

**Schenectady County Soil & Water Conservation District**  
**Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**  
**September 27, 2023**

Present: Steven Ruther, Donald Ackerman, Michael Pileggi, Sara Mae Pratt, Eric Hess,  
Nicholas Klemczak, Joe Braun, Paula Schaeffer

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The meeting was **called to order** at 10:04 am by Michael Pileggi, Vice Chairperson.

**Privilege of the Floor:** none

Michael Pileggi asked for a motion to approve the **August Meeting Minutes**.  
Motion to approve made by Donald Ackerman, seconded by Sara Mae Pratt. Motion carried.

**Financial**

Nicholas Klemczak previously emailed all the reports to the Directors for review.

Michael Pileggi asked for a motion to approve the **Treasurer's Report**.  
Sara Mae Pratt motion to approve, seconded by Eric Hess. Motion carried.

Upon his arrival, Steven Ruther asked for a motion to review and approve the **Paid Bills**.  
Sara Mae Pratt motioned to approve the paid bills, seconded by Eric Hess. Motion carried.

**New Business**

**A. Part B Project Ideas for 2024**

Nicholas asked the members to consider projects for the upcoming year from which Part B funding may appropriately be utilized. He said previous projects such as the Fehr Ave. food waste composting system, Erosion control in the preserves, Tree plantings etc. are some examples for which the funding can be used.

He mentioned setting up a large tire (farm tractors, etc.) collection and recycling program. It would give those who have no way to dispose of large tires an avenue to keep the tires out of the environment.

There is a landscape software program, to purchase, which could be set up and used as an educational tool to present a visual to municipalities and communities. It would show what various projects will look like when completed. Whatever the project, Nicholas wants it to be visible and beneficial to all.

**B. Recycling Area Assistance**

Nicholas asked the Directors for their input about indicating on our Facility Handout that customers unload their own recycling, or bring someone with them to assist with unloading.

The reason: Some of the items are too heavy for one person to unload and the Gatekeeper is asked to help. Recently, our employee pulled a muscle and injured his shoulder removing a huge television alone.

After much discussion, it was unanimously agreed *not* to put any notice in the Handout.

If items are too heavy for one person, the Gatekeeper on duty should call the office for assistance. Another employee will be called to help with the move.

### C. Approval to purchase an Air Lift Separator

Nicholas explained what the separator does: removes plastics and debris from the ground material to ready the products for use. He has seen such a unit, in another locale, in use and was advised on how well the unit works. Currently, our crew removes as much as possible of unwanted material and it is brought to the landfill. This separator will get the job done much more efficiently and save time.

It attaches to our Vermeer screener, comes with all the necessary accessories and installation is included in the total price. Schenectady County has budgeted half of the cost up-front, \$31,720. The District has Part C funds to cover the remaining half, \$31,720. Additionally, we will apply for a grant from DEC to get reimbursed, but most likely, the reimbursement will not be realized for approximately five years.

Nicholas asked for the Directors to approve the use of the Part C funds to pay for half of the separator. Steven Ruther asked for a motion to approve using the Part C funds. Donald Ackerman motioned, seconded by Eric Hess. Motion carried.

### Program Reports

(Full reports previously emailed to the Directors and are on file)

Scott Fickbohm, NYS SWCC Report electronically submitted

Nicholas Klemczak, Executive Director

Highlighted the following from his August 23<sup>rd</sup> – September 27, 2023 Report

- The grinder is still working “lite-duty” no stumps, etc. Awaiting the new grinder mid-January at which time we will catch up for the upcoming season;
- John and Randy are moving finished compost out of the field and are screening;
- Topsoil and bagged products are still selling;
- Nicholas gave a Facility tour to members of the CDEA.
  
- Trail Stewards and our Crew are continuing to make improvements on the Preserves and walkways;
- Capital Region BOCES are helping with work in the Preserves and Bike Hike Trails and offered to assist with other future projects;
- Installed split rail fence on Bike Path, replanted Lilacs for a landowner due to loss from a water line installation for the water fountain;
- Dave and Damien repaired a bridge at the Indian Kill.
  
- We did not receive the grant that SiCM applied for, but are awaiting word on another grant application and exploring alternative options;
- We are continuing to bring food waste from Zollar School to the Fehr Ave. composting site.
  
- Our Crew filled sand bags, for storage in case of emergency flooding issues for the County, using our bagging system,
- Trees have been ordered for projects: Airplane hangar, Veteran’s Memorial, ReTree & Zollar (to be reimbursed) and for a resident who’s tree was removed by the County;
- Beaver “deceiver” projects on going, working well for flood control in areas.

Joe Braun, District Technician

Joe reviewed his District Highlights including AEM Programs, Foodwaste Composting, Beaver Dam flow device and his attendance at the Conservation Skills Training in Auburn, NY.

During the Conservation Skills Training Program, Joe met with local NRCS representatives, attended two classes directly dealing in AEM and two other classes dealing with Ag related programs. He met our Soil Conservationist who will be in communication with the District.

After meeting with other training attendees, Joe said that most handle the travel expenses for food purchases by giving the employee a sum of cash to spend each day to purchase what they please. We allot a certain amount for breakfast, lunch, dinner expenses and reimburse the employee after he/she hands in the respective receipts. Not all eat breakfast or lunch and would prefer to purchase food when they wanted. Hence his request to consider a cash sum for travel expenses.

After discussion, it was decided to investigate further and vote upon the request at the October Meeting.

Correspondence

Nicholas will email information on the Administration Conference in Syracuse (November 6-7, 2023) should any Director be interested in attending. We have already met our Performance Measures for the year.

The **next meeting** is Wednesday, October 25, 2023 at the District Office beginning at 10:00 am.

Steven Ruther asked for a **motion to adjourn** at 10:55.

Donald Ackerman motioned, seconded by Michael Pileggi. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Schaeffer  
Administrative Assistant