



SOMERSET - UNION SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Somerset County 4-H Center
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**SOMERSET-UNION S.C.D.
DISTRICT MEETING
February 16, 2022**

PRESENT: Mark Kirby, Robert Amberg, Ed Dec, Matthew Loper, Jim Laine, Matthew D'Alessandro, Bianca Diaz Deliz (NRCS), Louise Davis (NJACD), Lily Mehl (NJACD), Laura Tessieri (RC&D)

ABSENT:

CALL to ORDER:

The meeting was called to order at 12:03 p.m.

PLEDGE of ALLEGIANCE

COMPLIANCE STATEMENT

The meeting was conducted in accordance with the Open Public Meeting Act, Chapter 231, P.L. 1975.

APPROVAL of MINUTES

A motion was made by Jim Laine to approve the January 2022 meeting minutes. The motion was seconded by Robert Amberg and unanimously passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

The treasurer's report for January 2022 was reviewed by the Board. Ed Dec made a motion to approve the report. The motion was seconded by Jim Laine and unanimously passed.

CORRESPONDENCE:

None

OLD BUSINESS:

Intern search-Matthew D'Alessandro reported that he has been in discussion with both Raritan Valley Community College and Rutgers SEBS to discuss the possibility of adding an intern to staff. Matthew informed the SUSCD Board that the Fall, 2022 would be the first opportunity to add an intern since class sessions have already started. Matthew will continue to communicate with both schools as time moves forward.

NEW BUSINESS:

District Action on Ch. 251- The SUSCD Board reviewed the certified and completed projects for the month of January 2022. Matthew Loper recused himself from SUSCD File #2021-5101 and SUSCD File#2021-5047 from the certified list. Ed Dec recused himself from SUSCD File#2022-5126 from the certified list and SUSCD File#2020-4539 from the completed list. Ed Dec made a motion to approve the plans on the certified and completed list for the month of January 2022. The motion was seconded by Matthew Loper and unanimously passed.

Annual Reorganization Meeting-Matthew D'Alessandro reported that the annual reorganization meeting was needed. A motion was made by Jim Laine to nominate Mark Kirby as the Chairman. Mark Kirby recused himself from the vote. The motion was seconded by Matthew Loper and unanimously passed. A motion as made by Matthew Loper to nominate Jim Laine as the Vice Chairman. Jim Laine recused himself from the vote. The motion was seconded by Robert Amberg and unanimously passed. A motion was made by Jim Laine to use Vernioia, Enterline & Brewer as the auditor for the district. The motion was seconded by Ed Dec and unanimously passed. A motion was made by Ed Dec to use LaFontaine & Budd, Inc. as the insurance company for the district. The motion was seconded by Jim Laine and unanimously passed. A motion was made by Ed Dec to close the nominations. The motion was seconded by Matthew Loper and unanimously passed.

Executive Session- A motion was made by Jim Laine to enter closed session to discuss a salary increase request for the District Manager. The motion was seconded by Robert Amberg and unanimously passed. Closed session was entered at 12:19 am. After a discussion, a motion was made to exit closed session by Jim Laine. The motion was seconded by Ed Dec and unanimously passed. The Board re-entered the public session at 12:42 pm. The topic and discussion was tabled until the following month.

Envirothon Support Request-Matthew D'Alessandro reported that there was a request by the NJACD to support this year's Envirothon. Louise Davis and Lily Mehl of the NJACD were in attendance and commented on the Envirothon and the benefits of the event for the students participating and for the Soil Erosion and Sediment Control program. A motion was made by Matthew Loper to support this year's Envirothon in the amount of \$500.00. The motion was seconded by Jim Laine and unanimously passed.

Request for agenda item- Laura Tessieri of RC&D was in attendance and spoke about monies available through a USDA grant opportunity for local land and business owners to have energy assessments performed to save money including solar energy opportunities. The Board asked questions about the various opportunities such as contractor info, money out of pocket, etc. Laura also spoke about the various activities RC&D has underway and provided her contact information for anyone interested.

RFA Invoice-Matthew D'Alessandro reported that the RFA Invoice for the FY 2022 1st Quarter was due in the amount of \$1860.00. A motion was made by Ed Dec to pay the invoice in the amount of \$1860.00. The motion was seconded by Jim Laine and unanimously passed.

