

Draft

St. Lawrence County
Soil and Water Conservation District

BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING MINUTES

For
July 17, 2008

Board Members Present: Robert G. Andrews, Jr., David Martin, Frederick Morrill, Clark Decker, and Thomas Nichols arriving at 7:48 PM.

Staff and Guests Present: Dawn Howard, Katie Maloney, Raeanne Dulanski, Aaron Earl, James Pullano, NRCS.

Robert Andrews, Jr. called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM at the Soil and Water Conservation District office.

Fred Morrill made a motion to accept the minutes as written. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.

Dave Martin made a motion to accept the June Treasurer Report. Clark Decker seconded and all were in favor.

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

- A hearing on the proposed changes to DEC Opening Burning Regulations is scheduled to take place on August 5, 2008 at SUNY Canton.
- A hearing on the proposed St. Lawrence County Ethics Policy is scheduled for August 13, 2008.
 - Discussion on the County's proposed Ethics Policy.
 - No changes have been formally adopted.
 - Discussion on the open burning ban.
 - The consensus of the Board was that they are against the Open Burning Law as written. They are against the burning of non-organic material; however feel that it is against the rights of rural landowners to put a ban on the burning of organic materials.
 - *Tom Nichols made a motion to give Chairman Robert Andrews approval to sign a letter to the DEC stating the Board position against the Open Burning Law as written. Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*
- Forestry Report – Aaron Earl, District Forester
 - Aaron has continued assessing storm damage. There is nothing as bad as Area # 33.
 - Aaron has completed the sale for Area # 33 and it is out to bid. He has a few more sales to put together for storm damage areas.

- The new chainsaw was shown to the Board. It is not the chainsaw that was reported in the manager's report. He decided on a STIHL 290. Aaron was able to stay on budget with this purchase.
- Technician Report – Katie Maloney, District Technician
 - NRCS Conservation Planner Certification - Katie has completed the second of three plans. The first plan has been approved. She has started work on the third plan.
 - AEM to EQIP – Katie finished the last plan for this grant today. The grant ending date is August 31st.
 - Stormwater – Katie attended a DEC Division of Water training session at Fort Drum on June 24th.
 - AEM Strategic Plan – Katie and Dawn attended a meeting in Albany on July 16 about a new 5-year plan.
- Secretary Report – Raeanne Dulanski
 - Raeanne Dulanski reported that she has been keeping busy working on the Budget and helping Jim Pullano with PII information.
 - Raeanne Dulanski has started working on getting the 2008 Fish Program information together and out to the Public.
- Manager Report – Dawn Howard
 - September 25, 2008 is the proposed Water Quality DEC presentation. Tom Nichols would not be able to attend. Fred Morrill was also unsure if he would be able to attend. Robert Andrews would like to move forward with the September 25th date. Tom Nichols suggested September 30th, October 1st, or October 2nd. Dawn will contact the DEC and try to set up an alternate date.
 - Dawn has contacted two more people about being RC&D representatives. Both were not able to give up the time needed. A press release is being developed to send out to advertise for those positions.
 - Clarkson professor Bill Vitek contacted Dawn about the possibility of a 3 hour per week, one semester internship program with the District.
 - Vehicle
 - Dawn reported that the 1996 red Jeep was taken to the Highway Department for an oil change and to be looked over. The shop guys reported that repairs were needed and it was their option that the Jeep should be disposed of.
 - Dawn priced out a Ford Ranger, Ford Focus and a Chevy Impala.
 - Discussion followed about which vehicle the District should purchase.
 - *Tom Nichols made a motion to purchase the upgraded Ford Focus. Fred Morrill seconded and all were in favor.*

New York Association of Conservation Districts (NYACD) – Tom Nichols

- Tom Nichols reported that Ron Kaplewicz was pushed out of his position and into retirement by Governor Patterson. The Governor wants everyone working out of the Albany office.
- Tom Nichols is very concerned with the new Governor's approach to environmental activism.
- Mike Latham is taking over Ron Kaplewicz's position sometime, but he did not know that exact timeline.

- Tom Nichols reported that the new DEC regulations are coming direct from the Governor's office. There is going to be a ban on outside wood furnaces, both new and already installed. Tom does not believe that they have the interest of rural communities or agriculture in mind. Everything is concerning environment and air quality.
- Tom Nichols reported the State is now going to allow only one personal vehicle on State Lands to get to camps; however, no ATVs.
- Tom Nichols has a NYACD meeting the 20th in Rochester to deal with issues.
 - Robert Andrews asked Tom to take a copy of the Board's letter to the DEC about open burning to the meeting with him.
- Tom Nichols reported that the weeds in Black Lake are not as bad this year because the water levels have been higher than normal.
- There was general discussion on dam relicensing.

Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) – Jim Pullano

- Jim Pullano previously discussed a draft Plan of Work associated with the Operational Agreement with Dawn Howard. Dawn had questions and contacted Marilyn Stephenson for clarification.
- Jim Pullano distributed copies of the Final Operational Agreement and Plan of Work to the Board. Discussion of documents followed.
- Dawn Howard went over the questions and the responses that she received from Marilyn Stephenson.
 - Yes, the Forester position can have an office, unless in the future there are staffing changes and an additional NRCS person is located here.
 - No written documentation is required. Jim Pullano and Dawn Howard will meet every few months and discuss the activities that have been taking place and make sure each agency is satisfied.
 - In the next few years as the portion of the Districts rent increases, more hours of these activities are going to be required, not the addition of more activities.
 - The rate that will be used the next three years is the Round 13 grant rate which is \$25/hr.
 - The agreement is not specific to one particular person.
 - A miscellaneous item can be added to the agreement to cover anything else that may come up that is not specified in the rest of the agreement.
- The Board would like all activities of staff assistance to the NRCS be kept track of, even though documentation is not required at this time.
- *Tom Nichols made a motion, pending the approval of the County Attorney, to approve the agreement. Fred Morrill seconded.*
 - Robert Andrews asked the Board members for their opinions. This is a big decision.
 - Dave Martin said that he was very pleased with this proposal.
 - Clark Decker thought that it was very good.
 - Tom Nichols said that it is the way that it should have been since the very beginning.
 - Fred Morrill thanked Jim for demonstrating cooperation by working with Dawn and developing this proposal.
- *All were in favor of authorizing Bob Andrews to sign the agreement after the County Attorney approved it.*

General Discussion

- Robert Andrews discussed Ag Plastic recycling with the Board. The Farmland Protection Board is asking for \$1,000-\$1,500 in the budget to help with Ag Plastic Recycling in the county.

New Business

- Tom Nichols asked the Board for a donation to the Black Lake Invasive Weed Committee of money, as well as in-kind service. Discussion followed. Dave Martin said that we are already doing an in-kind donation by doing the bookkeeping for the Committee. He said if there is a particular item that comes up that Black Lake would like financial help with, then Black Lake needs to come to the Board at that time and present that item to us.
- The budget was presented to the Board. Explanations and discussion followed.

The Board went into Executive Session at 9:25 PM.

The Board came out of Executive Session at 9:50 PM.

Robert Andrews reported that the Board has decided that as of January 1, 2009 all employees will receive a \$3,000 pay increase. *The Board unanimously approved the Budget as amended.*

Next meeting is September 18, 2008 at 7:30 PM at the St. Lawrence County Soil and Water Conservation District office.

Chairman Robert Andrews adjourned the meeting at 9:55 PM

Respectfully submitted,

Raeanne Dulanski
Secretary/Assistant Treasurer

The Board of Directors has not approved these minutes.