

Schenectady County Soil & Water Conservation District
Board of Directors Meeting Minutes
February 28, 2024

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

The meeting was **called to order** at 10:05 by Michael Pileggi, Vice Chairperson.

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

Privilege of the Floor None

Financial

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

The **Paid Bills** were reviewed.
Michael Pileggi asked for a motion to approve the report.
Motion made by Sara Mae Pratt, seconded by Donald Ackerman. Motion carried.

Steven Ruther, Chairperson arrived.

Trees for Trees:

Nicholas said this is a new program for 2024 and is budgeted to use the revenue from our Tree & Shrub Sale. Trees will be planted or replaced at Iroquois Middle School, Dean Street and GE Realty Plot using these funds. We may research a grant to continue offering this program.
Steven Ruther asked for a motion to proceed with this program.
Sara Mae Pratt motioned, Donald Ackerman seconded. Motion carried.

Health Insurance Renewal:

Nicholas received this year's renewal contract from our current carrier, Highmark BSNENY. The insurance went up 15% for the upcoming year. Nicholas said he predicted it would for about 12% and budgeted accordingly. He said we have enough money to cover the increase for our employees. He said he reviewed the numbers and alternative policies with our health insurance advisor. He shared this information with the Directors. They all concluded it was worth keeping the quality insurance package we have, even with the increase.

Steven Ruther asked for a motion to approve renewing our current health insurance policy with Highmark.
Sara Mae Pratt motioned, seconded by Donald Ackerman. Motion carried.

Summer Youth Supervisor Extension:

Nicholas said this program runs six weeks, from July to mid-August. He has two candidates for the Supervisor position. We will have the funding available to extend this program. The candidate will begin in May and assist with other District projects prior to the commencement of the Summer Youth Program. Nicholas asked the Directors to consider his request.

After discussion, Steven Ruther asked for a motion to approve extending the program.
Michael Pileggi motioned, seconded by Donald Ackerman. Motion carried.

District Garden Shed:

Eventually, we will take down the old greenhouse. The workers from the Community Garden store some of their equipment there. They asked if we would build them a storage shed to house their equipment when this happens. Nicholas asked the Directors for ideas and concerns regarding this. Some included: Price of the building and who pays for everything? Cost-share? Who will build the shed: Amish, the District crew, CCE, BOCES?

Additionally, what to do with the old greenhouse parts? Suggestions included: re-purpose them; sell them on the web; give it away? These will require advice from the County Attorney due to liability concerns.

Sara suggested we get some type of contract to legally formalize associates and responsible parties between the District and Community Garden members.

The Directors agreed to revisit District Garden Shed concepts at a later date.

Program Reports: (full reports on file)

Scott Fickbohm, NYS SWCC report received and emailed to Directors.

Nicholas Klemczak presented his Report from January 23, 2024 – February 28, 2024, highlighting the following:

- Repairs to screener with the new welder is being completed by Randy which will save time and money instead of sending it out for repairs;
- Bagging of all products continue;
- Trinity Construction and Gallivan are purchasing products;
- New signs on bike path by water fountain;
- Trail Steward applications for the Preserves and trails continue;
- PRISM Grant moving forward, DEC is reviewing application;
- Tree & Shrub Sale preparation continues;
- Presented Good Housekeeping Training for municipalities;
- Met with Steve Feeney and Vale Cemetery reps to discuss NYSDEC Grant;
- Fishing Derby planning has begun, County Attorney drafting licensing agreement;
- Spring Flower Program ordering has been done;
- Nick discussed the MS4 Water Quality Grant the SWQCC has been working on for public outreach regarding water pollutants;
- No word from DEC yet regarding the Onderdonk Road beaver deceiver project.

Joe Braun, District Technician submitted his Report. Nicholas reviewed:

AEM Program Projects: Close-out of Round 17 and Tier 4 submitted; Champlain Valley drone flight visit to four farms; Plan of Work submitted for the CRF Grant; Prepared information for the county web site update to include AEM Program and WQCC ;Working on Tree Sale with crew; Working at the food waste composting site and trained the new hire to run the site; Ag assessments being done; Sat in on an Ag Assessment webinar.

The **next meeting** is March 27, 2024 beginning at 10:00 at the District.

Steven Ruther asked for a **motion to adjourn** at 11:05.

Sara Mae Pratt motioned, seconded by Donald Ackerman. Motion carried.

Respectfully submitted,

Paula Schaeffer, Administrative Assistant