

**SUSSEX COUNTY SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

Board of Supervisors Meeting

March 11, 2015- 4:30 PM

186 Halsey Road, Hampton Township, Newton NJ 07860

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**NEXT MEETING:** April 22, 2015 – 4:30 p.m.

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**SUPERVISORS PRESENT:** Barbara Rosko, Philip Deacon, Fred Hough, Matthew Fox and James Kilduff

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**SUPERVISORS ABSENT:** None

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**OTHERS PRESENT:** Clifford R. Lundin-District Manager. Dan Mull, USDA-NRCS

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Chairman Rosko called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m. declaring that adequate notice had been provided in accordance with the NJ Open Public Meetings Act. The Board observed a moment of silence in memory of Ann Ricker, wife of former Supervisor Walter Ricker. Ann recently passed away after a long illness.

The members joined in in a salute to the flag.

**ROLL CALL:** A call of the roll showed that Mrs. Rosko, Mr. Kilduff, Mr. Hough and Mr. Deacon were present. A quorum was established. Mr. Fox arrived at 4:41 p.m.

**MINUTES:**

On motion of Mr. Kilduff seconded by Mr. Deacon and properly carried on roll call vote, the Board approved the minutes of the regular meeting of January 21, 2015. The motion was approved on the following roll call vote: Mr. Kilduff-yes; Mr. Deacon-yes; Mr. Hough- abstain and Chairman Rosko-yes. Mr. Fox arrived at this point.

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

On motion of Mr. Kilduff, seconded by Mr. Hough and properly carried, the attached correspondence list was reviewed and approved for the files.

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

**Monthly Report:** On motion of Mr. Hough, seconded by Mr. Deacon and properly carried, the Treasurer's Report was approved, subject to audit, by roll call vote as follows: Mr. Kilduff- yes, Mr. Deacon-yes, Mr. Fox- yes, Mr. Hough-yes and Chairman Rosko-yes. The Treasurer's Report included the following: Income Statement for the Nine Month Period ending March 31, 2015, Cash Disbursements-Check Register for the period of January 21, 2015 to March 11, 2015, Cash Receipts Journal for the period of January 21, 2015 to March 11, 2015, Cash Account Balance Report as of March 11, 2015, Consulting Engineer-Cash Disbursements Journal for the period from July 1, 2014 through March 11, 2015, General Ledger Trial Balance as of March 11, 2015 and Balance Sheet dated March 31, 2015. The Board reviewed the financial condition of the District. For the first 8.5 months of FY2015, the District is showing a positive balance in excess of \$9,786.18. No expenditure accounts are significantly over budget at this point.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**Chapter 251:**

**Monthly Report:** On motion of Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Kilduff and properly carried, the attached 251 Project Card Summary Sheet dated March 11, 2015, the Project Status Report dated March 11, 2015 and the Performance Bonds Remaining Report as of March 31, 2015 were approved. The motion included authorization for the chairman to certify the 5 plans listed under the report heading: "Projects Certified 1/21/2015 to 3/11/2015." In the past month, the District has received 6 new applications, 5 recertification applications and 14 Permit Extension Act applications. The number of active projects is 308, essentially level since the January meeting.

**Exempt Municipality Annual Review for 2014:** Mr. Lundin reported that he had met with officials from Andover Township and Green Township during the past month to review the performance of the two municipalities during 2014. Both were found to be acceptable. Mr. Lundin also reported that Andover Township has determined to change municipal engineers. The new engineer is Cory Stoner, P.E. of Pellow and Associates. The meeting with Andover also included Mr. Stoner. All transition and reporting requirements were addressed. Satisfactory reviews are also recommended for Fredon, Frankford and Vernon, where the District administers the program for the municipality. Mr. Kilduff moved, seconded by Mr. Hough and properly carried to approve the exempt municipality reviews. Mr. Deacon recused himself from acting on the Andover Township review since he has an active project within the Township.

**Problem sites:** Mr. Lundin briefed the Board on the following sites:

- 1) Uncertified site- Vernon- 1 and 3 Silver Spruce Drive. Two Stop Work Orders have been issued to adjoining property owners. The sites remain unstable. All work had apparently ceased. The District has been contacted by an engineer for the owner of 1 Silver Spruce who has been retained to prepare the necessary plan.
- 2) Maggio Site: WT-154. This is an active application. In response to District enforcement letters, the applicant submitted an application in March of 2014. The applicant has failed to respond to District review letters. The fill continues without adequate controls. Mr. Lundin recommended the issuance of a Stop Work Order. By consensus the Board was in agreement with this request.

**Records Disposal:** Mr. Lundin reported that the State has approved the District's request to dispose of certain closed files. The archived records will be destroyed as soon as the District storage unit becomes accessible (currently inaccessible due to snow conditions.)

