

**Chenango County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board  
January 17, 2020- MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Kenneth Ryan;  
Sup. John Lawrence; Sup. George Seneck; Sup. Marge Davis;  
Stan Davis; Nora Ling-Browning, Stephen Harris

**Guests Present:** Sandy Pierce (Norwich Farmers Market)

**Restructuring of Members**

Mr. Katusha called the meeting to order at 10:06am.

Mr. Butler explained that for purposes of restructuring the Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board (AFPB) members a temporary chairman had to be appointed.

Mr. Katusha asked for a temporary Chairman of the AFPB.

**Sup. Seneck moved, seconded by Mr. Harris, to appoint Mr. Corey Katusha temporary chairman of the AFPB. All members voted ayes, motion carried.**

Mr. Katusha asked for nominations for the chair, vice-chair, and secretary to the AFPB.

**Sup. Seneck moved, seconded by Mr. Harris, to appoint Mr. Terry Ives as chairman of the AFPB. Members voted all ayes, motion carried**

**Sup. Seneck moved, seconded by Mr. Ryan, to appoint Mr. Stan Davis as vice-chairman of the AFPB. Members voted all ayes, motion carried**

**Sup. Lawrence moved, seconded by Sup. Seneck to appoint Mr. Ken Ryan as secretary of the AFPB. Members voted all ayes, motion carried**

The 2020 Structure of the AFPB is as follows:

Mr. Terry Ives: Chairman

Mr. Stan Davis: Vice-Chairman

Mr. Ken Ryan: Secretary

**Minutes**

Mr. Ryan asked for any additions or corrections to the November 15, 2019 meeting minutes. Sup. Lawrence requested clarification on the topic of the Soil and Water Districts hydro seeder. The hydro seeder would be operated by a Soil and Water employee, the machine would not be given for use by a municipality.

**Sup. Seneck moved, seconded by Ms. Ling-Browning, to approve the minutes with the correction. Members voted all ayes, motion carried.**

**Ag Tour Locations**

Mr. Katusha stated that he has reached out to an Amish farm in Guilford with the help of Mr. Rich Tabor of CCE. The farm would be interested in being an Ag Tour location and would provide a lunch. When last brought to the AFPB members stated they would like to pay or provide a donation for the food. Mr. Katusha stated that he would reach out to Mr. Tabor on the logistics. Mr. Katusha contacted a hemp farm in the Afton/Bainbridge area. The hemp farm operated by Mr. Bruce Kellogg is interested in being a tour location as well. Mr. Katusha has reached out to Fantasy Fruit Farms in Afton, but has not had any return communications. Mr. Smith stated he may be able to help with contacting Fantasy Fruit Farms. Mr. Katusha stated he was looking for the members to pick a date in July when to hold the Ag Tour. The day that seemed the best was July 24<sup>th</sup>. Members agreed to host the 2020 Chenango

County Ag Tour on July 24<sup>th</sup>, 2020.

### **Updating the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan:**

Mr. Katusha stated that he is working on updating the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. The last plan was done in 2012 and a new Census of agriculture was taken since. One part of the plan is public outreach which can be done through surveys, interviews, or a community forum. Mr. Katusha asked if members had any preference as to what public participation approach was taken. Sup. Seneck asked if more than one approach could be taken. Mr. Katusha stated he has seen plans with more than one or all three approaches. Sup. Seneck suggested a survey and hosting a community forum if the logistics could be worked out. Mr. Katusha stated he would begin developing survey questions and think about a community forum.

### **ADC**

Mr. Smith stated that the ADC was adding natural resources to its mission. Mr. Smith feels this allows the ADC to expand into other areas as farms transition. The ADC is looking to do a standalone event possibly around Dairy day at the Fairgrounds to take the place of the Farm to Fork event. Mr. Smith and Mr. Tabor would be attending the Farm Show in Syracuse with a display on Chenango County. Sup. Lawrence asked if the display would have anything on it regarding the benefits of whole fat milk. Mr. Smith stated he could find some information and place it on the display.

