



Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District

103 County View Drive, PO Box 166

Lake Pleasant NY 12108 518-548-3991

hcsxcd@frontiernet.net www.hcsxcd.com

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Working to manage and promote the wise use of natural resources in Hamilton County since 1965.

Board of Directors Meeting Minutes

January 2, 2024

Hamilton County SWCD office: 103 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108

Inlet Highway Department: 65 Limekiln Lake Rd, Inlet, NY 13360

Zoom

Board of Directors

Victoria Buyce, Chairperson

John M. Stortecky, Vice Chairperson

Betsy Bain, Town Supervisor

Shawn Hansen, Member-at-Large

District Staff

Caitlin Stewart, District Manager

Marjorie Remias, Clerk and Secretary to the Board

Leonard Croote, District Technician

Katie WhitKovits, District Technician

Partners

Ryan Cunningham, Associate

Environmental Analyst, Soil and Water

Conservation Committee

Absent

Chris D. Rhodes, Town Supervisor

Vacant, District Conservationist,

Natural Resources and Conservation

Service

- I. Call to order and roll call** – Buyce called the meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Roll call conducted.
- II. Pledge of Allegiance** conducted.
- III. Reading and approval of the December 5, 2023, meeting minutes** – The minutes were provided in advance of the meeting.
 - **A motion was made by Buyce seconded by J.M. Stortecky to approve the December 5, 2023, meeting minutes. All voted in favor, motion carried.**
- IV. Treasurer’s Report** – Remias reviewed the Treasurer’s Report and distributed December expenses for Board review and approval for payment.

Balance	11/30/23	\$319,800.25
Receipts		3,262.58
Disbursements		73,686.30
Balance	12/31/23	\$249,376.53

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to accept the Treasurer’s report, and approve the bills to be paid. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

V. 2024 Organizational Items - Stewart emailed the Annual Organizational Items in advance of the meeting, and they are appended to the minutes. Stewart went over the items.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Buyce to accept the 2024 Annual Organizational Items. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

VI. 2023 Risk Management Plan - Stewart emailed the plan in advance of the meeting, and it is appended to the minutes. Stewart went over items in the plan that keep our equipment and workers safe.

- **A motion was made by Buyce, seconded by J.M. Stortecky to accept the 2023 Risk Management Plan. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

VII. FLOWPA 2023-24 Resolution

RESOLUTION #

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING THE SIGNING OF A CONTRACT
WITH THE OSWEGO COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT FOR
TRANSFER OF FUNDING FOR FINGER LAKES-LAKE ONTARIO WATERSHED PROTECTION
ALLIANCE SFY2023-24 FUNDING**

DATED: January 2, 2024

BY: Mr. Stortecky

WHEREAS, Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District, as one of twenty-five (25) voting members of the Water Resources Board of the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance, has been allocated NYS Department of Environmental Conservation (NYSDEC) funds for its water quality program under the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLOWPA); AND

WHEREAS, NYSDEC has agreed to transfer funding for the twenty-five (25) member Programs to the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District via a single contract between NYSDEC and the District; NOW THEREFORE BE IT

RESOLVED, that District Manager Caitlin Stewart be, and hereby is, authorized and directed to sign a contract between Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Oswego County Soil and

Water Conservation District for the Finger Lakes – Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance as specified in said contracts; and to act as the official representative of Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District in connection with any and all contracts between Hamilton County Soil and Water Conservation District and the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District for FLOWPA funds, AND FURTHER, BE IT

RESOLVED, that a signed, certified copy of this resolution be submitted to Mr. Joe Chairvolotti, District Manager of the Oswego County Soil and Water Conservation District along with said contract, AND FURTHER BE IT

RESOLVED, that this resolution take effect immediately.