Dormant Applications: Mr. Lundin reported that in accordance with the Board's guidance from the January meeting he had contacted representatives for each of the long term pending applications. On four of the files, the applicants requested to remain active. Seven other files have been placed in dormant status.

**Agriculture-NRCS:**

Monthly Report: Mr. Mull presented the attached NRCS report for March. There are currently 49 active Farm Bill contracts within Sussex County representing financial assistance in the amount of \$765,868.82. These consist of 4 AMA contracts, 33 EQIP Contracts and 12 WHIP contracts. There are 3 pending AMA contracts and 25 pending EQIP contracts for FY2015. Mr. Mull requested approval of 4 conservation plans for properties located in Montague (2), Sandyston and Wantage. The report was approved on motion of Mr. Fox, seconded by Mr. Hough and properly carried.

Cooperators: Mr. Lundin and Mr. Mull reported that the District received two applications within the past month for Conservation Assistance. These are the applications of Ben and Nancy Smith for a 12.3 acre parcel located in Wantage Township and Maryann Huff Casciano for a 5 acre parcel located within Newton. Mr. Hough moved, seconded by Mr. Fox and properly carried to approve the applications.

2012 Census of Agriculture: Mr. Lundin provided the Board with the results of the 2012 NRCS Census of Agriculture. This census is conducted every 5 years. From 2007 to 2012, the number of farm operations in Sussex County has decreased by 17% from 1,060 to 885. The total acreage in agriculture has decreased by 6% to 61,033 and the average size farm has increased from 62 acres to 69 acres. The average Sussex County farmer is 60.6 years of age. The total annual market value of products sold in the county was \$18.6 million which is a 12% decrease since 2007. The average income per farm is \$21,078.

**State Soil Conservation Committee (SSCC) Report:** Mr. Minch was not present to provide a report. In his absence, Mr. Lundin discussed the following items:

H&H Grant: Mr. Hansen has completed the entry work on all H&H forms. The District has therefore completed all required work under the grant. Mr. Hansen continues to enter data from closed District files. Payment from the state is expected in the near future.

Digital copies of SESC plans: Mr. Lundin indicated that he is drafting an amendment to the District policy so as to comply with the new state mandate. The draft will be available for the April meeting.

Audit Manual: Mr. Lundin reported that he had submitted comments on the proposed audit manual. Five other districts sent letters or e-mails in support of the Sussex comments. As a result the SSCC at its meeting of March 9, 2015 deferred action and

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Old Business (audit manual) (continued)

extended the comment period for an additional 30 days. The SSCC has requested all Districts to refer the draft manual to their respective auditors for additional comments.

251 Penalty Schedule: Mr. Lundin reported that the SSCC at its meeting of March 9, 2015 ruled that the use of District Penalty Schedules for violations of Chapter 251 is not permissible under the SESC statute. The issue arose as a result of an appeal from a Morris County action that applied an administrative penalty (rather than a Court imposed penalty) for a violation of the SESC act.

**Education:**

4H Judging: Mr. Lundin reported that he had acted as a judge for the 2015 oral presentations for the participants in the 4H program. This continues a long term District tradition where the District Manager has been invited to judge the presentations.

Northern NJ Envirothon Training Session: Mr. Lundin reminded the Board that the District will once again host the Northern NJ Envirothon Training Day on April 15, 2015 at Swartswood State Park.

NJ Envirothon: The 2015 NJ Envirothon will be held on May 1-2, 2015 at the Cape May 4H Center. The theme will be "Urban and Community Conservation." Mr. Lundin and Mrs. Rosko have agreed to act as judges for the oral presentation component. The District is in receipt of a letter from the NJACD requesting all Districts to make a \$500 contribution to the Envirothon. Mr. Kilduff moved seconded by Mer. Deacon to donate \$500 to the NJ Envirothon. Motion approved on the following roll call vote: Mr. Deacon-yes, Mr. Fox-yes, Mr. Hough-yes, Mr. Kilduff-yes and Chairman Rosko-yes.

2015 Conservation Poster Contest: The theme of this year's contests is "Pollinators- Our Local Heroes." Entries are due to the District by March 20 and to the SSCC by April 1, 2015. Mr. Deacon volunteered to assist in the judging.

**Meetings:**

2015 National NACD Meeting: Mr. Lundin reported on his attendance at the 2015 NACD National Conference in New Orleans. Mr. Lundin made two presentations to different groups relative to the activities of the Urban and Community Coastal (UCC) Committee. Mr. Lundin has been reappointed to represent the National Conservation Districts Employees Association (NCDEA) on the UCC committee.

