

Empire Chapter – Soil and Water Conservation Society

Meeting Minutes

Conference Call

1PM – 3:10PM

August 20, 2014

- 1) Welcome – Brad called the meeting to order at 1:05 pm.
 - Brad Schwab, Jessica Sargis, Elaine Dalrymple, Ray Mueller, Pat Barry, and Lisa Miller were on the call.
- 2) Review/Approval of minutes from the June 18, 2014 meeting. Ray moved to accept the minutes, Brad seconded and all were in favor. Pat will post them on the website.
- 3) Review the Treasurer's Report and Lisa's invoice
 - a) Treasurer's Report
 - Ray went over the main points of the report that had been emailed to everyone ahead of the meeting. There has been [REDACTED] in total income for the year and [REDACTED] in expenses. With other income (sales tax credit) added in, there is a net income of [REDACTED] as of Aug 16, 2014. In the Endowment accounts through June 30, 2014: Vanguard Fletcher Endowment has a gain of \$405.02 with a balance of [REDACTED] and the regular Vanguard Endowment has a gain of [REDACTED] with a balance of [REDACTED]. Lisa has said there has been [REDACTED] in sales of stormwater books since the last meeting.
 - Lisa sent the Board members a report on the income and expenses from the 2013 Annual Meeting (which fell into two different bookkeeping years) as requested by Jess. The last annual meeting had a profit of [REDACTED].
 - Brad mentioned that he is trying to keep tabs on the checking account. Right now there is only [REDACTED] in it and we pay Lisa from the checking account. We need to have an operating income.
 - Lisa asked whether Jess switched the signature required to manage the Vanguard account to Ray. Jess still needs to do this. Jess said we can only take a certain amount out of the account without a fee.
 - Elaine made a motion to accept the Treasurer's report as presented, Jess seconded the motion and all were in favor.
- 4) Low publication sales/cash flow support measures
 - Brad reminded the Board where we are at present, [REDACTED] in the checking account and on a monthly basis, we have anywhere from [REDACTED] worth of bills. We also pay the Mini-grant applications out of the checking account. To support this year's application from the Conservation District Employees Assoc. (CDEA) for the Conservation Skills Workshop, we will need to take money from the Vanguard Endowment. The mini-grant applicant must be a member. Brad thought we might get a new member with this year's application and was a little disappointed as it came in under Doug Fisher's name, who is already a member.

- Pat said that the website is very important for book sales and membership but that it would be nice if we got new members through the mini-grant applications as well.
- Pat asked if any assurance had been given to the CDEA that this year's mini-grant application would be fully funded and Brad said he had not but we have funded this program for a number of years. Last year [REDACTED] was requested; this year [REDACTED] was requested. Last year we moved money from the National Conference line item in our budget to mini-grants to pay for it.
- Someone wondered if we should ask for membership when we advertise the mini-grant.
- Brad proposed to move [REDACTED] from the Vanguard endowment to the checking account, [REDACTED] of which will go to pay the mini-grant application for the Conservation Skills workshop and [REDACTED] will go into our operating account. Also, when the check is sent, Brad will enclose a letter to Doug Fisher explaining why we are not funding the application to the full extent - that SWCS publication sales are slow as are our membership renewals. He will also write that CDEA should be aware that we may not be able to support this program every year in the future and they may need to find other funding sources. We will also ask them to promote SWCS membership at the workshop and to take pictures of some of Conservation Skills training sessions so we can use them on our website. Someone mentioned that there is a stormwater training session at the Conservation Skills training program and this would be a good venue to promote our books. Pat said we should state that increased membership means we can support more mini-grants. Brad will enclose membership applications and book order forms in the letter to Doug Fisher. Jess made a motion for all of the above, seconded by Elaine and all were in favor.
- Ray's name needs to be on the Vanguard account so that money can be transferred. Brad will get the letter to Doug Fisher to Lisa so she can send it with the check for [REDACTED]. This should get done by next week.
- Jess has lots of membership forms and will send them to Lisa. Jess will request that the [REDACTED] get transferred from Vanguard to checking account today.

5) Status of action items from the 6/18 meeting

- Ray has contacted Cammie at the national office in Ankeny about student chapters. Cornell has 3 students enrolled. Lisa will send Ray the email address for Anne Moore at SUNY-ESF. Someone said Paul Ray, retired NRCS employee, used to be active with the ESF student chapter. Ray never heard back from Paul Richards at Brockport. Ray will follow-up with Cornell, ESF and Brockport. Ray said that you need a large pool of students at a college to have a viable student chapter in his experience. This would principally be SUNY schools with environmental science departments. Ray will write a letter to be sent to colleges about forming student SWCS chapters and run it by the Board first.
- Elaine drafted a letter with Brad to the stormwater trainers list provided by DEC and Lisa sent it out. Elaine sent her bio to Pat for the website.