### **Animal Welfare**

Mr. Smith stated that he received a phone call from Oneida County Farm Bureau about the animal welfare program and possibility of providing training. Mr. Smith stated that New York State is interested in having the training available throughout the State. Mr. Ryan stated his displeasure with rodeos and asked if anything could be done to educate people about them. Mr. Smith stated that maybe that could be discussed next meeting.

### **Privilege of the Floor**

**Sup. Lawrence** stated that the Soil and Water is having their annual tree and shrub planting program. Forms are available if anyone is interested. The Soil and Water District Office is hosting an open house at 10am at the CCE in Norwich on March 3<sup>rd</sup>.

**Ms. Ling-Browning** stated that Mr. Steve Palmatier is working with SUNY Morrisville to develop an entrepreneur center. Ms. Shelia Marshman is working on a possible commercial kitchen with St. Bart's. Ms. Ling-Browning felt these two entities were better served at developing these ideas. She would take a step back from the projects and work on developing her farm. Sup. Lawrence asked if the Norwich Meadows Farm's new building could accommodate local farmers bringing in products. Mr. Butler stated that Norwich Meadows would most likely at first not accept any outside products. Mr. Smith stated that he has been working with Norwich Meadows on developing a space and building for their needs. Mr. Smith also stated that for a commercial kitchen Nelson Farms on Morrisville would be the best option.

**Mr. Katusha** stated that the Planning Department is working on ways to promote the 2020 Census. Mr. Katusha was looking at ways to educate farmers about the importance of the Census. Mr. Smith stated that he could place something on the display he is taking to Syracuse as well as put something in the CCE's newsletter.

**Sup. Seneck** stated that four (4) dairy farms have sold out since October. Hanehan farms in Guilford is expanding and will most likely pick up production from the lost farms. A contractor for NYSEG is working on replacing poles for a high power transmission line. While doing the work the Town of Guilford's roads have been damaged from the heavy traffic and equipment. Sup. Seneck is hoping to meet with the contractor to discuss the road use and repair.

**Mr. Harris** stated that property tax bills have gone out. The renewals for the Ag Exemption are due in March. Issues with the STAR tax credit have occurred for those that do not file a New York State tax return. The State verifies income qualification from the tax returns and is unable to do so if not filed.

**Mr. Smith** stated that he was working with Norwich Meadow Farms to develop a space for cold storage and vegetable packaging. Mr. Smith thinks a building on Kemper road would work well. Mr. Smith is working with the Planning Department and Commerce Chenango on outdoor recreation pamphlets.

**Ms. Sandy Pierce** stated her opposition to past decisions she feels were discriminatory to the Norwich Farmers Market. Ms. Pierce feels that the City of Norwich, Chenango County, Norwich Bid and Agricultural Buildings & Grounds have interfered with farmer income and promotion of agriculture. Ms. Pierce requested the following:

1. that the new mayor and Mr. Wilcox come to a public meeting to discuss the need of a formal agreement between the city and the county to protect against any further abuses which have interfered with farmer income and promotion of agriculture in this county.
2. We be given an explanation as to why non-elected individuals are allowed to make policies regarding the use of the park that are openly discriminatory and in direct violation of city code and county permit requirements.

**With no further discussion meeting adjourn at 10:43am.**

**The next meeting will be held on February 21, 2020 at 10:00 AM.**

Minutes prepared by Corey Katusha, Planner

DRAFT

**Chenango County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board**  
**February 21, 2020- MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Terry Ives, Nora Ling-Browning, Ken Ryan, Stan Davis,  
Bradd Vickers, Sup. Marge Davis, Sup. John Lawrence, Stephen Harris,  
Shane Butler, Ken Smith, Sup. George Seneck, Rob DeClue, Corey Katusha

**Guests Present:** Sandy Pierce (Norwich Farmers Market)

**Minutes**

Mr. Ives asked if there were any amendments to last meetings minutes. Mr. Katusha stated that Ms. Sandy Pierce had a clarification regarding last meeting's minutes. Discussion followed regarding the clarification. After discussion the minutes were accepted as presented with Ms. Pierce's request denied, but told to bring up her comments during this meeting.

