

Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District
Monthly Meeting of Directors
June 28th, 2023
6:00 PM.
2400 Meads Hill Road
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

Attending: Tony Specchio-Chairperson
Rick Reisinger-Treasurer
Gary Gaige-Member
Jerry Verrigni-District Manager
Jessica Verrigni – Stormwater Program Technician

1. **Meeting called to order** by T. Specchio @ 6:01 PM
2. **Pledge**
3. **Minutes of May Meeting:** Gary Gaige motioned to approve the April minutes as mailed. Seconded by Rick Reisinger. All in favor. Motion carried.
4. **Treasurer's Report May:** Rick Reisinger motioned to approve the treasurer's report. Seconded by Gary Gaige. All in favor. Motion carried.
5. **Vouchers May:** Rick Reisinger motioned to approve the list of bills as presented. Seconded by Gary Gaige. All in favor. Motion carried.
6. **Old Business:**

*A. **Secretary Contract** – Jerry stated that Karen Tillotson was officially retiring from Chemung County Soil and Water and Schuyler County Soil and Water. Karen has purchased a home down in Virginia and will be moving late fall. Jerry stated that he contacted Beth Yartym that we were going to hire for payroll, payroll taxes, bank reconciliations and banking, retirement, etc... last year prior to Jerry's health issues. Beth is still interested in working with us. Jerry provided the original contract in the board packets with new dates. Jerry explained Beth would start after the 4th of July holiday. That Karen would stay on until she moved south. That Karen would train Beth in what we do and all Karen has done for us. Beth would physically see what Karen does, then Karen would physically see Beth perform the duties until over time Beth was doing the work on her own. Karen would still oversee until she leaves.*

Gary Gaige made a motion to hire Beth Yartym as stated in the contractual agreement provided. Seconded by Rick Reisinger. All in favor. Motion Carried.

7. **New Business:**

*A. **Lamoka Waneta Lake Association Meeting** - Jerry stated that he was asked by the Lamoka Waneta Lake Association board to do a virtual meeting to discuss a study they have done. Jerry said that he, Jessica, and Gary Gray attended the meeting. Jerry stated that their study simply showed where water entered the lake with some very basic information. Jerry explained that he told the folks that the information provided exists in many formats for many years. The board was interested in a planning grant. Jerry informed the board that the lakes are a TMDL watershed and at the highest level of planning. Jerry then did a presentation to show the board the work that is done by the Soil and Water District annually and would have been implemented within the watershed in the last 13 year period. The board was very thankful. Jerry stated that if they wanted to help like they seem to. That if they could generate funds for the Soil and Water District to implement projects. Similar to what was done by the Seneca lake Pure Waters folks, that would help greatly. Jerry stated the board was very receptive to the idea.*

*B. **Village of Watkins Glen Truck** – Jerry stated that while installing the primary outlet for the whiteman pond on Saylor Road, Scott Taylor from the Village of Watkins Glen to help with*

manual labor. Scott is always a great help. While on site Jerry utilized the truck to move more culvert to the outlet. When doing so the wind blew and caused a dent on the hood. Jerry told the Village that we would pay for it. Jerry also mentioned how he was floored because when he and Jessica went to get water from the hydrant at the Highway Department it was once again locked. He had to call to have it unlocked as they have had to multiple times now. He was told it would remain locked. He stated he needed a key to hydroseed. He was told he was stealing water. Jerry went in to see Ken Thurston. Ken set Jerry up with being able to get water from the town of Dix, areas of hector, and village of Burdett. Jerry also called Terry Wilcox to let him know how absurd the situation was. Terry said it is what it is. Jerry said if I don't have a key then we wont be doing the 50k plus project in the stream for the Village this year. Jerry was given a key by the end of the day. The lock has never been locked since. The water spout was given a key prior to soil and water, which seemed odd to Jerry. Not notifying a known user that a lock would be put on was less than professional.

C. Local Work Group – Jerry explained that NRCS reached out to have a local work group meeting in Tompkins County for area farms. Jerry explained that our farms now our programs when we are allowed to seek funding for them because they have to have a conservation plan through the AEM program. He explained the last two experiences with NRCS were not very good. That in one case they could have bankrupted the farm by trying to pay them over \$30,000 less then their contracted amount. That the farm luckily didn't sign the papers and that Jessica Skinner and Jerry worked with NRCS and that NRCS ended up paying the \$30,000 plus an additional \$500. Jerry explained even though never on site during construction etc... and even though the district asked to be at the closeout and onsite review they were never notified. A similar occurence happened in Chemung County. Jerry stated that he feels unless a farm absolutely needs federal funding that he has difficulty after these experiences and many others promoting NRCS programs. He stated he always makes sure farms know there are multiple sources of funding and he has always tried to pair state and federal funding for large scale projects in the past. He just simply believes that the District should provide our contact information, our annual newsletters for the local work group meeting. That farms already have a difficulty understanding the difference between agencies. The board agreed as a group with personal experiences by all on hand with NRCS in various forms that the district will provide information but doesn't need to attend the meeting.

D. Finger Lakes DEC Funding – Jerry stated there is a small pot of funding for finger lakes counties to apply for. Jerry stated that he had a project for culvert upsizing for the county that may fit the funding source. A resolution was needed to in order to apply.

Gary Gaige made the motion to submit the application for County Road 16. Seconded by Rick Reisinger. All in favor. Motion Carried.

8. **Stormwater Technician Report – Jessica V.** –Her report is in the packet and will be on file with the book of minutes. Jessica reviewed her reports highlights and showcased the busy time of year.
9. **District Manager Report -Jerry V.** – Jerry's Report was sent out with the packet and will be on file with the Book of Minutes.
10. **Adjournment** -Motion to adjourn at 7:14 by Gary Gaige and seconded by Rick Reisinger

Respectfully submitted by:

Tony Specchio, Chairman

Jerry Verrigni – District Manager