I. CALL TO ORDER

Ms. Lattimer called the meeting to order and asked Mr. Malter to lead the Pledge of Allegiance.

II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

MOTION: APPROVING THE MINUTES OF THE JULY 7, 2021, AND JULY 26, 2021, MEETINGS MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MRS. FERRATELLA. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.

III. OUTSIDE AGENCIES

A. Cornell Cooperative Extension

1. **2022 Budget Presentation** – Ms. McKinley provided a PowerPoint presentation. She stated she is requesting $409,000 which remains flat from last year’s request. Cornell Cooperative Extension is made up of 14 local staff and 16 regional agricultural staff. We are funded by Federal, State and County funds. Our 2021 appropriation was used to help fund our participation in the Cornell Agricultural Teams which consists of the Cornell Vegetable Program, Finger Lakes Grape Program and the Southwest New York Dairy, Livestock and Field Crops Team. We also used the appropriation for our County agriculture program, the 4-H program and for financial and consumer education.

Ms. McKinley stated during COVID we provided support for County COVID-19 clinics and also partnered with the Farm Bureau, Public Health and area health care providers to encourage farmers and workers to get vaccinated. We distributed free hand sanitizer and face masks to farmers and 4-H clubs. She stated they distributed 3,000 boredom buster kits to youth and 4-Hers throughout the County. They are currently distributing 1,000 container gardening kits to low-income families. She stated they also continued the PPP and CFAP loans for farmers; helping with education and to complete paperwork.

Ms. McKinley stated with our 4-H program we have increased enrollment, even during the pandemic. We are offering 4-Hers new classes around ice fishing, shooting sports, tractor safety, robotics and STEAM. She stated they also led a successful fundraising campaign for 4-H bathrooms at the fairgrounds. With our agriculture programs we have received increased inquiries from both farmers and the general public. We have continued to hold classes, both in person and via Zoom for farmers, students and the general public around agriculture. Ms. McKinley stated we continue to offer financial and consumer wellness classes to both youth and adults and these are being held in-person and online. We also trained 17 new Master Money Mentors and they are providing
financial budgeting help to people in need. We held nutrition classes online and in-person to youth and adults and we also participated in the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program. She stated for 2022 we will continue our hybrid approach of online and in-person information and classes. We will also continue to recruit more volunteer leaders and 4-H youth and will continue to support local farmers with education and consulting. She stated they will continue to get more agricultural programming in schools and will also continue the Fruit and Vegetable Prescription Program. Ms. McKinley stated they are looking to become more financially sustainable and are looking at putting some savings into investments. The 4-H bathrooms have been started and are completed or close to completion.

Ms. McKinley stated Fair is our biggest time of year and the entire 4-H building will be filled with projects that our youth have been working on. The youth do these projects all on their own without parental help. She noted the animals are raised by the 4-Hers. Please support us by attending the Fair which will be held August 16th – 22nd.

Ms. Fitzpatrick commented the 4-H program really does amazing work. I participated in and judged the Dairy parade and they put together some amazing floats and it was a lot of fun. These kids and their families are enthusiastic and it is important to continue a program like this.

Ms. Lattimer stated we are grateful for your level funding request and it appears that your agency is hedging on expanding some programing. That is commendable; thank you for that.

B. Steuben County Soil & Water Conservation District

1. 2022 Budget Presentation – Mr. Parker presented a PowerPoint presentation. He stated during COVID we stayed working every day as we were deemed necessary. We continued working with farm communities and the municipalities. Mr. Parker reviewed his activity update. He noted they did hire a new District Technician and that individual has been with us for a couple of months. By the end of this year we will have completed a total of 43 stabilization projects. We completed a manure storage facility under the Ag Nonpoint Source Pollution Grant and we have begun work on a covered barnyard under the same grant. We have been working with six producers on completing their Best Management Practices in the AEM (Agricultural Environmental Management Program) for cover cropping and prescribed grazing system. He stated they have completed two gravel pit renewals for two municipalities and will have another one due in October. We submitted six stream permits to DEC and we completed seven pond evaluations. He stated we have also been working with two other Conservation Districts on developing a Road Ditch Stabilization manual.

