

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes January 11, 2021

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting on Monday, January 11, 2021 at 7:30am. Chairman Jeff O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:31am. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Jim Frogge, Alan Wissmiller, and Ed Brown, Resource Conservationist Emilie Watkins, and Educational Coordinator Crystal Sauder. Absent were Director Larry Kirchner, Associate Director John Settle, Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle, and District Conservationist Trenton Rader. Guest in attendance was Emy Brawley from The Conservation Fund.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Frogge made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to approve the agenda as printed with a small correction to the order. Motion passed three to zero.

APPOINTING OF ED BROWN TO DIRECTOR: O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to accept Peters' letter of resignation and appoint Brown to Director for the remainder of Peters' term. Motion passed three to zero.

CONSENT AGENDA: O'Connor made and Brown seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda. Motion passed four to zero.

SECRETARY REPORT:

Minutes of December 14, 2020 Board meeting

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Approval of Time and Travel
Approval of Financial Report
Approval of Bills

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

PFC Cost-Share – Watkins stated the District received a cost-share transfer from Kendall County for \$613.76 from FY2019 funds. There is over \$6,000 left of FY2020 funds to spend by December 31, 2021. She stated the FY2021 cost-share funds have not been released yet.

RCPP – Emy Brawley, the Great Lakes Regional Director, Conservation Acquisitions from the Conservation Fund joined the board meeting to discuss the District's involvement in holding

Land Easements. She gave a general overview on what the RCPP is and how it is funded. The District would hold the land easements for the local farmers and oversees monitoring the sites every year. Following the overview and the District's involvement, the Directors were able to ask more in-depth questions. It was discussed what the District's responsibility would be if the landowner does not comply with the easements, if there was no staff for the District, the time commitment of yearly monitoring reports, and what the farmers/landowners get out of putting their land in an easement.

Grants – Sauder shared the District will be moving forward with applying for two different grants. One grant will be for general operations funds and the other will be for the Manteno Habitat project for signage and walkways. Both grants are due by the end of March. Sauder will work on completing both applications before she leaves for vacation at the beginning of March. The State allocated how much money Districts are receiving this past summer, but the District has yet to receive it.

Outreach – Watkins shared herself and Sauder have attended a couple S.T.A.R. webinars and meetings. Watkins participated in the S.T.A.R. panel for the AISWCD webinar. She also had an interview with Mike Perrine on WIVR to promote the S.T.A.R. Program and our raffle. Watkins shared American Farmland Trust is starting a Pilot Incentive Program. The program gives a set dollar amount per acre based on the star increase for the field.

Sauder shared herself and Watkins are working on the Annual Winter Newsletter. There will be another round of Conservation Kits this year, with applications due in May. She will be working on preparing for the Virtual Kids Day at the Farm videos, trying to set up an Earth Day program with Taft, and doing a couple lessons during the Heldt Park Summer Program in Grant Park. Sauder shared the 2020 Outreach Report with the board. January had the highest number of visitors on our website throughout the year. There was a list of the top 10 pages viewed on the website. The three different sales pages were in the top five pages visited. In 2020, the District reached around 530 people in-person, around 3,630 people virtually, and 4,200 households reached through the Kankakee Farm Bureau paper.

2021 Election – Sauder shared we aren't able to have an in-person annual meeting this year due to COVID restriction. Because of this, the election and annual meeting will be held on separate days. There will be an 'election day' held at the K3SWCD office on February 3rd, from 7am until 5pm. Voters will pull into the parking lot, call the office, and an employee will bring the sign-in sheet and ballot out to the parking lot. Two notices of election will be run in the Daily Journal. Before the notices are sent to the Daily Journal, the addition of appointing Ed Brown will be added to the form.

NEW BUSINESS:

2021 Annual Meeting and Election – Watkins shared the date and time for the Election and Annual meeting need to be approved. Election will take place on February 8th at 7:30am. The Annual Meeting will follow directly after the election. Wissmissler made and Frogge seconded a motion approve the Election and Annual Meetings dates and times. Motion passed four to zero.

Peters Resignation – Watkins shared Peters sent his letter of resignation to the office and was effective 12/31/2020. Ed Brown will be appointed to fill Peter’s position as Director for the remainder of Peters’ term. Brown will be added to the ballot in February’s election for a one-year term, with re-election in 2022 for a full two-year term.

2021 Sales – Sauder shared she is working on finalizing the spring sale details. The tree and fish sales with have pick-up on either April 16th or April 23rd. Native plant sale pick-up will take place on Saturday, June 5th.

Watkins’ 2021 Work Schedule – Watkins shared the proposal to reduce her working hours down to 32 hours per week effective January 18th through April 30th. The reduction in hours will not affect state allocations. There was discussion on retirement contribution and healthcare stipend. Watkins’ healthcare stipend will stay the same with her retirement adjusting based on the hours she works and paycheck amount. Brown motions and Frogge seconded a motion to approve Watkins schedule change, keeping the healthcare stipend the same, and adjusting the retirement contribution based on how many hours worked. Motion passed four to zero.

Approval of 2021 Board Meeting Schedule – Watkins shared the board meeting schedule needs to be approved for 2021. The same schedule as used in years past will be kept this year. O’Connor made and Frogge seconded the approval of the board meeting schedule. Motion passed four to zero.

REPORTS – In addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC Report – Nothing additional

AC Report – Nothing additional

EC Report – Nothing additional

DC Report – None

FSA Report – None

Committee Reports – None

Wissmiller made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the Elections taking place on February 3rd from 7am-5pm and the Annual meeting to take place on February 8th at 7:30am with the regular board meeting to follow. The motion passed four to zero.

Wissmiller made and Frogge seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed four to zero. The meeting adjourned at 9:30am.