Seconded by: Ms. Buyce and adopted by the following vote:

AYES: Mr. Hansen, Mr. Stortecky, Ms. Buyce

NAYES: None

ABSTAIN: None

ABSENT: Mr. Rhodes, Ms. Bain

VIII. Water Quality Symposium registration – Stewart reported that registration will open soon, and she is seeking approval to register staff and any Directors for the event to be held March 12 – 16, 2024 at the Double Tree Hotel, Syracuse. This follows the Board approved 2024 training plan and money is in the 2024 budget. The full conference registration fee is \$570.00 per person, and CDEA covers the expense of 2 full conference fees.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Hansen to permit District staff and Directors to register for the 2024 Water Quality Symposium. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

9:45 am Board Member Bain arrived.

IX. NYACD Legislative Day – Stewart reported that Legislative Day appointments will be held Tuesday, March 5, 2024. On Monday, March 4, 2024 NYACD will hold a legislative briefing with snacks at the Hampton Inn, 10 Ulenski Drive, Albany. The hotel room rate is \$119.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Bain to permit District Manager Caitlin Stewart and any Directors to attend 2024 NYACD Legislative Day, and make hotel reservations. All voted in favor, motion carried.**

X. Seasonal Technician – Stewart mentioned FLOWPA funds can cover the expense of hiring a Seasonal Technician to assist with summer programs including lake monitoring, hydroseeding, and invasive species. She would like to proceed with hiring.

- **A motion was made by J.M. Stortecky, seconded by Hansen to permit District Manager Caitlin Stewart to hire a Seasonal Technician for the 2024 summer / fall season using FLOWPA funds at \$18 to \$18.50/ hour, commensurate with experience. All in favor, motion carried.**

XI. District Law presentation – Cunningham presented District Law.

XII. District activities

- 2023 Year in Review video** – Stewart is still working on video and commended the Directors and staff on another excellent year.
- 2023 4th Quarter Annual Plan of Work** – Stewart disseminated and reviewed the APOW.
- 2024 insurance review** – Stewart reviewed the Trident Insurance renewal, and reported that the renewal premium is coming in at \$7,450.53. Unfortunately, this is increase over 2023 but, it is consistent to what Trident is seeing in the market this year.
- July and December 2023 storm update** – Croote reported that things are slowing up as construction season is over. There are a few permits in the works. If the DPW contract with NRCS is signed we will be helping them redesign Shaw Brook and oversee the clean up. After the recent December storm Croote checked out three of the four projects that were implemented this summer. They all held up beautifully.
- Sediment and Erosion Control Program** - Croote reported that after the December storm he was contacted by DEC to help resolve erosion and sedimentation issues at a nearby logging operation. He did an extensive site visit and developed an erosion sediment control plan and it should begin implementation at the end of the week.
- Adirondack Tree and Shrub Sale** - Croote reported that all the trees and shrubs are ordered, order deadline is March 15 and the sale is planned for the end of April. The order form will be out within the next month and it will also be on our Website.
- Agricultural Environmental Management** – WhitKovits reported that she has been working on the round 17 close out which is due at the end of February. The round 18 action plan for the upcoming two years has been sent in and been accepted by Ag and Markets.
- Invasive Species Program** - Stewart reported that she assisted Invasive Species Advisory

Committee Chairperson Kristopher Williams with the 2023 annual report. Stewart was elected as the secretary for this committee, so she also finalized the November 2023 meeting minutes. The NYS Invasive Species Advisory Committee serves as an advisory committee to the Invasive Species Council, and they meet every other month.

