

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes May 10, 2021

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting on Monday, May 10, 2021 at 8:00 am. Chairman O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:50 am. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Alan Wissmiller, Larry Kirchner, Jim Frogge, and Ed Brown, Resource Conservationist Emilie Watkins, Educational Coordinator Crystal Sauder, and District Conservationist Trenton Rader. Absent were Associate Director John Settle and Administrator Coordinator Linda Settle.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: O'Connor made and Kirchner seconded a motion to approve the agenda with no additions. Motion passed five to zero.

CONSENT AGENDA: O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda with the addition of adding Association dues to the Bills for Approval and fixing the spelling error in the April Minutes. Motion passed five to zero.

SECRETARY REPORT:

Minutes of April 12, 2021 Board Meeting

TREASURER'S REPORT

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

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

UNFINISHED BUSINESS:

NRI Report – Watkins recommended the Board's approval for No Opposition for NRI Case #2021-02A and NRI Case #2021-02B. Brown made and Wissmiller seconded a motion of no opposition for NRI Case #2021-02A and #2021-02B contingent upon receiving payment for a special use permit for around 300MW photovoltaic facility in Salina and Essex. Motion passed five to zero. Watkins shared she will not release the NRI report until the final payment has been received at the office. Watkins recommended the Board's approval for a rezone of a parcel of land for NRI Case #2021-04. O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve a letter of do not oppose for NRI case #2021-04, a request for zoning change from A-1 to I-2 to park and store truck trailers. Motion passed five to zero.

Grants – Watkins had a conversation with Rebecca Judd from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation to review our proposal. Judd noted our application was one of the best she received and to be cautiously optimistic. Watkins stated she needed to send a couple additional pieces to Judd before the Conservation Fund Board will review proposals. Grants accepted for funding will be awarded in July 2021.

Education & Outreach – Sauder shared the Summer Outreach Schedule she has for the summer. She will continue to promote the different outreach programs this summer through our mailing list and post in different buildings around town. Sauder will reach out to BTPD to help us promote our programs with them.

Sales – Sauder shared we made a profit of \$2599.90 through our Fish Sale this spring. There was a profit of \$1818.50 from our Tree Sale this spring.

Ag Land Easements – Watkins shared there is nothing new to report with the Mantoan easement. She will begin to focus on agriculture impact fees. Watkins contacted American Farmland Trust and Kane County SWCD for their agriculture impact fees. The Board recommended to contact Chad Miller from the Farm Bureau about agriculture impact fees.

NEW BUSINESS:

State Funding – Watkins shared we received an email from Grant Hammer with the AISWCD stating “officials within the IDOA have indicated that FY2021 state operations funding will be released within 10 days.” Settle will keep an eye out on our account for when we receive those funds.

NRI Policy and Application – Watkins shared she would like to review, edit, and approve the “NRI application” and “NRI Policy & Procedures” documents. For the updates to the procedures, correspondence through certified mail will be changed to “through electronic communications with verified receipt.” An addition of “If, at any time throughout the NRI process, the petitioner alters or adds additional acreage to the project area, the District will have an additional 30 business days to complete the report upon receipt of the updated materials and new fee. The petitioner will be charged for any work already completed, and for an entirely new NRI report if required.” In addition to the fee schedule, a fee for wind farms will be agreed upon with further investigation into what other counties charge. Wissmiller made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the new policies of the NRI Report with future discussion to be help on wind farm fees. Motion passed five to zero.

Budget Meeting and Employee Evaluations – Watkins shared a budget meeting is needed to be scheduled before the June Board meeting in order to review and approve the budget, complete

the employee evaluations, and decide on the new hire(s). It was decided the Budget meeting will follow immediately after the Board meeting is over.

FY22 Staffing Plan – Watkins shared the dates she will be out of the office in June and July. She proposed to the Board of staying on full-time after she moves to San Antonio to help with project management and organization, grant research and management, NRIs, and NRCS sub-agreement items.

Rock Creek Watershed – Sauder and Watkins were approached by Floyd and Janine Catchpole about a Rock Creek Watershed-based plan. There are several partners across Kankakee and Will Counties pursuing a Section 319 grant through the Illinois EPA. Watkins and Sauder will attend the Zoom meeting on 5/13 to learn more about the project and grant proposal.

Peotone Airport – Frogge reported that Tribune ran an article about the Peotone Airport discussion continuing. Watkins is continually monitoring the Peotone Airport website for the Environmental Impact Statement.

Budget Discussion – The Board worked through the budget and a proposed staffing Excel sheet to play out different staffing scenarios and how those will work with our budget. Staffing is contingent upon the receipt of the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation Grant in July. One proposed staff plan contained three full-time staff members, a Resource Conservationist an Agriculture Coordinator, and an Education Coordinator. By running different scenarios through the budget, the Board came up with the desired staffing plan of 2 full-time staff members, two part time workers, and a summer intern to help with outreach. Watkins will work on revisiting the mission and vision statement for the District to better show what the District stands for.

REPORTS – In addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC Report – Nothing additional

AC Report – Nothing additional

EC Report – Nothing additional

DC Report – Rader stated he is buried in paperwork for CSP, CRP, and EQIP. The new administrators are requiring a site visit to each project site three times throughout the course of their contract. This created a rush to complete all the new site visits that are now required. If Kankakee County SWCD would have an employee trained as a certified conservation planner, there would be an opportunity to help other counties without a certified conservation planner and bring in additional funds.

FSA Report – None

Committee Reports – None

The next regular District Board Meeting will be June 21, 2021 at 7:00 pm with employee evaluations starting at 5:30 pm.

O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed five to zero. The meeting adjourned at 11:08 am.