

Minutes
Herkimer County Soil and Water Conservation District
Herkimer County USDA Service Center
5653 State Route 5, Herkimer, NY 13350
Regular Meeting
May 8, 2018
5:00 p.m.

- I. **Call to Order:** Chairman Zaleski called the meeting to order at 4:55 p.m.

Directors Present:

Bill Zaleski, Chairman
 Bernie Peplinski, Vice-Chairman
 Peter Campione, Legislator
 Linda Coffin, Member at Large

SWCD Staff Present:

Gerry Smithson, District Manager
 Rachel Radicello, Soil and Water Resource Con.
 Katie Whitcomb, Natural Res. Conservation Technician
 Debra Michael, Secretary-Treasurer

Absent: Director Mitch Hooker

Guest: John Piseck, IDA, Executive Director

- II. **Approval of the minutes from April 10, 2018:** Motion: Moved by Director Campione, seconded by Director Coffin that the minutes of April 10, 2018 meeting be approved as written. Motion carried.

III. **Cooperating Agencies:**

- A. Abby Gulseth, NRCS District Conservationist, provided a written update.(Appendix 1)
- B. NYSSWCC: Written report provided. (Appendix 2)
- C. Herkimer County IDA: Executive Director John Piseck introduced himself and stated that he has been with IDA for 2 ½ months. He talked about his background and experience from past employment. He explained that he was attending the meeting to discuss a wetland issue at the Schuyler Industrial Park regarding an easement and monitoring on approximately 2.6 acres. He explained that if the District is interested in holding the easement and monitoring the wetland area for 10 years, that the IDA would hold all the liability insurance and that their attorney would draw up the agreement.

Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Campione that we move forward by obtaining more information about the easement/monitoring of this wetland site and that a joint meeting be held with the Army Corp of Engineers before any further action is taken. Motion carried.

IV. Treasurer's Report:

- A. Financial reports for April 2018 were presented: **Motion: Moved by Director Peplinski, seconded by Director Coffin approving the Financial Reports for April 2018. Motion carried.** (Appendix 3)
- B. Abstract #5-18: **Motion: Moved by Director Campione, seconded by Director Peplinski approving the payments on Abstract #5-18. Motion carried.** (Appendix 4)
- C. Time and Attendance Reports for Pay Periods 7, 8, 9 were reviewed and signed by Chairman Zaleski.
- D. Bank Reconciliation statements for February, March and April for all District and Grant accounts were reviewed and initialed by Vice-Chairman Peplinski.

V. District Employee Reports:

- A. Rachel Radicello, Soil and Water Resource Conservationist, presented her written report. She gave an update on the Agricultural Environmental Management (AEM) program, discussed the dollars the District was awarded for the Climate Resilient Farming program and listed the many other activities she was involved in during April. (Appendix 5)
- B. Katie Whitcomb, Natural Resource Conservation Technician, presented her written report. She reported on the recently held Envirothon, planning for Farm & Home Safety Day, and discussed other ongoing projects. (Appendix 6)
- C. Gerry Smithson, District Manager, presented his written report.
 - 1. He gave an update of Round 22 and 23 grants, and the Climate Resilient Farming program.
 - 2. Gerry reported that a resolution to participate in the CAFO Waste Storage Funding was needed.

Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, and seconded by Director Campione that a resolution to signed by Chairman Zaleski authorizing the District to participate in the CAFO Waste Storage and Transfer System Program. Motion carried.

- 3. Gerry discussed the Conservation Aide Position job description that he emailed to Directors with proposed changes and also stated that a salary range for the new position needed to be established.

Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Campione to accept the job description for Conservation Aide with the proposed changes. Motion carried.

Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Vice Chair Peplinski that the salary range for the Conservation Aide position be set at \$28,000 to \$30,000, plus full benefits. Motion carried.

Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, seconded by Director Campione to allow Gerry to spend whatever he feels is necessary for advertising to get the word out about the Conservation Aide job opening. Motion carried.

V. District Employee Reports: (Cont'd)

4. WQCC – Gerry reported that the Town of Norway project has been tabled, the County has presented 3 stream projects, and that the hydrologic study has been completed and we are waiting for final paid bills to make the final FLOWPA payment. Long-time member of the WQCC, Jessica Breiten is retiring in July and Gerry will have a cake for her at the next meeting on June 7th.
- D. A list of landowners assisted during the month of April 2018, including over 300 tree and shrub program participants was provided for review. (Appendix 8)

VI. Old Business:

- A. Scheduling the annual audit – The audit will be done following the June board meeting.

VII. New Business:

- A. FOIL Request – We have received a FOIL request. We have a FOIL policy in place and will follow that policy and the advice from Scott Fickbohm in dealing with this request. Gerry was also advised that speaking with Attorney Charlie Crandall on this issue would be helpful.
- B. Employee Evaluations – Gerry provided copies to each Director of the evaluations he had completed with District employees.

Motion: Moved by Vice Chairman Peplinski, seconded by Director Coffin to begin an Executive Session to review the employee evaluations with DM Gerry Smithson. Motion carried.

Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, second by Vice Chairman Peplinski to end the Executive Session. Motion carried.

Motion: Moved by Director Coffin, second by Vice Chairman Peplinski to award the following salary increases, effective July 1, 2018: K. Whitcomb, \$1500; R. Radicello, \$2000; and G. Smithson, \$2500. Motion carried.

Action for D. Michael is on hold pending more information.

VIII. Correspondence: All of the following correspondence was presented and acknowledged:

- A. Thank you from Bassett Healthcare for donation made in memory of Ruth Abele.
- B. NYACD Update from Blanche Hurlbutt, Executive Director.

IX. Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held on Tuesday, June 12, 2018 at 5 p.m. Annual audit with immediately follow.

- X. **Adjournment:** Motion: Moved by Director Campione, seconded by Vice Chairman Peplinski to adjourn the meeting at 6:45 pm. Motion carried.

Submitted by:

Approved by:

Debra Michael, Secretary-Treasurer
May 15, 2018

William Zaleski, Chairman
June 12, 2018

Attachments:

- Appendix 1: NRCS Report – April 2018
- Appendix 2: NYSSWCC – April 2018
- Appendix 3: Financial Reports – April 2018
- Appendix 4: Abstract of Audited Vouchers No. 5-18
- Appendix 5: Rachel Radicello, SWRC Report
- Appendix 6: Katie Whitcomb, NRCT Report
- Appendix 7: Gerry Smithson, District Manager Report
- Appendix 8: Landowner's Assisted – April 2018