- i. Conservation Education Program** - WhitKovits reported that she organized Conservation Field Day awards ceremonies and presented students with certificates, ribbons, and prizes with Stewart and Remias. Stewart will write and submit the CFD press release announcing the winners.
- j. Caring Through Conservation Mini-Grant Program** – Stewart reviewed the grant procedure with WhitKovits, who will take over the program.
- k. Lake Monitoring Program** – Stewart reported that she contacted AWI, and we should have our results by the end of January.
- l. Trail Stewardship Program** – Stewart reported that she and Remias have begun the close out for the County.
- m. Septic System Replacement Fund** – Stewart reported that she received Round 4 information from DEC and has corresponded with Hamilton County Board of Supervisors Chairperson Brian Wells. Hamilton County is eligible for Round 4 funds. Croote and WhitKovits will complete the Priority Waterbodies List worksheet and submit to DEC. Eligible Round 4 waterbodies as listed by DEC include Fulton Chain Lakes, First thru Fourth Lk, Fulton Chain Lakes, Fifth thru Seventh L, Limekiln Lake, Aluminum Pond, Lake Eaton, Raquette Lake, Minor tribs to Long Lake, Blue Mountain Lake, Lower, Upper Browns Tract Pond, Indian Lake, Piseco Lake, Sacandaga Lake, Lake Pleasant, Lake Algonquin, Minor Lakes in Upp Sacandaga R Watershed, Cedar River, Upper, and tribs, Stoner Lakes, and Fourmile Brook and tribs.
- n. Watershed partnership update**
 - 1. FLOWPA** – Stewart amended the work plan per DEC request, completed and submitted the 1 page request, and will submit all required documents for SFY2023-24 funding.
 - 2. Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition** – Stewart completed and disseminated annual report and canceled the December meeting because she contracted Covid. Croote and Allison Gaddy, Lake Champlain Lake George Regional Planning Board, reviewed any submitted RFP for the Elbow Creek Assessment grant and hired Gary L. Henry, PG, Ausable River Association, for the project. Stewart is preparing for the January organizational meeting.
 - 3. St. Lawrence River Watershed Project** – Nothing new to report.
 - 4. Mohawk River Watershed Coalition** – Stewart is preparing for the January organizational meeting.
 - 5. Black River Watershed** – A Black River Watershed Conference planning committee meeting will be held in January.

o. Other –

1. The Hamilton County Board of Supervisors approved our 2024 allocation request of \$127,650.00.
2. Stewart submitted the Gilmantown Road Bank Stabilization Project summary and photos for the 2024 NYACD Legislative Booklet.
3. Stewart completed staff appraisals and reported that all team members performed with expertise and great enthusiasm. Croote, WhitKovits, and Remias are a joy to work with.

p. Directors' comments – Director Hansen thanked the team for all they do and said keep up the good work. Director J.M.Stortecky reported that the farm owned by his son has received a grant for a second high tunnel and that while farming his son is also a flight engineer for the Air Force and is presently defending our country as well.

XIII. Staff reports – Stewart disseminated and emailed copies of the staff reports.

XIV. District Conservationist's report – No report.

XV. New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee report – appended to minutes.

XVI. Correspondence – None.

XVII. Next meeting date – February 7, 2024, 9:30 AM, at the Hamilton County SWCD office (103 County View Drive, Lake Pleasant NY 12108), Inlet Highway Department (65 Limekiln Lake Rd, Inlet, NY 13360), and virtually on Zoom.

XVIII. Adjournment – A motion was made by Bain, seconded by Hansen to adjourn the meeting at 10:39 a.m. All in favor, carried.

Respectfully Submitted



Marjorie Remias
Secretary to the Board/Treasurer

HAMILTON COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
ORGANIZATIONAL ITEMS
2024 DESIGNATION OF:

