. NRCS's staff is going to have to justify keeping any computers that put them over the 1.1 computer per employee limit in order to keep them.
  - Discussion was had on how expensive the cost per computer is and is it really worth it? How good is their technical support?
- Operational Agreements - Tom told the committee to get ahold of Dawn and to set something up so that St. Lawrence County can be used as a trial county. This will help, because then SLC is involved in setting up the system that will be used when Districts are charged for rent.
- Summer is the timeline for closing the NRCS offices. RD is already moving ahead and closing offices. FSA has legislation that is preventing them from allowing any office closing until the Farm Bill has passed and then it may not happen.
- Chandra Lindsey will start as RC&D Coordinator on February 1.
- NRCS is still working on the watershed areas. They may go to seven areas because the areas are getting too big.
- Tom will be going to Reno in February for the NACD annual meeting.
- Tom will also be attending Legislative Day.
- There will be a Division 3 meeting and Tom's Division 3 representative position will be filled.
- Tom will be a member the Governor's task force for Invasives. He hopes to get information that will help Black Lake and the St. Lawrence River.
- Tom is also going to be meeting with the Commissioner of DEC. He plans on discussing the following points with him:
  - CAFO, hard for farmers
  - Manure Pits, holes
  - Invasives Species
  - Stormwater, getting \$6.2 million out the Environmental Protection Fund and on its own, so that money can be used for Stormwater and not be touched by politicians at budget time.

#### **SWCD – Report continued**

- Secretary Report – Raeanne Dulanski gave her report.
  - Annual Reports are coming along well. The financial parts have been completed and made available for the Board to review.

- District Tree program has been mailed out. Raeanne updated the sales booklet as, well as the mailing list and was able to save the District about \$300 on this years mailing cost.
- Raeanne has been learning and completing most Ag Values.
- First Farm Safety Day Committee meeting has been set.
- Raeanne presented one account that needed to be deemed uncollectible. Donald Green owes \$10 for two maps from April 2007.
  - *Fred Morrill made a motion to deem Donald Green's account for \$10 as uncollectible. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.*
  - Further credit is not to be extended to Donald Green.
- Manager Report – Dawn Howard
  - *Tom Nichols made a motion to authorize Dawn to close the St. Regis grant. Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*
  - *Ed Hadlock made a motion to authorize a \$150 payment to the American Tree Farm System. Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*
  - Dawn reported that the private land DEC Forester position has been filled. The name has not been released yet.
  - *Tom Nichols made a motion to pay NYACD dues, Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*
  - NYACD Legislative Day was discussed. Tom Nichols will be attending for NYACD. Ed said that it is a wonderful experience and he has been able to go in the past and would be pleased to go or allow someone else to go. Clark said that he was interested in going and will let the District know Friday morning if he can go. It was decided that anyone that wanted to go should be allowed to go.
    - *Tom Nichols made a motion for the District to pay for all Board of Director members that would like to go and for Dawn Howard to go to Legislative Day. Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*
  - *Tom Nichols made a motion to pay for all four District employees to attend the Water Quality Symposium in Auburn. Mary Rutley seconded and all were in favor.*
  - *Tom Nichols made a motion to authorize up to two people from WQCC to attend the Water Quality Symposium using funds from the WQCC account. Mary Rutley seconded and all were in favor.*
  - *Fred Morrill made a motion to pay for all fees associated with Raeanne Dulanski obtaining her Notary Public. Ed Hadlock seconded and all were in favor.*
  - Discussion was held on Fish Program fish delivery. The hatchery was willing to build a fish box for the District for no more then \$100. They will be willing to deliver the Grass Carp in the spring for \$100. The Board decided to have the fish delivered and pay the \$100 delivery charge.
  - Karen St. Hilaire has requested each Department set goals that they would like to achieve in 2008. Dawn asked the Board for their input on goals.
    - Work out Operational Agreement with NRCS.
    - Keep AEM to EQIP money coming into the County.
    - Research an additional employee.
    - Have Katie complete her Stormwater Certification.
    - Completing the County Forestry Inventory and Plans.
    - Maximize State reimbursement funds.
    - Continue to bring 55:1 ratio of funds to County for funds received.
  - RAC - no word on grants.
  - Fort Drum Meeting – Robert Andrews reported.

- Tom Nichols thinks that the businesses moving into the areas around Drum are going to hurt locals. Locals are not going to be able to get jobs, preference is going to go to the spouses' of Army people, and many of these have more education.
    - Robert discussed the increase rent and land values around that area.
  - Robert Andrews also reported that the Ag & Farmland Protection Board contacted Matt Brower of Ag & Markets, the Hammond windmill people and Morristown windmill people. Matt did a presentation for the group and it was very good. Matt is willing to do another presentation. Discussion on wind farms was held.
  - Robert Andrews and Dawn Howard need to do financial disclosures when the County has the new form available.
  - Dawn Howard's vacation starts Saturday, January 19.

## **Old and New Business**

- Annual Plan of Work
  - *Clark Decker made a motion to accept the Annual Plan of Work. Tom Nichols seconded and all were in favor.*
- Annual Reports
  - Raeanne Dulanski has completed the financial portions of the reports.
  - Dawn Howard is still working on moving our numbers from our Technical Assistants format of report to the Annual Report's format.
    - *Tom Nichols made a motion to approve Mary Rutley and Robert Andrews to sign the Annual Reports. Dave Martin seconded and all were in favor.*
- RC&D Representative
  - Currently there is no SWCD or BOL alternates.
  - With the coordinator position at RC&D being filled, the Board agreed to wait until after the next meeting to see what direction RC&D will be heading before filling the positions.
  - Currently our two representatives are going and they are Chair people on two out of the three committees that RC&D has.

*Robert Andrews, Jr. made a motion to go into Executive Session at 10 P.M. to discuss Dawn Howard's performance evaluation.*

*Board left Executive Session at 10:35 P.M.*

*Dave Martin made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:36 P.M. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.*

**Next meeting is February 21, 2008 at 7:30 PM at the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District office.**

**Respectfully submitted,**

Raeanne Dulanski  
Secretary/Assistant Treasurer