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Old Business (Meetings) (Continued)

NRCS State Technical Committee: Mr. Lundin reported on the discussions at the State Technical Committee meeting on February 26, 2015.

Common Waters Project: The next meeting of the Common Waters group is scheduled for April 9, 2015 at the Grey Towers National Historic Site in Milford, PA.

NJACD Northern Regional Supervisors Meeting: The Northern Regional Supervisors meeting has been scheduled for March 18, 2015 in Clifton NJ. Mr. Hough, Mr. Kilduff and Mr. Lundin will attend on behalf of the District.

NACD Northeast Conference: Mr. Lundin reported that this conference has been scheduled for August 2 through 4, 2015 in Davis, West Virginia.

NJACD Annual Conservation Partnership Conference: This conference will be held sometime in October or November 2015. The date and location have yet not been finalized.

NACD 2016 Annual Meeting: This meeting is scheduled for February 1-4, 2016 in Reno Nevada.

North Jersey RC&D: Mrs. Rosko and Mr. Lundin reported on the continuing discussions between the RC&D Council and the Musconetcong Watershed Association. The next meeting is scheduled for March 13, 2015 from 9:30 to 12:30. Mrs. Rosko, Mr. Kilduff and Mr. Lundin will represent the District at the meeting.

**Other:**

Forestry RFP: The response to the RFP was submitted to NJDEP. The agency is still reviewing the competing proposals.

District Annual Report: Mr. Lundin reported that the 2014 Annual Report has been posted on the District website.

District Business Plan: Mr. Lundin reported that he is working on an update to the District business plan.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**Supervisor reappointments:** Mr. Lundin reported that the terms of Mr. Hough and Mr. Kilduff are expiring on June 30, 2015. Mr. Kilduff expressed an interest in reappointment. Mr. Hough indicated that he would not be seeking reappointment after 45 years of service to the Board. Chairman Rosko appointed the following Nominating

Committee: Donna Traylor-chair, Richard Vohden, Glen Vetrano, Margaret McGarrity and Nathaniel Sadjak.

**Grant Opportunity- Agricultural Assistance:** Mr. Lundin reported on a possible grant opportunity. This resulted from a conversation with NRCS State Conservationist, Carrie Mosely at the State Technical Committee meeting on Feb 26. Mr. Lundin had subsequent meetings with Asst. State Con. Maria Collazzo and the Warren District on March 6, 2015. The District would seek funds from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF) to hire an entry level agricultural specialist to work with NRCS for a two year time period to provide outreach services and conservation technical assistance to Sussex County producers. Possible target populations could include: a) producers in the Pequest watershed; b) preserved farms; c) small acreage or new farmers; or d) farmers subject to the Animal Waste Management requirements. The grant application could be submitted individually or in partnership with the Warren District. The application is due by March 18, 2015. After significant discussion, Mr. Deacon moved, seconded by Mr. Kilduff and properly carried to authorize the submission of the application.

Mr. Hough departed the meeting at this time (6:15 p.m.)

**Reforest NJ Program:** The District has agreed to act as a county distribution center for trees under this program. The NJ Bureau of Forestry is distributing over 100,000 trees at no cost to help citizens recover from trees damaged or lost during Hurricane Sandy. Municipalities will pick up the trees from the District and distribute them to the public. In addition, individuals can apply to the District (information on website) to receive up to 10 seedlings each.

**October 2015 meeting:** Mr. Lundin noted that there was a typographical error on the annual list of meetings previously adopted. Mr. Deacon moved seconded by Mr. Kilduff and properly carried to change the date of the October meeting to October 28, 2015.

**Donation in memory of Ann Ricker:** The Board noted the recent passing of Ann Ricker, wife of former Supervisor Walter Ricker. Walt had served on the District Board for 33 years. On motion of Mr. Deacon, seconded by Mr. Fox and properly carried on roll call vote, the Board voted to donate \$250 to the Sussex County 4H Foundation in memory and honor of Mrs. Ricker. Roll call vote as follows: Mr. Deacon-yes, Mr. Fox-yes, Mr. Kilduff-yes and Chairman Rosko-yes.

**Employee Furlough Program:** Mr. Deacon moved seconded by Mr. Fox to continue the Employee Furlough Day program through April 2015. The Board will review the issue at its April meeting.

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(Continued)

**PUBLIC SESSION:**

Chairman Rosko opened the meeting to the public at 6:27 p.m. There being no one desiring to speak, the meeting was closed to the public at 6:28 p.m.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:**

There was no need for an executive session.

**ADJOURN:**

The Meeting was adjourned at 6:28 p.m. on motion of Mr. Deacon seconded by Mr. Fox and properly carried.

Respectfully submitted for Fred Hough, Secretary/Treasurer

By Clifford R. Lundin, District Manager