- A. Official Bank and Newspaper: That NBT Bank, Speculator is the official bank of the District, and the Hamilton County Express is the official newspaper of the District.
- B. That the treasurer be authorized to pay the following for the calendar year 2024:
1. Salaries
 2. Social Security contributions
 3. Medicare contributions
 4. Health insurance premiums and health insurance stipends
 5. New York State Retirement contribution
 6. New York State Deferred Compensation contribution
 7. New York State Income Tax
 8. Federal Withholding Tax
 9. Telephone bills
 10. Fuel charge payments for District vehicles (payable to the county)
 11. Straw bale bills from William Lee
 12. Automobile insurance premium
 13. Liability insurance premium
 14. Workman's Compensation payment premium
 15. Payment for Blanket Bond
 16. Reimbursements for Director's travel
 17. Reimbursement for Director's stipend (optional)
 18. Public Officials Liability insurance premium
 19. Standard mileage rate: 67 cents per mile, or most current IRS Mileage Rate
 20. In the event of a canceled board meeting, all bills as pre-approved by the Directors
 21. Registration fees for the Conservation Skills Workshop, Water Quality Symposium, and New York Association of Conservation Districts Annual Meeting
- C. Board of Directors meetings shall be the first Tuesday of the month at 9:30 a.m. unless otherwise rescheduled.
- D. Board meetings shall be hosted in hybrid format in person at the District office, Inlet Highway Department, and remotely via videoconference unless otherwise stated.
- E. That employees be authorized to spend up to \$100 (\$300 emergency) without prior approval of the Board. Such expenditures would still need Board approval for payment.
- F. Authorization for the District to transfer funds between District accounts.
- G. Authorization to keep on hand petty cash of \$100 (\$50 for General and \$50 for WRB accounts).
- H. Designation of the following:

Chairperson – Victoria Buyce
 Vice Chairperson – John Stortecky
 Treasurer - Marjorie Remias
 Secretary – Marjorie Remias

- I. Check Signing Authorization and alternate – Caitlin Stewart or Victoria Buyce (alternate).
- J. Contact directory for Directors, staff, and partners.
- K. Any District Board member may audit the Secretary to the Board’s annual books.
- L. Personnel Committee – John Stortecky, Vicki Buyce, Betsy Bain.

The 2024 Organizational Designations were reviewed and established at 1/2/24 Board of Directors meeting. A copy is attached to the January minutes.

Hamilton County Soil & Water Conservation District Risk Management Plan					
List approved by the Hamilton County SWCD Board of Directors on 5/2/2000					
Objective: To minimize or eliminate potential risk					
YEAR 2023					
Category	Action	Who	When	Status	Comments
Management	Follow District Law.	Staff and Directors	On-going	x	
	District purchases insurance for indemnify employees.	Clerk	Annually	x	
	Update and follow office policies.	Staff	Ongoing	x	
	All District programs will be approved by District Board.	Directors	Ongoing	x	
	Purchases will be bought according to procurement policy.	Staff	Ongoing	x	
Personnel	Update job descriptions and review annually.	Manager	Annually	x	
	Complete performance appraisals for all employees.	Manager and Directors	Annually	x	
	Develop training and certification plans for staff and directors.	Manager	Annually	x	
	Complete annual sexual harassment prevention training.	Staff	Annually	x	
Financial	Keep accurate records, books and minutes.	Clerk	Ongoing	x	
	Update resolution book as needed.	Clerk	Ongoing	x	
	Conduct yearly audit of financial records.	Clerk / Directors	Annually	x	
	Review and adjust budget.	Manager and Clerk	Ongoing	x	
	Complete annual report for the New York State Comptroller	Staff	January	x	
	Complete audit and Control Report for the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.	Clerk	January	x	
	Complete state aid reporting and the Treasurer's Report for the New York State Soil and Water Conservation Committee.	Manager and Clerk	February	x	
	Maintain health insurance for District staff.	Clerk	Ongoing	x	
	Maintain security bond for District staff.	Manager	Annually	x	
	Maintain liability, fire, and theft insurance on equipment and building contents.	Manager	Annually	x	
Vehicle	Maintain proper vehicle insurance.	Staff	Ongoing	x	
	All NYS laws will be followed by operators of SWCD vehicles.	Staff	Ongoing	x	
	NYS inspection will be completed each year.	Staff	Annually	x	
	Vehicles will be serviced on a regular basis.	Staff	Ongoing	x	
Safety	Employees are encouraged to take first aid, CPR, boater safety, and defensive driving courses.	Staff	Ongoing	x	
	Ensure that staff receive training on the proper use of all equipment to be used on District projects.	Manager	Ongoing	x	
	Ensure that staff have access to and wear necessary personal protective equipment while on project sites and performing field work.	Manager	Ongoing	x	
Implementation	All conservation applications will be completed under guidance of the Natural Resources Conservation Service. Standards and specs will be followed and documented by proper design procedures.	Staff	Ongoing	x	
	Obtain all necessary permits before construction begins.	Staff	Ongoing	x	

