



Zoom Meeting  
Wednesday, March 27, 2024  
7:00 P.M.

**Attendance:**

Sam Casella, President	Jim Brick, Div. I
Scott Ryan, 2 <sup>nd</sup> V. President	Bruce Dolph, Member @ Lg
Rollin Pickering, Div. II	Ernie Swift, Treas.
Rob Carpenter, 1 <sup>st</sup> V. President	John M. Stortecky, Div. V
Blanche Hurlbutt, Ex. Dr.	

**Absent:**

Dan Farrand, Past Pres.

**Guests Present:** None Present

**Partners Present:** Bethany Bzduch, SWCC Ex. Dir., Caitlin Stewart, NYSCDEA' President.

**Absent:** Blake Glover, NRCS State Conservation

**I. Call to Order:** Sam Casella, President Called the meeting to order 7:08 p.m.

**II. Roll Call:** Blanche Hurlbutt, Ex. Dr. gave roll call.

**III. Secretary's Report/Approval of Minutes:**

- A motion by Scott Ryan second by John Stortecky to approve January minutes as written.  
Carried. **#3/27/2024 = A**

**IV. Treasurer's Report:**

- A motion by Jim Brick seconded by Bruce Dolph to approve the January Treasurer's report as provided. Carried. **#3/27/2024 = B**
- A motion was made by Bruce Dolph seconded by John Stortecky to approve the February Treasurer's report with the line-item adjustments. Carried. **#3/27/2024 = C**
- A motion by Bruce Dolph seconded by Scott Ryan to approve the February Bills to be Paid.  
Carried. **#3/27/2024 = D**

Ernie provided a report on the income/expenses for January and February. Ernie stated that we were over budget for Legislative Days and could be seen on the finance page with the adjustments being made to adjust the 2024 budget. A discussion took place regarding the NYACD assessments.

## V. Partners Reports:

**NYSCDEA' Report:** Caitlin Stewart, NYCDEA President reported the following:

- 2024 Water Quality Symposium
  - CDEA Vice President Jessica Armstrong dedicated weeks of her time to organizing one of the best training sessions to date. Attendees gave positive feedback on the variety of courses offered, saying it was difficult to choose which class to attend, and that the instructors were excellent.
  - New Employee Orientation - Ryan Cunningham and I overhauled the New Employee Orientation. We co-presented with P.J. Emerick and Vic DiGiacomo, NRCS's Paula Bagley who I literally recruited to instruct from the hallway right before class began, and NYACD's Blanche Hurlbutt and highlighted the 4-Way Partnership and alphabet soup of acronyms. Trivia was a hit with a tabletop spinner.
  - Thank you to all State Committee staff who assisted with facilitating and instructing classes.
  - Jess will send out the evaluation form statewide, and send RFPs to larger venues to accommodate all employees who wish to attend. We have outgrown the Double Tree Hotel, and maxed out rooms and classrooms.
- CDEA Annual Meeting – March 13, 2024
  - The CDEA board made updates to the CDEA Bylaws, Policies, and Procedures manual that were adopted.
  - The Annual Meeting packet with board, partner, and committee reports is available on SharePoint. Please take a few moments to review the excellent conservation work that was accomplished in NYS.
- DEC Permits
  - Discussion ensued during the Managers' Meeting held during the water quality symposium. The DEC permitting process varies statewide, not all Districts have a General Permit to expedite the process. Some Districts experience a 6 to 8-month approval process from DEC for simple stream crossing designs. Some Districts wait 1 year for DEC permit approval. We think the wait period is due to new DEC employees who do not understand that Districts do reliable work, and DEC is understaffed. When District staff reach out to their local DEC office or the Division of Land and Water, they do not receive a response.
  - I will work on a bottom-up and top down approach with the Municipal Assistance Subcommittee.
  - I will compose a letter to partners, including the SWCC, on this challenge.
- Cover and Flare
  - Meeting with Jennifer Kelly, Greg, and Scott to discuss challenges Districts face with selling this practice to farmers and understanding it themselves.
  - Topics discussed included economics, technologies, and labor that is required for the practice to be successful.
  - Solution: offer a training during Conservation Skills.
- State Programs Advisory Committee
  - CDEA continues to advocate for a Non-Ag, Non-Point Source Pollution program
    - This aligns well with the SWCC Strategic Plan: a system that enables Districts to adapt to an evolving landscape: environmental, technical, and political.
- CDEA News

- February edition is hot off the press: <https://www.nyscdea.com/newsletter/>
- Our next CDEA meeting will be held in May, date, and location TBD.

**NRCS Report:** Blake Glover, NRCS State Conservation was unable to attend, and no report was provided.

**State Committee Report:** Bethany Bzduch, SWCC Executive Director reported the SWCC 2024-28 Strategic plan has a few adjustments to be made and will be finalized for the April SWCC meeting.

