

Empire Chapter – Soil and Water Conservation Society

Annual Business Meeting Minutes

January 22, 2014

The Natural Resource Center
7413 County House Road
Auburn, NY 13021

1) Welcome

Present were Brad Schwab, Cherie Sage, Lisa Miller, Pete Wright, Doug fisher, Jenna Swartourt (scholarship recipient), Pat Barry, Dana Chapman, Heath Eisele, Scott Fitcher. Others filled in later.

Administrative

2) Treasurers Report (L. Miller & J. Sargis)

Lisa explained the treasurers report and that we are in the black from 2013, even after replacing the publication outlay (for updating the Contractor's Field Notebook).

Net income for 2013 was [REDACTED] from sales.

All reconciliations on accounts were done and ready for accountant. The accountant quote this year for our 990 filing may be over [REDACTED]. This is a dilemma, as our quote last year was [REDACTED]. (The accountant is asking [REDACTED] for the spreadsheet she set up last year and [REDACTED] for this coming year) Discussion ensued including looking at other accountants and getting a quote in writing from our current accountant. It was the consensus that the pricing isn't outrageous, but that we should explore the options. Lisa will send info to Brad so that he can forward it to an accountant he knows for a quote, and we will vote in upcoming meetings or via email. Manual, guide and publication areas are areas to discuss with the budget going forward. We need a whole meeting on this.

Heath brought up the point of the legal issues or how to protect our rights of publications because we take on all the cost of updates and printing while the publications are available through the NYS DEC website to download for free. We need to make some changes going forward with publications to be state of the art. This area of income is dwindling. Suggestions were to speak with the DEC to discourage free download, or obtain a grant for our work; also create an app.

There was not quorum for accepting the report, so a vote was not taken.

After the meeting, via email, Scott Fitcher proposed accepting the treasurer's report for the 2013 year end and also the 14 days of 2014. Jessica seconded it and it was approved.

3) Lisa's Invoice 13-11 (Jessica Sargis)

Jess was not in at this time due to weather. We did not need to discuss Lisa's invoice. Jess will send her a check asap.

4)

The results of Council elections are:

- a) Past President-Cherie Sage (term ends 11/2014)
- b) President-Brad Schwab (term ends 11/2015)
- c) President Elect-Jessica Sargis (term ends 11/2016)
- d) Vice President-No accepted nominations (1 year term)
- e) Secretary-Elaine Dalrymple (term ends 11/2014)
- f) Treasurer-No accepted nominations (3 year term)
- g) Region 1 Representative-Heath Eisele (term ends 11/2014)
- h) Region 2 Representative-No accepted nominations (2 year term)
- i) Region 3 Representative-No accepted nominations (1 year term)
- j) Region 4 Representative-Scott Fitscher (term ends 11/2015)
- k) At Large Representative-Pat Barry (term ends 11/2015)

Heath motioned to accept the slate of officers as shown. Cherie seconded. It was sent out for an email vote.

5) State of the Chapter (B. Schwab)

Brad opened the floor for discussion on the subject of decreasing membership. Pete Wright explained that it seems that NRCS used to promote membership in the society as a smart career move. Federal government ethic rules don't want the appearance that the government is supporting a specific group so the organization is backing off on promoting any professional organization. Pat suggested drawing membership from retirees. Jenna suggested that student chapters can be big, as students want to network and learn. New employees are an avenue that Heath suggested. Pete says concentrate on what motivates us...scholarships etc. Pat added that the NRCS plant material center does great workshops. Maybe we don't need to put on our own functions, but piggyback and sponsor other organizations. Cherie suggested that we may want to bump up the mini grants in the budget this year to do this. Brad asked a rhetorical question "do we need to change bylaws and put less positions?" since we are having trouble filling the seats. Heath mentioned that we need to hone in on what sets us apart from the other organizations and explain that every chance we get. It was suggested that there are too many similar organizations and not enough partnering. It was noted that Trout Unlimited has a lot of money and is interested in what we do-soil and water conservation. Perhaps we need to find out how we can partner.

6) National Awards & Regional Director Nominations (C. Sage)

Cherie read the information about awards sent by email from National President Bill Boyer. There are a number of awards that members are eligible for. The position of Regional Director is also available on the east coast/north east. If someone is interested in this position Cherie will forward the outline of needs and responsibilities of the position.

7) Website Upkeep (B. Schwab)

We need help.

8) Other?

We had a resolution accepting Brad Schwab, Lisa Miller, and Jessica Sargis to be signors on the bank account at First Niagara and Cherie will not be a signor. The scholarship recipients for 2013 were Jenna Swartout and Katharine Leigh. Lisa and Jessica processed the checks to them.

9) Cherie motioned to adjourn

Brad seconded it.

Programmatic

10) Schedule 2014 Council Meetings, bi-monthly (B. Schwab)

Brad will email this to council.