**District Manager's report
Submitted by Caitlin Stewart**

- **Administration**
 - Staff appraisals
 - Contacted AWI regarding 2023 invoice and data
 - Worked with Marj to begin the Trail Stewardship Program close out for Hamilton County
 - Submitted Gilmantown Road Bank Stabilization Project summary and photos for 2024 NYACD Legislative Booklet
 - Board of Directors meeting preparation
 - Staff meetings
 - Reviewed budget with Marj
 - Assisted Tim Ellifritz with computer maintenance and updates
 - Quarter 4: Annual Plan of Operations
 - Submitted project to NYACD for the 2024 legislative day packet
 - Began work on SWCC Annual Reports
 - Website updates
 - Social media posts
- **Technical Assistance**
 - Provided lake monitoring data to a USGS staff member
- **Watershed Coalitions**
 - FLOWPA – Amended work plan per DEC request, completed and submitted 1 page request.
 - Upper Hudson River Watershed Coalition – Canceled December meeting because I had Covid, completed and disseminated 2023 Newsletter, preparing for January organizational meeting.
 - St. Lawrence River Watershed Project – Nothing new to report.
 - Mohawk River Watershed Coalition – Preparing for January organizational meeting.
 - Black River Watershed – A Black River Watershed Conference planning committee meeting will be held in January.
- **Invasive Species**
 - Invasive Species Advisory Committee – finalized November 2023 meeting minutes, assisted president with 2023 annual report.
- **Conservation Education**
 - **Conservation Field Day** - Assisted Katie with awards ceremony, working on press release
- **Septic System Replacement Fund**
 - Corresponded with BOS Chairperson Brian Wells and Treasurer Jody about the next round
 - Answered inquiries
- **Caring Through Conservation Mini-Grant Program**
 - Reviewed the procedure with Katie, who will take over
- **New York State Conservation District Employees Association**
 - Water Quality Symposium – Chaired Education Track, submitted ed classes
 - Coordinating January meeting
 - Hosted Managers' Meeting
 - CDEA News
 - Soil and Water Conservation Committee meeting
 - State Programs Advisory Committee meeting
 - New York Association of Conservation Districts meeting

- Corresponded with new Division VIII Representative
- Updated By-Laws
- Revised 4-Hour Fund Policy
- Civil Service – working to improve exam frequency and streamline job descriptions
- Bond Act – compiles survey results and shared with SWCC

**District Technician’s report
Submitted by Lenny Croote**

General

7/10/23 Storm event
 Fishing Brook Stabilization
 Shaw Brook survey
 December Storm damage assessment
 Culvert Assessment
 Erosion and Sediment plan for logging
 Inlet Snowmobile Trail Map
 Permits for 2024 construction season
 Trail Maintenance
 Vehicle maintenance
 2024 Tree and Shrub ordering and orderform
 Office Work

**District Technician’s report
Submitted by Katie WhitKovits**

- Conservation Field Day
 - Conducted all 4 award ceremonies with Caitlin and Marj
 - Wheelerville, Lake Pleasant, Wells, and Long Lake
- Japanese Knotweed
 - Working on finalizing the manual with input from the rest of our staff
 - will work on obtaining signed agreements and homeowners’ insurance to have on file for the next treatment season
- Lake Monitoring
 - Organized our field data and YSI multiprobe data
 - Waiting to add AWI’s data to master data sheet
- Agricultural Environmental Management
 - Working on AEM Round 17 closeout – Due February 29th

Other

- Attended APIPP’s 25th anniversary partner meeting in Keene Valley 12/6
- Met with Carl Schwartz of USFWS with Lenny for Shaw Brook
- Visited Fishing Brook site in Long Lake with Lenny
- Visited Wells Rd stream site, did some rechanneling work with Lenny

