**BOARD MEETING**

**Thursday, March 2, 2024 at 1:00 pm**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Ag Board Members Present:**

David Zilker

Crystal Abers

Daniel Martonis

Jake Kelly

**Ag Board Members Absent**

Barbara George

Brian Andrews

James Finch

Donald Benson

Donald Telaak

Kelly McDonald

**EDPT Members Present:**

Connor Maxwell | Environmental Planner

**Present Guests:**

Kimberly LaMendola | Southern Tier West

Mark Hanson |Farm Bureau

A Quorum was not met so a formal meeting was not held, but the attendees had discussions on various topics listed below.

*Chairman Dave Zilker called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.*

1. **Approval of Minutes from the February 13, 2024 meeting**

The minutes were not able to be voted upon due to a quorum not being met. The minutes will need to be approved during the next meeting.

1. **Farmer-Neighbor Dinner Recap**

There was discussion about how the Annual Farmer-Neighbor Dinner went, as well as how the event could be made even better and run more smoothly for next year.

1. **AFPB Vacancies**

There was discussion about recommending names to the legislator to replace current vacancies on the board.

Dave Zilker recommended Mark Hanson to serve on the board.

**4. Agricultural Issue – Town of New Albion**

Crystal Abers spoke about a current agricultural issue in the town of New Albion. The issue seems to be that of a neighborly dispute in which NYSDAM is stepping in to help the landowner since the parcel of land is in the Ag District.

**5.** **Ag Tour 2024**

Since the northwest portion of the county has not been visited during an Ag Tour yet, Crystal Abers spoke briefly about potentially having our annual Ag Tour in the northwest quadrant of the county. The tour is being set up to potentially visit a grape, apple and blueberry farm, since previous Ag Tours have not visited those types of agriculture.

**6. Agency Updates**

**a) Farm Bureau**

 Mark Hanson mentioned to Farm Bureau had their Ag Trivia night to raise money. The event raised around $2000 in scholarships.

**b) Cornell Cooperative Extension**

 N/A

**c) Soil and Water Conservation District**

Jake Kelly spoke about howallocated AEM management money. One for a farm in the town of Mansfield, in the Cattaraugus Creek watershed, for a stream crossing. The other farm is in Hinsdale, in the Allegany River watershed, for a manure storage project. He also discussed some grant opportunities that are coming up, such as a Climate Resilient Farming Grant. Envirothon and Tree Sale went well. They have around 5–6 stream restoration projects.

**d) Southern Tier West**

Kim LaMendola is trying to set up a butcher apprenticeship program in the three county Southern Tier West region (Chautauqua, Cattaraugus, Allegany counties).

**7. Open Forum**

Dan Martonis mentioned that farmers who lease their land for solar farming should know that this will make their land worth more, which will increase their taxes. This would also make the farmer lose their agricultural exemption.

Crystal Abers spoke briefly about the County Planning Board’s role in reviewing solar projects.

**8. Upcoming Meeting**

The next meeting is set to be held on the same date as the upcoming Ag Tour. The date for the Ag Tour has still not been decided upon.

**9. Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 1:38 PM.