**BOARD MEETING**

**Tuesday, February 13, 2024 at 1:00 pm**

**Meeting Minutes**

**Ag Board Members Present:**

David Zilker

Barbara George

Crystal Abers

James Finch

Daniel Martonis

Donald Telaak

Charles Couture

Kelly McDonald

**Ag Board Members Absent:**

Brian Andrews

Donald Benson

**EDPT Staff Present:**

Dalton Fries | Planner

Connor Maxwell | Environmental Planner

**Present Guests:**

Kimberly LaMendola | Southern Tier West

Paige Williams |CCSWCD

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

1. **Approval of Minutes from the September 28, 2023 meeting**

Charles Couture motioned to approve with a second by Donald Telaak. Carried.

1. **Election of Officers**
2. **Chairman – Dave Zilker**

Charles Couture motioned to approve with a second by Donald Telaak. Carried.

1. **Vice Chairman – Barbara George**

Charles Couture motioned to approve with a second by Donald Telaak. Carried.

1. **Parcel Inclusion for Ag District**

Connor Maxwell gave an overview on all the parcels that submitted a request to be included into the agricultural district. He gave an overview for every parcel, which included the acreage of the parcel, the current land use, and if there are nearby parcels of land that are currently in the agricultural district. He also presented a soil ratings map, as well as aerial imagery for each parcel to identify if the parcel of land consists predominantly of viable agricultural land, as well as to identify if the land is currently being utilized for agriculture.

**a) 113.002-2-6.6, 113.002-2-6.5**

 Daniel Martonis motioned to approve with a second by James Finch. Carried.

**b) 72.001-1-26.1**

 Charles Couture motioned to approve with a second by Donald Telaak. Carried.

**c) 64.004-1-4.19, 64.004-1-4.8**

 Barbara George motioned to approve with a second by Charles Couture. Carried.

**d) 72.004-1-46**

 Barbara George motioned to approve with a second by Kelly McDonald. Carried.

**e) 23.004-1-1.2, 23.004-1-1.3**

 Daniel Martonis motioned to approve with a second by Charles Couture. Carried.

**f) 69.002-1-30.4**

 Charles Couture motioned to approve with a second by Donald Telaak. Carried.

**g) 47.002-1-13.4**

 Daniel Martonis motioned to approve with a second by Donald Telaak. Carried.

**h) 68.004-1-13**

 Donald Telaak motioned to approve with a second by Barbara George. Carried

**i) 65.001-2-17**

Donald Telaak motioned to approve with a second by Barbara George. Carried.

**j) 45.004-1-22**

 Donald Telaak motioned to approve with a second by Charles Couture. Carried.

**k) 21.004-1-47.2**

 Daniel Martonis motioned to approve with a second by Donald Telaak. Carried.

**4. Farmer – Neighbor Dinner**

The Farmer-Neighbor Dinner is set to take place on April 10th at the West Valley Fire Hall. Crystal Abers spoke about how there has already been a meeting held to help coordinate the upcoming event. She also mentioned how the EDPT staff has been working on a glass and program design for the upcoming meeting. Paige Williams mentioned how she has been making contacts for food donations for the event.

**5.** **Agency Updates**

 **a) Farm Bureau**

 Paige Williams and David Zilker spoke about how the Farm Bureau has approved a couple of FFA blue jackets. The Farm Bureau will provide the FFA blue jackets. The Farm Bureau has also approved one scholarship.

**b) Cornell Cooperative Extension**

Kelly McDonald mentioned how Cornell Cooperative Extension is hosting a dairy processing boot camp at the Great Lakes Cheese factory in Franklinville. She mentioned how the event is held for anyone who is looking into entering this career. There is a stipend paid to anyone who participates. Kelly also mentioned how the Southwest Dairy Team is doing a dairy tour to some east coast dairy farms.

Kelly also mentioned how their Master Gardener position is not filled. They are currently looking for someone to fill this part time position.

**c) Soil and Water Conservation District**

Paige Williams discussed how the district is doing a tree sale this year. Tree seedling sale order forms can be found on their Facebook page, as well as their website and newsletter. The tree order pick up date is scheduled for April 19th.

**d) Southern Tier West**

Kimberly LaMendola spoke about NYSAWG (New York Sustainable Agriculture Working Group) becoming completely autonomous of Southern Tier West.

She also mentioned how she will be taking over the role of economic development, as well as working on reinvigorating the food system work specific to our Appalachian communities.

**6. Open Forum**

Crystal Abers discussed the Agricultural Economic Development Team that has been reinvigorated. A meeting was held with key stake holders. The team is composed of people from EDPT, AFPB, CCSWCD, STW, Farm Bureau, CAWFNY and CCE. Crystal also mentioned how EDPT is currently working on creating a pamphlet for the Agricultural Economic Development Team, which will be designed as a contact list of the agencies that describes each agency does.

Kimberly LaMendola spoke about the current state of our food systems. She mentioned how between our three local counties (Allegany, Chautauqua and Cattaraugus), we have the land and the capacities to create a more independent and localized food system.

Charles Couture, Barbara George and Donald Telaak mentioned how impressive last year’s agricultural tour at the Great Lakes Cheese factory in Franklinville was.

Crystal Abers discussed The New York Food for New York Families Program grant that the Department of Aging is currently applying for through NYSDAM. The grant requires applicants to use efficient strategies to help create and incorporate New York food into new and existing food distribution networks. She spoke about how this grant could potentially bring a large amount of money to our local community.

Charles Couture spoke about how Attica School District is currently buying and freezing sweet corn from local farmers to utilize the resource year round. He mentioned how it would be nice to see some local Cattaraugus County school districts mimic what Attica School District is doing, if they have the resources available to preserve food for long periods of time.

James Finch briefly discussed the Birds and Bees Protection Act, which is prohibiting the use of certain neonicotinoid pesticides that are commonly treated on corn, soybean, wheat seeds, as well as outdoor ornamental plants and turf.

**7. Upcoming Meeting**

The next meeting was decided to be scheduled for May 2nd at 1:00 PM.

**8 Adjournment**

Charles Couture motioned to adjourn with a second made by Donald Telaak. Meeting adjourned at 2:29 PM.