- Pat has posted the minutes on the website except 6/18 as he was waiting for approval before posting. Heath and Jess still need to provide photos and bios and Pat needs to post his bio.
- Lisa did necessary paperwork for Ray to be on the checking account. She set up the step pricing system with Paypal for the contractor notebooks and she updated the website. Ancient Wisdom, who provides technical support of our website, charged [REDACTED] for setting up the step pricing for Paypal.
- Brad sent a letter to Greg Kist, the new State Conservationist, about how NRCS has supported the Empire Chapter in the past. He received no response to date.
- Brad talked to Dave Gasper of DEC about whether or not there would be any grants to support publications and Dave was not encouraging. Brad also asked Don Lake about proprietary rights for the stormwater books and Don said they belong to DEC and they control the information. Don said he thought the agreement between DEC and the Empire Chapter, which is rather informal, should allow us to put together an application such that we would get paid for on-line purchases of the stormwater books. If we did decide to pursue such an application, it would probably require further discussion with the DEC. The 'Blue Book' (Standards and Specifications for Erosion and Sediment Control) is presently being revised and is almost done.
- Jess did attend the planning meeting for the soil health event that was held near Batavia on 8/19. NRCS had lots of sponsors for this event and it would have been too late at that point to get our name on the publicity if we sponsored as well. Jess said she was not sure what it would have gotten us to co-sponsor it. Next year would be better if such a program is held again.

6) Ancient Wisdom (website) software upgrades

- Pat, Brad and Pat's wife, Carol, who has been helping to manage the website, met with an Ancient Wisdom employee. We have been using Webtree software (purchased 5 years ago) but Ancient Wisdom will not support it after the end of this year. Webtree has not been updated to keep up with Smartphones and will eventually be obsolete. Wordpress is an open source product that is free and constantly updated by Google to deal with new browsers and servers.
- Pat reiterated that our website helps enhance our revenue.
- Brad said we will have to do something about our website, the question is how do we get from here to there, so to speak.
- If we update our own website with an open source product, someone will need to provide technical support.
- Ancient Wisdom said they would charge [REDACTED] to migrate information on our present website to a new one. We should get other price quotes for doing this. Ancient Wisdom has provided us with a server.
- Lisa said she set up 1 website for Cayuga Co. SWCD using Weebly, a free, open source product. She also maintains it. Elaine said a technician in the Schuyler SWCD office also set up their website.

- Setting up Paypal on the present website took a lot of time. Paypal needs to be set up by zipcode.
- We have until December to decide what to do, really even longer in that there are no problems with the website just starting in January there will be no one to fix any bugs that may occur i.e. no safety net.
- Everyone should get ideas and leads to Pat and Brad. Lisa knows a computer person and will contact him.
- Brad said Ancient Wisdom are nice folks and they are located in Ithaca. They can put in a method to track who uses our website and make it more enticing visually. They would be providing an option to rebrand.

7) Website Updates

- Ray sent his photo and bio to Pat.
- Still need bios and photos for Jess, and Heath and bio for Pat.

8) Contacting members who have lapsed

- Pat said he would contact Don Pettit, Dave Mortenson and Josh Hornesky.
- Elaine will contact Ellen Luchsinger and Lisa Fields.
- Lisa will contact Dana Chapman.
- Brad will contact all the other previous members whose memberships have lapsed.
- Two student members have graduated.

9) 2019 Council Positions open for nominations

- Brad said the President Elect (3 year term) and Secretary are important to fill. Elaine said she would be secretary again (1 year term).
- Brad hopes that Heath will agree to stay as Region 1 rep. Region 2 and 3 are still open, as is Vice President.

10) Annual meeting planning

- Date of Nov. 18 was set.
- Jess contacted Greg Albrecht about speaker ideas but has not heard back from him.
- Having Larry Goehring talk about bioreactors was suggested, maybe Roger Ort from Cornell Cooperative Extension of Schuyler Co. on different vegetable and fruit varieties that would be good in the State with climate change taken into consideration. A speaker on stormwater was also mentioned.
- If anyone hears a good speaker, suggest him or her to Jess.

11) Next meeting- October 15, 1- 3 pm. There may be a smaller meeting before this to finalize the Annual meeting speakers and agenda.

12) Meeting adjourned at 3:10 pm on motion by Brad, seconded by Ray, all in favor

Minutes taken by Elaine Dalrymple, Secretary

Addenda

The following was approved via email the first week of September, 2014.

The Council approved free annual meeting registrations for up to 5 students to be chosen by Dr. Paul Richards at SUNY Brockport. This is a measure to increase our exposure to potential student members. Brad, Scott, Jess, Pat, Elaine, and Heath voted in favor. Cherie, and Ray abstained from voting for unknown reasons.

The students will complete registration forms (without payment) and include a note on the form that they are one of the 5. Lisa, please be prepared to track these registration forms and document for us how many were received.

The following was approved via email on September 30, 2014

The Council approved the proposal to reduce the annual scholarships from 2 to 1. The amount of the single scholarship awarded will remain [REDACTED]. This change in scholarship policy will remain in effect until such time that the Council makes a formal change at a future date. This will prevent the need to update the scholarship information on the website annually. The motion was made by Pat and seconded by Scott. Pat, Scott, Jess, Brad, and Elaine voted in favor. Cherie, Heath, and Ray abstained from voting for unknown reasons.