Bethany stated that the State Committee has issued all the Part A, B, C funds with districts receiving over \$200,000 each with a few exceptions.

Bethany expressed her appreciation for the CDEA Water Quality Symposium and all the hard work and what a great event it was.

Bethany touched on the approved Round 8 Climate Resiliency Farming Program. This was approved on March 19, 2024, and will be opened in April for districts to apply with a combined State and Federal funds of \$29 mil available.

Bethany reminded the board that the AEM Leopold Conservation award given to a farm is now open for applications and is due May 15, 2024. Bethany encouraged districts to nominate a local farmer from their district.

### **Board Report:**

**President:** Sam reported on the NACD annual meeting in San Diego in February. Sam also reported on the NACD Fly-In, Washington, DC that he attended. Sam stated that both events were great events and both he and Blake Glover met with several NY Legislators getting the message out about soil and water districts and their programs.

Sam reported he attended the Division I annual meeting and it was a great event and felt it was well attended.

**Executive Director:** Blanche reported that Legislative Days went very well with many districts attending and meeting with close to ninety Legislators carrying out our message of what districts do throughout the year to protect NY's soil and water. Overall, it was a great event and next year Blanche is looking into a possible room for district folks along the way other adjustments.

Blanche reported that the 2024 NYACD Annual meeting will be held at the Hampton Inn, Penn Yan again this year. NYACD will be hosting two full days beginning on October 21-22, 2024. Blanche stated she is looking forward to some training ideas from the board.

Blanche reported she attended the CDEA Water Quality Symposium and shared the classes she attended with the Board and expressed what a great event it was. A job well done by the CDEA Board.

#### **Director & Representatives –**

- a. **Division I:** Jim Brick reported on the annual Division meeting held this past week. It was a great event and was well attended by seven out of the eight divisions he represents. Sam Casella, NYACD President and Victor DiGiancomo, Ag & Mkts was present and presented reports. Jim was reelected as the Division I NYACD representative.
- b. **Division II:** Rollin Pickering reported that Monroe County SWCD is preparing for their annual tree & shrub sale. Rollin stated that he and Kelly Emerick, Monroe District Manager attended NYACD Legislative Days expressed their thanks and appreciation for the Legislators continued support.
- c. **Division III:** No representative. No report.
- d. **Division IV:** No representative, no report.
- e. **Division V:** John M Stortecky reported he is making plans to attend each of his divisions in the upcoming months. John stated that his first visit will be with Franklin County SWCD Board of Directors. John inquired about reimbursement for travel, mileage, and hotel and Blanche stated that she would provide him with a reimbursement form. Blanche advised John to provide receipts and forward them along with the reimbursement form to Ernie Swift.
- f. **Division VI:** No representative, no report.
- g. **Division VII:** No representative, no report.
- h. **Division VIII:** No representative, no report.

#### **Committee Reports:**

**2024 NYS Envirothon:** Ernie reported the next NYS Envirothon meeting will be on Tuesday, April 23rd by Zoom and in person at SUNY Cortland. Ernie referred to Blanche for a full report since he had a conflict and was unable to attend the March meeting.

Blanche stated that the NYS event is shaping up and on track for the May event.

**2024 NCF Envirothon New York:** Ernie referred to Blanche for the report. Blanche reported that the committee is still working hard to meet the funding goal needed to pull off the event, but everything else is on track at this point. Blanche stated that they are in the process of making down payments and ordering necessary items needed. They have made their request for reimbursement to NRCS as well as the down payment request.

#### **VI. Old Business:** No old business to discuss currently.

**VII. New Business:**

**Bill #S7854:** John Stortecky, Hamilton Co. SWCD Board member provided the NYACD board in advance of the meeting with a letter from the Hamilton County SWCD Board President regarding their concerns with this bill. John referred this to Caitlin Stewart, Hamilton Co. SWCD Manager, to share information regarding this bill and the reasons for the letter. After much discussion it was determined that Blanche would reach out again to Senator May's (sponsor of bill) office to find out where the proposed funds would be coming from and how it would impact soil and water districts. Once Blanche finds out she will share the information with the board and Hamilton Co. SWCD Board before any final thoughts and discussions take place. At that time Hamilton Co. SWCD may decide to create a resolution.

**VIII. Adjournment:**

- A motion by Jim Brick, seconded by John Stortecky to adjourn the meeting. Carried.  
**#3/27/2024 = F**

Meeting Adjourned at 8:16 p.m.

Next meeting date is **Wednesday, April 24, 2024, 7:00 p.m.** by Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by

*Blanche L. Hurlbutt*

NYACD Executive Director March 28, 2024

**January Motions Meeting:**

**#3/27/2024 = A Approval January Minutes**

**#3/27/2024 = B Approval January Finances**

**#3/27/2024 = C Approval February Finances**

**#3/27//2024 = D Approval of February Bills to Pay**

**#3/27/2024 = F Approval to Adjourn**