

**ESSEX COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
REGULAR BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING
MINUTES
August 18th, 2022**

Meeting was called to order at 7:53 a.m. by Director Anna Reynolds at the Westport Town Hall.

Attendance: Board members - Chairman Tyler (late), Anna Reynolds, Ben Leerkes, Mike Davis;
SWCD - Alice Halloran, Lois Sayward, Daniel Berheide, Paige Lamb, Kade Gilbo, and Jacob Smith

Excused: Jim Monty

MOTION to accept the July 21st, 2022 Regular Board of Directors Meeting Minutes was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.

Correspondence – Alice passed around some correspondence from the Town of Minerva, NYACD and the Water Quality Coordinating Committee to review.

Chairman’s Update – No update.

Secretary Update (Lois) - was reviewed by the Board (Appendix 1)

MOTION to accept the August update was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.

District Manager Update (Alice) - was reviewed by the Board (Appendix 2)

MOTION to accept the August update was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.

Technician Update (Daniel) – was reviewed by the Board (Appendix 3)

MOTION to accept the August update was made by Leerkes, seconded by Reynolds, and carried.

Technician Update (Paige) - was reviewed by the Board (Appendix 4)

MOTION to accept the August update was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.

OLD BUSINESS

- **2019 Ford Escape** - \$23,900.00 was the highest bid received through Auctions International for the 2019 Ford Escape. When the district purchased the vehicle new the cost was \$24,236.00. The district has done well when selling on Auctions International.
- **Technician Position** - Two candidates were interviewed for the Technician Position. Both candidates interviewed well and were qualified for the position. **MOTION** to hire Thomas Firkins at a salary of \$30,000.00 was made by Leerkes, seconded by Reynolds, and carried.
- **Forestry Rates** - Alice was not ready to set forestry rates. The topic was tabled until September or October when she has something ready. She will check and see what Crown Point is paying for their forester and with other districts for rates.
- **NYACD Annual Training and Meeting – October 18th-20th** - Alice has registered for the annual training. **MOTION** to approve Chairman Tyler and Alice attending the annual training and meeting was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.

- **2023 Budget** – The 2023 Budget needs to be handed into the county by September 9th. A tentative budget was sent out to the board prior to the meeting to review. The budget was increased by \$45,000.00 from last year due to cost increases in health insurance, gas, retirement, etc. Alice increased the salaries to try to be more competitive. The district is projected to receive a good increase in state funding so an increase in county funding wasn't included. **MOTION** to accept the tentative budget as presented for the county was made by Leerkes, seconded by Reynolds, and carried. After a discussion it was agreed to ask the county for an additional \$10,000.00 from last years request. **MOTION** to revisit the budget and leave the \$10,000.00 county increase reflected in the areas needed in the budget was made by Reynolds, seconded by Leerkes and carried.
- **Secretary Position** - Lois will be retiring December 31st. The board directed Alice to advertise for the position in September and plan to hire at the October meeting.
- **Credit Card** - Alice would like to set up another credit card for the district with limited use. She will look for one that works best for the district and expenses will be monitored throughout the month. Her name will be added to the card.

NEW BUSINESS

- **Buffer Program** – **MOTION** to open a new Buffer grant checking account in the amount of \$4,000.00 with funding from NEIWPC LCBP, and pay back the General Fund \$1,987.73 for tree tubes and \$1,260.00 for trees was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.
- **DEC WQIP Overlook** - Received final payment in the amount of \$8,512.50 from the Overlook DEC WQIP grant. **MOTION** to pay back the General Fund \$6,937.00 loan and pay Essex SWCD Personal Services \$3,478.36 to close out the grant account was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.
- **Advertise for new truck** - Daniel recommended the district purchase a diesel truck to move the hydroseeder and no-till drill. He said the diesel would be more economical to run. After a discussion Ben felt a gas truck would be more cost effective, since the difference in price between purchasing the diesel truck would not make up for the difference in gas usage. The board also agreed the district would not deliver the no-till drill and wanted it taken out of the agreement. The farmer would have to pick up the drill themselves. **MOTION** to advertise with OGS state site for a new pickup truck was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.
- **Covid Policy** - The Covid Policy regarding paid time off needs to be clarified. Three employees in the office were recently out with Covid. **MOTION** made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis to follow the Essex County Covid Policy which gives employees a one-time paid leave of up to five days off, and carried.
- **CRF2 Boquet Mountain** - All checks have cleared with the NYS Department of Agriculture and Markets. **MOTION** to approved paying Essex SWCD \$1,716.32 for Personal Expenses and to close the CRF2 Boquet Mountain grant checking account was made by Leerkes, seconded by Reynolds, and carried.
- **Cold Brook SWBP Contract** - The Cold Brook SWBP grant contract was e-mailed out to the board to review prior to the meeting. **MOTION** to approve the NYS Agriculture and Markets Cold Brook Source Water Protection Program Contract in the amount of \$201,168.00 was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried. Ben encourages this type of program.

- **Conservation Skills** - Alice, Daniel and Paige are signed up for Conservation Skills September 26th - 29th. The NYSCDEA will reimburse the district for hotel expenses. The new technician may also want to sign up for the training.
- **AEM Round 17 - MOTION** to open a new AEM Round 17 checking account in the amount of \$35,000.00 received from NYS Agriculture & Markets was made by Reynolds, seconded by Leerkes, and carried.
- **Mussel Survey** - Alice would like to use district funding to pay for a mussel survey that needs to be completed for a dry hydrant project in Lewis. The cost of the survey should not exceed \$1,000.00. There is district funding that can be used for this purpose. **Motion** to use district funding to pay for the mussel survey up to \$1,000.00 was made by Leerkes, seconded by Reynolds, and carried.
- **Intern Extension** - There are projects to finish an intern can assist with. Alice would like to extend Olivia Sayre's position for eight weeks to work on these projects. There is still funding left in the budget to allow for this extension. **MOTION** to extend Olivia Sayre's intern position for eight more weeks was made by Leerkes, seconded by Reynolds, and carried.

OTHER

DISTRICT TREASURER

Financial reports were presented to the Directors ([Appendix 5](#))

MOTION by to accept the August report as presented was made by Leerkes, seconded by Davis, and carried.

Bills due for payment were presented to the Board for approval. ([Appendix 6](#))

MOTION to accept the August bills for approval, and pay as such was made by Leerkes, seconded by Reynolds, and carried.

COOPERATING AGENCIES

NRCS Report - No report.

NYSSWCC - No report.

MOTION to adjourn the meeting at 8:40 a.m. was made by Chairman Tyler, and carried.

Next regularly scheduled meeting - September 15th, 2022 @ 7:45 a.m. at the Westport Town Hall.

Attachments: Appendix 1 - Secretary Update (Lois)
 Appendix 2 - District Manager Update (Alice)
 Appendix 3 - Technician Update (Daniel)
 Appendix 4 - Technician Update (Paige)
 Appendix 5 - Financial Report
 Appendix 6 - Bills

Submitted by:

Lois Sayward
Secretary to the Board