- Checked out flooding sites in Piseco
- Additional field surveys of Shaw Brook with Lenny
- Attended NYS Notary prep class in Cortland on Dec 13th
 - I can sign up to take the exam
- Created a new facebook page!
 - Be sure to like & follow us: Hamilton County NY Soil and Water Conservation District

**New York State Soil & Water Conservation Committee
Region 4 Report – January 2024**

Submitted by: Ryan Cunningham – Region 4 Associate Environmental Analyst

NYS SWCC News

2023 State Aid to Districts – DUE 2/15/24: All 2023 annual reporting documents (State Aid, Treasurers Report, Annual Report, etc.) are now available on the SWCC SharePoint <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>, under Resources for Districts – State Aid to Districts. All reports are due to the State Committee by **February 15, 2024**. Please contact ben.luskin@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions.

AEM Base Program: Round 17 of the AEM Base Program ended on December 31, 2023, and the Final Report/Close Out package is due the State Committee by **February 29, 2024** (please upload files to your District’s AEM17 folder on SharePoint and email your Regional AEA and Greg Albrecht once uploaded). Round 18 of AEM Base is now underway, starting on January 1, 2023, and running through December 31, 2025. See the AEM Base Program Materials folder on the SWCC SharePoint site (<https://nysemail.sharepoint.com/sites/Agriculture/SWCC/SitePages/AEM.aspx>) for program/contract policy instructions and materials to close out AEM17 and operate AEM18. Please contact greg.albrecht@agriculture.ny.gov or your Regional AEA with any questions.

Round 29 AGNPS and Round 7 CRF Plans of Work: Please submit plans of work for projects awarded through Round 29 AGNPS and Round 7 CRF to your Regional AEA for review and approval when they are ready. Submitting this information as soon as possible can help to expedite the contracting process.

January SWCC Meeting: The January SWCC meeting will be postponed. The next SWCC meeting will take place in February. Further details and an agenda for the February meeting will be sent out at least two weeks prior to the meeting date. Each meeting agenda provides an opportunity for Conservation Districts to provide reports, updates, or feedback to the SWCC. **Reminder – participation at a SWCC meeting is eligible toward PM1, Part C of State Aid to Districts.**

New State Programs Advisory Committee: A folder has been created on SharePoint for the NYS SWCC State Programs Advisory Committee. The folder is located within the Resources for Districts page, under the Programs category, <https://nysemail.sharepoint.com>. Information from the December 2023 meeting has been uploaded to this folder. Please reach out to the SWCC staff if you have additional thoughts or ideas for future meeting topics.

Clean Water, Clean Air, Green Jobs Environmental Bond Act Update: Since the Bond Act was passed in November

2022, State agencies have been actively working to develop a data tracking/reporting protocol, eligibility criteria, define eligible projects and identify existing programs that could benefit from Bond Act funding. NYS SWCC staff will be sure to provide more updates as new information becomes available.

Other Events

2024 Water Quality Symposium: The New York State Conservation District Employees' Association and Soil and Water Conservation Committee are thrilled to announce the 2024 Water Quality Symposium in Syracuse, NY. **March 12th – 15th, 2024**. Registration is due no later than **January 26th, 2024**. Please note that this year, **each County Soil and Water District will receive 2 free admission coupons for staff to attend the full week**. Registration packet available here:

<https://www.nyscdea.com/training-sessions/> Online registration form here:

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLScvGzoAQQ9jkNC-LS091twNOeyjRx5yYlzc32sNifmvHcPWw/viewform>

NACD 2024 Annual Meeting: Registration for The National Association of Conservation Districts' (NACD) 78th Annual Meeting is now open! Hosted in partnership with the California Association of Conservation Districts, the 2024 Annual Meeting will take place in San Diego, California, from **February 10th – 14th, 2024**. To learn more and to register, please visit: <https://www.nacdnet.org/news-and-events/annual-meeting/>