

Empire Chapter – Soil and Water Conservation Society

Meeting Minutes

Conference Call

1PM – 3:00 PM

January 21, 2015

- 1) Welcome – Jessica called the meeting to order at 1:00 pm.
 - Brad Schwab, Jessica Sargis, Elaine Dalrymple, Ray Mueller, Heath Eisele, and Jason Cuddeback were on the call. Jessica mentioned that Lisa Miller will not be on the call due to a cold
- 2) Open positions - Jason Cuddeback accepted Jessica's nomination as Region 2 Representative. A vote was taken and all Board members on the conference call were in favor. Jason has been working at Cayuga Co. SWCD for nearly 10 years as the grazing specialist. He is a Certified Crop Advisor and heads up the soil health initiative at Cayuga SWCD. He farms 1,000 acres of cash crops with his father. Jessica commented that she has noticed there are several SWCS's without presidents. Brad said that he has given some thought to our situation and thinks we should ask the national office in Ankeny for ideas. Brad feels it is not good to have the same president from year to year. Ray said he would consider it except he has some professional commitments at the end of this year and he also just came onto this Board. Jess said she would contact Ankeny and she asked all Board members to think about assuming the President Elect position. Jess said there are not many new members joining the Empire Chapter and she asked that we email ideas for getting more such members to her.
- 3) Review the minutes from the Annual Meeting (11/21/14) - Elaine reviewed the minutes that were previously emailed to the Board. Ray moved to accept the 11/21/14 minutes, Heath seconded and all were in favor.
- 4) Review the Treasurer's Report:
 - a) 2014 Year End Report
 - Ray first went over the Annual Meeting costs and income. There was a net loss of [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] was taken in, one person did not pay and 4 who paid did not attend.
 - Ray mentioned that there is only [REDACTED] in the checking account and we owe Lisa for 2 months of salary ([REDACTED]) through Jan.17, 2015. So, with present funds we cannot cover that bill.
 - For the entire 2014 year, there was [REDACTED] in income and [REDACTED] in expenses for a net loss of [REDACTED] but this includes [REDACTED] of sales tax (vendor credit) and [REDACTED] of other income. Net ordinary income is minus [REDACTED]. In the Endowment accounts through December 31, 2014: Vanguard Fletcher has a balance of [REDACTED], an increase of [REDACTED] since November and the regular Vanguard Endowment has a balance of [REDACTED], an increase of [REDACTED] for the year.
 - We will need to take out some money from the regular Vanguard Endowment to cover Lisa's expenses. We can only withdraw money from this account

once every 6 weeks. We also need to take out money to pay for the [REDACTED] scholarship to Cornell junior, Rachel Breslauer. This scholarship was awarded at the Annual Meeting and the check should be mailed on 1/30/15. Heath mentioned that membership dues reimbursement from the National office of around [REDACTED] should be arriving soon.

- Jess reminded the Board that last year we took \$1,000 from the endowment account to help with expenses and we never replaced it. Brad commented that even though the year end Treasurer's report shows just a [REDACTED] loss for the year, it included this [REDACTED] in income from the Vanguard endowment account, so really we were [REDACTED] in the red for last year. Ray pointed out that our budget had scholarships listed at [REDACTED] but we only gave out one for [REDACTED] so our net loss really is only [REDACTED]. Brad said that we also need to think about the change in inventory of our stormwater books such that will need to be replaced at some point, which is a future cost
- Heath said there are two choices: we either take money out of the Vanguard Endowment to meet expenses or we need to think about reassigning some of Lisa's duties in the future so we don't keep doing this.
- Ray mentioned that New Jersey SWCS did not have a staff person but he also said he did not think any of the Board members has time to handle the stormwater books and do the Treasury duties that Lisa does.
- Brad wondered if we can keep drawing down the endowment. Low publication sales are forcing our hand.
- Ray said our interest income has increased the value of the two endowment accounts to the tune of approx. [REDACTED]. The scholarship cost us [REDACTED]. We can either give up the book sales or cut Lisa's position some. Heath said that amount of income in our endowment accounts assumes that the stock market will keep going up. Jess reminded the Board that Lisa has told us that she is not sure she would keep doing the Treasurer, etc. duties for less money. She would need to evaluate her personal situation.
- Ray suggested that we need to make such hard decisions at a face to face meeting, not on a conference call.
- Brad said we have books in our inventory but we may "bleed out" before we get rid of them. Heath wondered if we could only sell books at the training sessions versus mailing them out. Elaine commented that she tries to promote our hard copy books but that trainers also need to tell attendees that the books are available for free on-line. Brad added that we need to treat SWCS finances as a business and look at what is going on in the market. People now get lots of reference material on line. Are there other ways to raise money?
- Jess asked for suggestions on what amount we should withdraw. [REDACTED] was paid to Lisa last year plus handling fees. Brad said our present commitment is only [REDACTED], plus we will need a few hundred dollars for paying the accountant/auditor to file our tax returns. The quoted auditor cost for 2015 is [REDACTED]; in 2014 it was [REDACTED].
- Brad reiterated what Ray said - we need to get together face to face to figure things out for the long term. He suggested for now that we transfer [REDACTED]