NJACD Dues Request- Matthew D'Alessandro reported that the NJACD has requested annual dues in the amount of \$850.00. A motion was made by Matthew Loper to submit a payment of \$850.00 as requested. The motion was seconded by Robert Amberg and unanimously passed.

NJACD/SSCC Annual Partnership Meeting Matthew D'Alessandro reported that the NJACD/SSCC Annual partnership Meeting will take place on 3/28/22 at the Freehold SCD office. The meeting can be attended in person or virtually. Registration begins at 7 a.m. Matthew reminded the SUSCD Board that he must know who is planning on attending by the deadline of 3/11/22.

Soil & Water Cost Share Tables-Matthew D'Alessandro reported that the district is required to approve an average cost table for the installation of eligible conservation practices on lands within the district participating in the farmland preservation program. The Soil & Water Conservation Cost Share Tables were reviewed by the Board. Bianca Diaz Deliz of the NRCS was in attendance and spoke about the overall process and need for the approval by the Board. A motion was made by Ed Dec to approve the Cost Share Tables. The motion was seconded by Robert Amberg and unanimously passed.

Earth Day Seedling Sales- Matthew D'Alessandro reported that the SUSCD is participating in a seedling giveaway event in conjunction with the NJDEP Forestry Division and Somerset County DPW. The event will take place on Earth Day on 4/22/22 at the district office located at the Somerset County 4H Center on Milltown Road in Bridgewater, NJ. The SUSCD is the only district participating this year. The seedling giveaway event has been ongoing for many years as part of reforestation efforts but there has been less participation by districts in the recent past. Other districts expressed interest after the participation of SUSCD and may participate next year, however, there were less seedlings planted due to Covid and short staffing.

Insurance Policy Discussion- Matthew D'Alessandro reported that the insurance agent informed us that he was able to save on auto insurance and offered some suggestions of additional coverage. Matthew D'Alessandro will reach out to Somerset County and the Department of Agriculture SSCC to research if any coverage is already provided before any discussion or decision of additional coverage takes place. Matthew will report back to the Board.

NJACD Attendance- Louise Davis, President and Lily Mehl, Executive Director of the NJACD were in attendance and spoke of upcoming events such as the local NRCS work groups and the annual NJACD/SSCC Partnership Meeting. Louise updated the Board on the upgraded NJACD website and the vision of the NJACD moving forward.

Farmland Assessment Mapping/Rowan University-Matthew D'Alessandro reported that he attended a virtual meeting with other district managers and Sandra Howland of the N.J. Department of Agriculture regarding a new online tool for farmland assessment mapping created by Rowan University in conjunction with the NJ Department of Agriculture. The online tool is free for anyone to use and will be

presented to go live at the upcoming Vegetable Grower's Meeting. Districts will have the opportunity to assist a farmer/landowner by using the online mapping to provide a base map for the interested party to give to their local tax assessor for issues like reassessment. A uniform fee is being determined and the mapping shall have a disclaimer statement included. The service shall be provided if the interested party cannot or does not want to perform the mapping on their own.

Conservation Plans- none

REPORTS:

NRCS – Bianca Diaz Deliz of the NRCS provided her monthly report and went over civil rights requirements for the SUSCD Board. She discussed the upcoming NRCS work groups and other issues involving soil conservation districts.

SCD – Matthew D'Alessandro that the new Ricoh copier arrived which is being leased and a training session will be conducted for all employees by a Ricoh agent. Matthew reported that the conference room was painted and that a new counter and countertop will be installed in the front office. The rest of the office will be painted in the near future. Office meetings are continuing to be held with follow up outlining each staffer's responsibilities with repercussions if not followed. The office continues to be very busy receiving numerous applications for SESC certification in both counties.

ADJOURNMENT:

Matthew Loper made a motion to adjourn the meeting. The motion was seconded by Ed Dec and unanimously passed. The meeting adjourned at 1:53 p.m.

NEXT MEETING:

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, March 16, 2022, at noon at the district office.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew D'Alessandro
District Manager