**Sup. Lawrence moved, seconded by Mr. Vickers, to approve the minutes as presented. Members voted all ayes, motion carried.**

**Ag Tour Locations**

Mr. Katusha stated that as of today the locations for the 2020 Ag tour were the Troyer Amish farm in Guilford, and the Kellogg Hemp Farm in Bainbridge. Mr. Katusha stated the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) location Fantasy Fruit Farms in Afton was unsure if they would be available for the tour. Mr. Katusha has reached out to Marshman farms in Oxford as a backup location. Mr. Katusha stated that the Troyer farm expressed interest in providing lunch which the AFPB will pay for. Mr. Rich Taber of CCE, who helped to setup the location, thought \$500 for the lunch would be sufficient. Mr. Katusha has looked back on previous years when the AFPB paid for lunch and found \$500 for the lunch to be average. Mr. Butler stated the \$500 would be used as a donation for the new school house being built.

**Sup. Davis moved, seconded by Sup. Lawrence, to approve \$500 for the lunch at Troyer Amish farm. Members voted all ayes, motion carried.**

**Updating the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan:**

Mr. Katusha had developed some survey questions to send out to Chenango County farmers for information to draft a new Chenango County Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan. Members present read the survey questions and made edits. A draft of the survey is available in the County Planning Office. Mr. Katusha stated he would make the suggested changes and report back to the members with an updated draft. Discussion followed on the best way to send out the survey.

**ADC**

Mr. Smith stated that the ADC selected Jordan Fleming as the new chair. Mr. Fleming and Ms. Kim Cook are working on a project together.

**Animal Welfare**

Mr. Vickers had no updates on animal welfare at this time until summer.

**Privilege of the Floor**

**Mr. Katusha** stated he received a letter from NYSDOT regarding purchase of a property within an agricultural district to replace the Chenango river bridge. Mr. Katusha wanted to know if members had any comments regarding the project. Members had no comments.

**Mr. Harris** stated the renewals for the Ag Exemption are due March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020.

**Mr. Declue** offered the following updates:

- The Watershed Implementation Plan (WIP) has been sent to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with reduction in pollutions to the Susquehanna Watershed to be met by 2025. The largest targeted pollutant is nitrogen which is a main ingredient in most farmer's fertilizer.
  - Mr. Vickers asked if New York State (NYS) was close to meeting the target goal. Mr. DeClue stated that NYS was 1,000 lbs. short of the targeted goal. Due to how well NYS is with its pollutant levels it is often given the stricter target limits. Discussion followed on other states willingness to participate in program.
- Riparian buffer program is losing participants due to shrinking returns on investment.
- NYSDEC representing this area is short staffed and is having difficulty meeting expedited reporting requirements the EPA has requested.
- Ag complaints have been increasing mostly due to odor.
- The Soil and Water Strategic Plan is under development and will welcome AFPB comments.
- Concerns on climate change and its effects on Chenango County landscape, wildlife, and its impacts on farming.

**Mr. Vickers** offered the following updates:

- Details of his National Farm Bureau trip to Austin, TX. The Farmer Safety program held by Chenango County Farm Bureau (CCFB) was award winning.
- Lobby days are on March 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> in Albany
- Ag day for Chenango County will be held on March 20<sup>th</sup> from 11-2pm at the Silo Restaurant in Coventry.
- Movement for a gun sanctuary status in Chenango County

**Mr. Smith** stated that the current Field Crop Specialist is retiring. CCE will be looking for a replacement. Mr. Smith wondered if having someone with interest in non-traditional crops (Hemp) would be beneficial.