Mr. Parker reviewed his 2022 budget request. He stated most of the funding from the County is used for personnel and salaries. We are working on getting a couple more individuals hired as we need a new ag person and an ag assistant. He is requesting a $3,000 increase. We did receive State funds last year with no reductions and we do not anticipate any reductions this year. He noted that they will not be receiving about $60,000 in Federal funds. Mr. Parker stated the $75,000 for the District Streambank Program is all used for cost sharing projects with landowners and municipalities. The County funds used for this program are matched with about 25 percent, so we get about $100,000. He noted the State grant program has been shut down for two years. Those funds in the past have been used to match the $75,000 allocation from the County to bring in $200,000. We will not be able to continue with that.

Mr. Parker reviewed his 2022 outlook which includes working towards hiring another individual as an Agricultural Technician; continuing to work on implementing streambank projects under the Streambank Stabilization Program, continuing collaboration with Upper Susquehanna Coalition on documenting best practices county-wide and continuing to work with every municipality and County DPW on infrastructure projects.

Mr. Van Etten stated I had talked with Mr. Parker earlier regarding the gap in the State grant program and I suggested that maybe we could consider some of the ARPA funds to assist them with staying at least level where they were at. This is one agency that does a lot of work for the County and it would be good to consider
supporting them. Mrs. Ferratella stated I agree and they also support the municipalities. Mr. Hanna commented they also do great work around the lake.

Ms. Lattimer asked what information have you gotten from the State for the start up of the grant? Mr. Parker replied the grant will start up again this next season. Any applications submitted this year may get approved by next year. The funding of the contract would go out in the third year. Ms. Lattimer asked has there been any mention on the State level to tap into Federal dollars that the State received to get the grant program going? Mr. Parker replied I don’t know. I would have to ask my State association. Ms. Lattimer asked how much money are we talking about? Mr. Parker replied $200,000 - $250,000. Ms. Lattimer asked is it one year of funding that you are missing? Mr. Parker replied over two years it would be $250,000. We are using some reserves that I had put away for a rainy day. We are funneling those funds back into the streambank program. Mr. Swackhamer asked what was the timeframe that the $250,000 would cover? Mr. Parker replied two years. Mr. Malter asked that would be 2021 and 2022? Mr. Parker replied yes.

Mrs. Lando asked have you had any issues trying to hire new people? Mr. Parker replied yes it has been difficult finding people. Ms. Lattimer asked is that because of skill set or salaries? Mr. Parker replied probably both. It is difficult to find individuals coming out of a four-year program that we can draw in because of the lower salaries that we pay. I am willing to bring them in at over $20.00 per hour, and then hopefully increase the salary. We do provide health benefits. We are not in the State retirement system, but we do have an IRA system set up.

Ms. Fitzpatrick asked with the grant money, if it was funded from ARPA funds, do you have a reserve in place or is it earmarked for specific purposes? Mr. Parker replied no, it is unrestricted. Mr. Van Etten stated his reserves are dwindling down and he will have a two year funding gap. Ms. Fitzpatrick asked how much do you have? Mr. Parker replied I have two Federal projects to do that will cost $200,000 and I have to get them done. Hopefully that will be replaced by Federal funds and we have contracts for those.

Mr. Van Etten commented $27,000 for insurance seems high. Is our Risk Manager able to help? Ms. Prossick replied I don’t think it is a problem, but we can look into that. Mr. Wheeler stated if he is just reviewing, I don’t think it is a problem. Mr. Parker stated the Risk Manager had reviewed this a number of years ago.

Ms. Lattimer thanked Mr. Parker for his good work. We will give serious consideration to Mr. Van Etten’s suggestion about ARPA funding. Mr. Wheeler stated I have received a few requests and I am compiling them and we will discuss them at next week’s Ad Hoc Reopening & Recovery Committee meeting.

**MOTION: TO ADJOURN MADE BY MRS. LANDO. SECONDED BY MR. VAN CAESEELE. ALL BEING IN FAVOR. MOTION CARRIES 5-0.**

Respectfully Submitted by Amanda L. Chapman, Deputy Clerk, Steuben County Legislature

**NEXT MEETING SCHEDULED FOR**

Wednesday, September 1, 2021
9:30 a.m.

Please send agenda items to the Clerk of the Legislature’s Office

NO LATER THAN NOON

Wednesday, August 25, 2021