from the endowment to our checking account and hopefully we can transfer it back at some point this year.

- Elaine made a motion to transfer [REDACTED] from the Vanguard endowment to our checking account. Heath seconded the motion and all were in favor. This transfer was not done carelessly and we need to list why we did this and break it down. It is to cover [REDACTED] of Lisa's salary through Jan. 17; the auditor payment of [REDACTED] and to cover the next couple months of Lisa's salary.
- Jessica will do the transfer and send an email to Ray about how to do this. The face to face meeting will be our next meeting, March 18, hopefully in Auburn. Jason will check to see if there is a room available.
- Elaine moved that the Treasurer's Year End Report be approved, Heath seconded the motion and all were in favor.

b) 2015 Budget Planning

- Heath moved to table this item; Ray seconded. This will be discussed in person at the March meeting

5) Website migration follow-up and decision making.

- Pat was not on the conference call so Jess will follow up with Carol and Pat to try to figure out costs.
- Heath wondered if we have a Facebook account. Facebook could be used to funnel people to our website.
- Jason said that he and Lisa could look into this. Jason has the administrative powers for the Cayuga SWCD Facebook page. He said we could make SWCS Facebook as a spin-off of Cayuga SWCD's or it could be a separate account. Jess thinks it should be a separate account. Heath said that whoever administers Facebook should have them on the friends list. Jess said that she had Facebook set up discussion on her possible 2015 goals list.

6) Goals for 2015 – State of the Council

- We need to decide if we are going to sell or not sell the stormwater books.
- We need to get more members. Jess wondered if we had ever done a survey of our members to find out why people rejoin and what would they like to see the chapter doing. This might help gauge where we are going and what we want to do.
- Ray wondered who runs the Envirothon and Elaine said the SWCD's do.
- Ray also wondered who develops the topic for the tour and Heath said that ideas are discussed amongst the Board and we always try to have the topic be something innovative.
- Pat had suggested at the Annual Meeting that we might visit farms where weather stations have been installed. Ray said in NJ, they had an integrated water management program that covered irrigation needs, etc. A farmer could key in their crop and the soil type and get a recommendation on water needs. They had 27 stations set up to help with this. Heath said that the Cornell Adapt N program gives up-to-the-minute nitrogen recommendations.

- Jess asked the Board to be thinking about other ideas for the summer tour and for this year's annual meeting as well.
 - Jess said she will email the Board about the website and about the site for the next meeting. (See addendum below re: website)
- 7) Brad made a motion to adjourn. Seconded by Ray and all in favor. Meeting adjourned around 2:40 pm.

Minutes taken by Elaine Dalrymple, Secretary

Addendum

The following was approved via email the Feb 2, 2015.

Brad made a motion to purchase the Pro Plus plan from Webstarts so that Carol can begin the migration as soon as possible. Their website quotes the price at [REDACTED] per month, with a full years payments due up front. This comes to [REDACTED]. The website also says [REDACTED] is a "today only price" but don't know if this is just a marketing gimmick. It looks like their normal price is [REDACTED]/mo (this would mean [REDACTED] up front instead of [REDACTED]). Either way Brad moved that we get it moving. Elaine seconded the motion such that either price is ok. Scott, Heath, Elaine, Jess and Brad voted in favor.