**Sup. Lawrence** stated that the April 19 2019 storm met the standards to qualify as a storm event, thereby allowing for funding via USDA loans for repair to farmland. A Cornell University educator, Mr. Mike Nuckols, developed a document for "Considerations When Leasing Agricultural Land to Solar Developers" that Sup. Lawrence found beneficial. Hemp has been added to the crop insurance program. Discussion on Hemp.

**Sup. Davis** stated that Farm Credit East is providing scholarships for Ag educators. The deadline to apply is April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020. The Holstein Association held their award program in January. Marshman Farms won the award for best Holstein. The FAA has approved a company to do crop pesticide spraying with drones.

**Mr. Ives** offered the following updates:

- On February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020 Mr. Ives attended a committee meeting with Congressman Brindisi. The Congressman discussed the United States Mexico and Canada (USMCA) trade deal and workforce modernization.
- The issue of hours of farm operation with the new NYS labor law for farm workers.
- The Hemp THC classification harvest approach is not working due to the climate
- Dairy prices keep rising and falling

**Sup. Seneck** stated that the Town of Guilford will be holding a program on Aging Grain Production. Discussion on High Bridge Wind project.

**Ms. Sandy Pierce** offered the following. The agreement between the City of Norwich and Chenango County that gave the Friends of The Park authority of East Park has expired quite a long time ago. The frequent discriminatory practices that have harmed the farmers marketing their product may have been avoided.

**Sup. Seneck moved, seconded by Sup. Lawrence, to send agreement to Ag Buildings and Grounds for review. Members voted**

**all ayes, motion carried.**

**With no further discussion meeting adjourn at 11:44am.**

**The next meeting will be held on March 20, 2020 at 10:00 AM.**

Minutes prepared by Corey Katusha, Planner

DRAFT

**Chenango County Agricultural & Farmland Protection Board  
July 17, 2020- MEETING MINUTES**

**Members Present:** Terry Ives, Ken Ryan, Stan Davis,  
Sup. Marge Davis, Sup. John Lawrence, Stephen Harris,  
Shane Butler, Sup. George Seneck, Corey Katusha

**Virtual:** Rich Taber, Bradd Vickers, Rob DeClue

Mr. Ives called the meeting to order at 10:08am

**Minutes**

Mr. Ives asked if there were any amendments to last meeting's minutes. Mr. Vickers stated that he was not at a National Farm Bureau event in Tennessee but in Austin, Texas. Mr. Ives stated that Mr. Jordan Fleming was not the chair of AFPB, but rather ADC.

**Sup. Seneck moved, seconded by Sup. Lawrence, to approve the minutes with the corrections. Members voted all ayes, motion carried.**

**Updating the Agricultural and Farmland Protection Plan:**

Mr. Katusha stated that at last meeting members reviewed a survey and approved changes. Mr. Katusha wondered when the best time to send out the survey would be. Mr. Ives stated that he felt anytime was proper and that people could fill it out when they had time available. However, vegetable farmers are busy harvesting, it might be beneficial to wait until after harvest time like December. Mr. Butler asked if members wanted to wait that long to send out the survey. Sup. Seneck thought it would be better to send it out soon and see what the response rate is and adjust from there. Other members agreed.

**ADC**

Mr. Smith was not available for update, Mr. Taber provided the update. Mr. Taber stated that due to the COVID-19 pandemic the ADC has been meeting regularly via Zoom. Mr. Jordan Fleming is now the new Chair of the ADC. Due to COVID-19 the ADC has not been able to do much. Mr. Ives asked if the ADC was going to be involved in the Ag Palooza that is rumored to take place at the County Fairgrounds. Mr. Taber stated that he didn't think ADC was involved. However, the 4-H members are looking into it.

**Animal Welfare**

Mr. Vickers had no updates on animal welfare at this time.

