

Schuyler County Soil and Water Conservation District
Monthly Meeting of Directors
March 23rd, 2022
6:00 PM.
2400 Meads Hill Road
Watkins Glen, NY 14891

Attending: Tony Specchio-Chairperson
Jim Howell, Jr. -Legislator
Gary Gray-Legislator
Rick Reisinger-Treasurer
Gary Gaige-Member
Jerry Verrigni-District Manager
Karen Tillotson-Secretary/Asst. Treas.

1. **Meeting called to order** by T. Specchio @ 6:02 PM
2. **Pledge**
3. **Minutes of February Meeting:** G. Gray motioned to approve the February minutes as mailed. Seconded by R. Reisinger. All in favor. Motion carried.
4. **Treasurer's Report February:** R. Reisinger motioned to approve the treasurer's report for February. Seconded by G. Gray. All in favor. Motion carried.
5. **Vouchers:** R. Reisinger motioned to approve the list of bills as presented. Seconded by J. Howell. All in favor. Motion carried.
6. **Old Business:**
 - A. **Liability Resolution-** Jerry sent the resolution to the County Attorney for review. County Attorney thanked Jerry for the opportunity to review the resolution but stated that he would have to see how this might affect the County even though the District is a sub-division of the County. Jerry hasn't heard anything more at this time. Gary Gray will check on this. Not able to vote on the resolution at this time.
7. **New Business:**
 - A. **Equipment Operator II Contract (Mike Manwaring):** The contract for Equipment Operator II was in the packet. This contract is a formal contract between the District and Mike Manwaring as an equipment operator during construction season. The amount is \$1 per hour higher than the end of last year making the amount \$39.00 per hour, April 4th-November 4th. *G. Gray made a motion to approve the contract between the District and Mike Manwaring as the Equipment Operator II at \$39.00 per hour. J. Howell seconded the motion. All in favor and carried.*
 - B. **Equipment Operator (Jim Barrett):** Jim Barrett went in for a heart catharitzation that was to be an in and out procedure. However they found substantial blockages in his heart that couldn't be done with stents. Jim was sent for emergency quadruple bypass surgery in Rochester. Jim was in the hospital for almost a week but is home now and progressing really well. Jim is hoping to be released by his physicians to work later this year. Jim will always have a spot here to work even if it is just to train future operators.
 - C. **Snowmobile Pass-Thru Grant:** State Parks pays snowmobile clubs for the upkeep of the trails. 15 years ago the grant was managed by CCE. Cornell

University looked into the programs that CCE's were involved with and stated this did not fit with their programs. So for over 14 years the Soil and Water Conservation District has handled this pass through grant so the Schuyler County Clubs can participate.

The District takes in the information from the clubs, which gets sent to the state, then funding is returned to the County, and the District informs the County where to send the money. Chairman of the County Legislature has to sign off on this report as well.

Jerry discussed the three Phases involved in how this grant works.

Phase I June trails get added or amended all gps data is submitted
Phase II The clubs are given 70% of the eligible funding they can earn up front – they fill out a 3-year plan, get DOT, and DEC Sign offs– Many of the clubs the last five years have not even earned the 70% they were given up front much less the additional 30% .

Phase II In May the clubs turn in their bills and timesheets to show what funds they earned. These bills have been done the last 10 years on an online system the state provides. The club scans in all documents in a uniform format and Jerry just clicks that he has seen them. The state does the audit on eligibility. The issue when the clubs don't earn the 70% they were paid the district has to get the money owed back before the other clubs can be paid their 30%. This poses liability and extra work especially because the clubs aren't generally timely with submittals.

Jerry received an e-mail about three weeks ago informing everyone state wide that the state parks will no longer have an online system. These meanse going back to the way the program was done 15 years ago where clubs bring in receipts in shoe boxes and envelopes and it's the responsibility of the district to audit the entire program with no assistance from state parks. Jerry told the snowmobile clubs the District would no longer be involved with the program after this year due to increased liability and time for the District. This could go through a town. Jerry informed the Board that Fonda was concerned that he had not been told ahead of time. However Jerry explained Fonda was told directly about this on the very first email by Stacy Husted from the County who is the liason for the County for this program. The state has gotten many local sponsors no longer interested in doing the program and they may be forced to find some other online system similar to what they had.

The Board agreed to step away from this program.

D. District Law Training: District Law PowerPoint training presented to the Board. All Board members are in attendance. This was the Ag. and Markets provided and accepted training.

Discussion on what happens when Jerry leaves:

How does the Board go about replacing Jerry? Advertise through the State Committee.

1. Jerry stated that the District would need to hire a full-time clerk-Jerry indicated that he has to do the financial book for the grants.

2. Advertise for a technician. Reach out to other District-would be difficult for a person to come on outside of District, not knowing how the District work.
3. Reach out to Jessica Skinner. -she understands how the District works.
4. When it gets close to Jerry's retirement, an experienced person would be brought on for training/shadowing of Jerry. Jerry explained that he and his wife have a list of people that would qualify for this position.

Rick Reisinger questioned soil loss: Jerry explained that there is a formula to calculate soil loss on farms and road ditches.

Most grants require in the final report how much soil the project saved. Jerry stated that this information has been given to several watershed organizations like SWIO and Cayuga Lake IO and the people doing the Seneca Lake 9E Plan; however, they don't want to advertise all that is done they want to show that more needs to be done so they don't advertise these numbers.

Road ditches were installed for the drainage of the roads. Road ditch stabilization is an essential component of soil loss.

8. **District Manager Report -Jerry V.** – Jerry's Report was sent out with the packet and will be on file with the Book of Minutes. Jerry had nothing to add to his report.

9. **Executive Session: *A motion to adjourn the regular session was made at 7:09 PM.***

Present: Tony Specchio-Chairperson

Jim Howell, Jr. -Legislator

Gary Gray-Legislator

Rick Reisinger-Treasurer

Gary Gaige-Member

Jerry Verrigni-District Manager

10. **Adjournment** -Motion to adjourn at 8:10 by Gary Gaige and seconded by Gary Gray

Respectfully submitted by:

Tony Specchio, Chairman

Karen Tillotson- Secretary/Asst. Treas.