

Schenectady County Soil & Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
October 25, 2023

Present:

Steven Ruther, Donald Ackerman, Michael Pileggi, Eric Hess, Joe Braun, Nicholas Klemczak, Paula Schaeffer

The meeting was **called to order** at 10:02 am by Steven Ruther, Chairperson.

Privilege of the Floor: none

Steven Ruther asked for a motion to approve the **September Meeting Minutes**.

Motion to approve made by Eric Hess, seconded by Michael Pileggi. Motion carried.

Financial: The Directors reviewed the Treasurer's Report

Steven Ruther asked for a motion to approve the **Treasurer's Report**.

Eric Hess motioned to approve, seconded by Michael Pileggi. Motion carried.

The Directors reviewed the Paid Bills. Steven Ruther asked for a motion to accept the report of the **Paid Bills**.

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

Nicholas Klemczak notified the Directors that the County adopted the **2024 Budget** which included the purchase of our new grinder, with delivery expected in January.

Nicholas Klemczak reminded the Directors that during our July meeting they approved a pay raise for our staff consistent with the pay raise those employees with certain job titles received at the Schenectady County DPW.

Steven Ruther asked for a motion to provide **retroactive pay** to certain compost employees who qualify, in accordance with the County's guidelines. Donald Ackerman motioned, seconded by Mike Pileggi. Carried.

New Business

Adopt 2024 Part B Project: Nicholas suggested the project funds be used for the municipal flower program we offer in the spring of each year. In the past, the District purchased annual flowers to be planted within the county, which die after the first frost. He wants to incorporate perennial flowers throughout the county which of course, will grow each year. The perennials will be native plants, will be frost resistant and will increase pollinator habitat. Some annuals will be incorporated into the gardens for variety. The planting of perennials will create a more sustainable flower program throughout our county.

Steven Ruther asked for a **motion to adopt** the 2024 Part B Project objective.

Donald Ackerman motioned, seconded by Eric Hess. Motion carried.

Adopt AEM Base Round 18 Action Plan:

Joe Braun described the Action Plan and handed out printouts of the Plan. It's a two year program supporting activities including education, outreach, program evaluation/data management, supporting the County AEM Strategic Plan. The Program provides financial reimbursement to the District for Technical Assistance provided to farms within Schenectady County by the District Technician. He has farms he is currently working on (potentially others) which qualify for the reimbursement available for work he will perform within the two-year parameter.

Project scope of work, budget and other required information will be submitted by May 1, 2024.

A Resolution will be prepared for the next meeting to review.

Steven Ruther asked for a **motion to adopt** the Plan.

Eric Hess motioned, seconded by Donald Ackerman. Motion carried.

Old Business

Air Lift Separator: Update: We were provided funding from the County to fully cover the purchase of the unit in our 2024 Budget. The County will own the unit and will prepare and submit the grant application for reimbursement.

Program Reports

(Full reports on file)

Scott Fickbohm, NYS SWCC submitted his report. Nicholas emailed it to the Board. He stated that he has submitted the Annual Plan of Work to Scott for review.

Nicholas Klemczak, Executive Director reviewed his District Report from September 27 to October 25, 2023, highlighting the following:

Compost Facility: Grinding and screening continues; RJ Valente bought more compost; Nick, John and Randy attended a free training at the Town of Bethlehem Compost Facility demonstrating food waste composting.

Preserves, County Forest & Bike/Hike Trails: BOCES members installed board walks in the Plotter Kill and painted picnic tables on the bike path; Indian Kill trail improvements; Lilac bush planting at the new water fountain sites; A resident calls regularly to report conditions on the bike path, which is very helpful!

Part B Project: Grant opportunities ongoing; Food Scrapes 360 may be used at the school for food waste pick up; Schenectady High School student will be presenting a bioassay on the finished compost from the Fehr Ave compost system.

Miscellaneous: The bare root trees we ordered for Zoller, County Airport & Re-Tree which have arrived today, we will be reimbursed by ReTree and Zoller for their trees; November 4th is the Pumpkin Smash at Schenectady High promoting composting and producing feed for a local pig farm; Nicholas met with BioFuels to discuss new technology for turning yardwaste into electricity, he gave an overview of the meeting; Tree planting at various sites throughout the County; Tree & Shrub species have been selected for the 2024 sale.

Joe Braun, District Technician: Continues work on Tier 3; Nutrient Management Plan; Ag assessments; AEM eligibility-working on developing a revised Ranking System for assessing eligibility under AEM; Assisting in the food waste composting program; Monitoring trails and preserves for hazards.

Correspondence: Email just received regarding the Empire Chapter Soil and Water Conservation Society meeting scheduled for November 9, 2023 in Auburn NY.

The next meeting is Wednesday, November 22, 2023 at 10:00 am at the District.

Steven Ruther asked for a motion to adjourn at 11:00.

Donald Ackerman motioned, seconded by Eric Hess. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Schaeffer
Administrative Assistant