**Privilege of the Floor**

**Sup Lawrence:**

The COVID-19 food assistance payments have gone out. The Dairy Margin program for 2020 doesn't have a lot of sign ups so far. The CRP program is on the backburner due to COVID-19. Funding is expected to be released around September. The Soil and Water building is under a different phase of reopening than the rest of

the State. Public access is by appointment only. Doing outreach, filing requirements, and virtual meetings have been challenging. Mr. Ives stated that during a conversation with Mr. Brian Sheridan, of USDA, said that doing paperwork virtually could be the way things are done for a while.

**Mr. Ryan:**

Last year a severe weather microburst ruined his farmland in Oxford with flooding and debris. With help from the Farm Service Agency over \$8,000 in repair was done so the field is suitable for crops. Sup. Davis asked if the NYSDEC allowed for any repairs to the stream or river. Mr. Ryan stated that the NYSDEC allowed for repair to damaged sections of the stream. Mr. Ives asked if there are still strips in his oat crops. Mr. Ryan stated there still was and he is unsure of the exact cause.

**Sup. Seneck:**

A WebEx meeting is being held on Wednesday July 22<sup>nd</sup> at 10am with the State Citing Board for the High Bridge Wind project. The Town of Guilford will be attending but will only be able to listen in. The Department of Public Service has reached out to the Department of Ag and Markets regarding their comments and concerns are on the DPS website.

**Sup. Davis:**

Most events and activities are shut down or cancelled. The Davis's will be celebrating their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. Mr. Ives asked if there is any updates on Dairy Promotion or if a Dairy Princess had been crowned. Sup. Davis was unsure at this time.

**Mr. Vickers:**

The Chenango County Farm Bureau (CCFB) has been following all the State and Federal guidelines regarding COVID-19. The monthly meetings have been held by conference call and are going well. Representatives Assemblyman Crouch and Congressman Brindisi have been on a few calls. Mr. Vickers feels meetings have been better attended. There is no update on how State and National meetings will be held. A virtual meeting was held with President Trump as well as USDA Secretary Sunny Perdu. Mr. Vickers attended the meeting and was the 83<sup>rd</sup> participant. The meeting focused on many programs such as the Waters of the US and the requirements that have been removed by the President's Administration. The President's emphasized the importance of the upcoming elections. A honey bee disease named American Foulbrood (AFB) has been discovered in Binghamton. AFB is a bacterial disease that isn't able to be cured. The only way to manage the disease is through the destruction of the infected hives, colonies, and materials.

Mr. Ryan asked if there was an update on milk pricing. Mr. Ives stated that milk pricing is so mixed up that it's hard to make sense of it. Discussion on milk pricing followed.

**Mr. DeClue:**

Last month the Chenango County Soil and Water District finished its Best Management Practices survey for farmers. Two handouts were shared with the group, one being the Upper Susquehanna Coalition Bi-monthly Newsletter for June 19, 2020. Mr. DeClue brought attention to two articles in the newsletter one being the "Precision Feed Management" article and the other the "USC Member County Project Spotlights" article. The other handout was the "2020 Upper Susquehanna Watershed Virtual Forum" which has dates of virtual meetings for Watershed Wednesdays on a variety of topics. More information can be found on

uppersusquehanna.org. There are 2 Riparian Buffer Stewards in the office currently for the summer. They are helping evaluate and maintain riparian buffers for farmers.

**Mr. Taber:**

Some interesting things are happening in the world of beef. The NY Customs meat processing facility that has been closed since last fall will be reopening in the coming weeks. OCM-BOCES is starting a pilot program to teach students how to become meat cutters. Not sure who the sponsor for the program is. 4-H programs are going well under the circumstances. Recently attended a cattle auction, cattle prices were pretty good.

**Mr. Ives:**

Cropping season has been good so far, a little dry out.

**With no further discussion meeting adjourned at 10:50am.**

**The next meeting will be held on August 21, 2020 at 10:00 AM.** Minutes prepared by Corey Katusha,  
Planner