

MINUTES
ALLEGANY COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING – April 16, 2019
District Facility, 5390 County Route 48
Belmont, N.Y.

Directors

Rod Bennett, Chair
Joe Cygan, Farm Bureau
James Wilcox, Grange
Judith Hopkins, Legislator
Karl Graves, Legislator

Staff

Scott Torrey, Exec Dir
Tiffany McCumiskey, Secretary

Cooperating Agencies

Nicole Ayers, FSA

1. **Call to Order:** 5:25 pm
2. **Minutes of March 19, 2019 Approved (Graves - Wilcox)**
3. **Financial Reports – Approved (Graves - Cygan)**
 - a. Treasurer’s Report
 - b. Abstracts
 - i. Audit Committee Report – Karl and Jim did audit for the books. They found no errors and Karl moved that the audit be accepted. **Approved (Hopkins – Cygan)**
4. **Cooperating Agency & Staff Reports**
 - a. NRCS – No Report
 - b. FSA – Report Attached
 - c. Victor DiGiacomo – Division of Land and Water Resources – Report Attached
 - d. Executive Director –
 - i. Program Updates:
 1. Round 20
 - a. No changes in the last month.
 2. Round 21
 - a. No changes in the last month.
 3. Round 24
 - a. Contract will be sent back to Albany this week.
 4. FL_LOWPA
 - a. We will have projects for approval at our April meeting.
 5. AEM
 - a. AEM Year 14 ends May 6, 2019. We will meet the 2,500 hours of AEM work needed for the full \$110,000.
 - b. We are working on the Year 14 closeout.
 6. Southern Tier Program
 - a. We are working on closeouts.
 7. Belfast River Stabilization
 - a. We met with the Army Corp and DEC at the site. We have some adjustments to make in the design and should be submitting the permit application in the next month.
 - b. We are still waiting on the contract extension for the project.

- c. We are currently about \$30,000 short on the match. WE can pull it out of next year's Part C money if we need to. DOT is still reviewing the project and whether they can provide some funding help.
- 8. CAFO Waste Storage Grant
 - a. We did not submit any applications in Round 3. The 2 farms that we had interested decided not to pursue the grant.
 - b. Ponderosa Farm is planning on constructing their storage later this summer.
- 9. West Almond Salt Storage Facility
 - a. No changes in the last month.
- 10. NRCS RCPP Funding
 - a. Waiting on approval of our plans for Jones Beef Farm.
 - b. Working on plans for Bob and Diane Foster's project.
- 11. EPA-GLRI Grant
 - a. One contract for approval tonight.
- 12. We submitted a grant application through the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program for the Van Campen Creek erosion site in Friendship. The total grant funding requested was \$89,729 with a match of \$29,909.
- 13. We submitted 3 grant applications for the Erosion and Sediment Control in the Genesee River and Finger Lakes Watershed. Two grant applications were for stabilizing streambanks where the stream is eroding away fields. The third grant application was to construct diversion ditches to control erosion in fields. Total state grant funding requested was \$30,000 with the farms contributing \$21,000.
- 14. Working with the Genesee River Watershed Coalition of Conservation Districts a grant application was submitted though the Great Lakes Sediment and Nutrient Reduction Program to perform streambank stabilization along farm fields. Allegany County's portion of the grant was \$65,000 with a landowner match of \$21,667.

ii. Technical Assistance

- 1. Travis Lot Timber cut – putting the lot out to bid will be voted on at Wednesday's Resource Management Committee meeting. The following are the quantities being sold:
 - a. Ash- 352,557 BF
 - b. Basswood- 54,852 BF
 - c. Cherry- 8,407 BF
 - d. Hard Maple- 119,738 BF
 - e. Hickory- 2,011 BF
 - f. Red Oak- 44,671 BF
 - g. Soft Maple- 24,946 BF
 - h. Totaling 607,182 BF

5. Old Business

- a. **Potential County Resolution** – There has been a discussion regarding a potential resolution that would require farm owners to pay back grant money they were awarded, if they go out of business or sell their farm. Scott stated that the farms who went out of business last year, had no intention of going out of business when they received their grant money and completed the projects. And many of them just broke even when it came to selling their farms. The purpose of our grants is to improve water quality, for everyone, and meet environmental regulations. Scott talked to the state, and they have no intentions of taking grant money back. They have no way to process the repayments and nowhere to put the funds. It was mentioned that the grant improvements would only benefit the next farmer, as it has already made necessary improvements. It was stated that it is difficult to get farms to do projects with grant funds at times because the farmer is responsible for a part of the funding, and it is difficult to come up with the co-funding. It is also difficult after building projects to afford the tax increase to their property.
- b. Karl said “It should be looked at as an investment in the land. The water quality is improved and protected, the goal, the mission is being accomplished. We want the farmer to stay there, we want the farmer be successful. That why we are doing this to begin with and you want that investment and to do anything that would make it so it would be an additional risk, there are multiple things to gamble with to begin with. I think it’s going to hurt the farmers.”
- c. Maybe the concern shouldn’t be getting the funding back, but coming up with a program or way to help the farms that are having a hard time, stay in business.
- d. Joe Cygan, representative for Farm Bureau, mentioned there are two sides, if the farmer has to pay it back, there is incentive to do your research to determine if it will be successful, the other side, a farmer may not be thinking or anticipating going out of business in a year or two, but something happens. For the farmer that goes out, how is he going to pay it back? He is out of business. Joe stated “I know the position of Farm Bureau is that they would like to see a resolution passed where the grantee is accountable for monies received.” That the grantee would have to pay the money back. Judy questioned the statement by asking, ”Let’s say you improve the land, or do some conservation measures, or whatever the grant is for, and the farmer does that, that’s not considered being accountable?” Joe agreed that the farmer would be accountable in that situation.

6. **New Business**

- a. **Truck Sale** – The Chevrolet Crew Cab has been put out for sale and we have not received any sealed bids. There was a minimum bid of \$20,000.00 put out for the truck, which was based off of the Kelly Blue Book value of trucks similar. There is a dealership interested, and Scott asked the board if they had a certain value in mind that he should be selling the truck for. The board said that they trust his judgement with whatever he decides to sell the truck for.
- b. **FL-LOWPA 17-18 – Wild Geese Farm – Heavy Use Area Protection - \$10,000.00 in funding - Approved (Graves – Hopkins)**
- c. **FL-LOWPA 17-18 – J&J Co Farm – Heavy Use Area Protection - \$10,000.00 in funding – Approved (Hopkins - Graves)**
- e. **GLRI Grant – Podunque Dairy (Sam Clark) - Diversion Ditch - \$4,800.00 in funding – Approved (Cygan – Graves)**
- f. **AEM Year 15** – AEM is transitioning from an annual program starting in May to a two-year program starting January 2020, AEM Base Year 15 is operating on a

schedule that represents two-thirds of a normal full cycle year. (May – December instead of May – May). Therefore, the funding caps are prorated two-thirds of the amount allocated for a full year in order to maintain the same rate of funding. We will be requesting the amount of \$73,000.00 which is the prorated cap of Option B, \$110,000.00. **Approved - (Graves - Cygan)**

- g. Ag District #3 8 Year Review – There are presently 160 landowners enrolling 16,668.78 acres in the district. There are 46 active farms among this group. Of the 16,668.78 acres, 11,884.11 acres are in active farm land and 8,116.45 acres are owned by farmers. 3,767.66 acres are rented from non-farm owners for cropping. This resulted in a 1,148.43 acre increase since the last review of Ag District #3. There were 44.69 acres deleted due to either parcels being split or acreage being adjusted on parcels.

6. Announcements

- i. **Next Board Meeting, May 21, 2019 at 5:30pm.**

7. Correspondence

- a. **NYACD Newsletter**

8. Adjournment - 6:27pm Approved (Graves - Hopkins)

Tiffany A. McCumiskey
Secretary to Board

Rodney Bennett
Chairman