

# KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## **Minutes February 14, 2022**

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting on Monday, February 14, 2022. Chairman Jeff O'Connor called the meeting to order at 8:22 AM. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Jim Frogge and Larry Kirchner, Alan Wissmiller and Ed Brown, Associate Director John Settle, Resource Conservationist Crystal Sauder, Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle, Grant Coordinator Emilie Watkins and Conservation Coordinator Matt Raymond. Absent was District Conservationist Trenton Rader.

**APPROVAL OF AGENDA:** Kirchner made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed five to zero.

**CONSENT AGENDA:** O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion passed five to zero.

### SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Minutes of January 10, 2022 Board Meeting  
Minutes of January 28, 2022 Special Board Meeting

### TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

**CORRESPONDENCE:** Watkins stated that she attended a webinar with American Farmland Trust. Dean Farr, Associate Director for McHenry County SWCD contacted her after the meeting to offer the District cover crop cost-share advice, help with setting up virtual meetings with legislators and assistance with the Indiana RCPP and IDOA RCPP programs.

### OLD BUSINESS:

**PFC Cost Share** – Raymond stated that the FY2021 cost share money is on track to spend \$10,500 by spring. The remaining balance needs to be spent by the end of 2022. FY2022 funds have not been received yet and the guidelines to be released soon.

**CREP** – Iroquois County SWCD RC, Thad Eshleman and Raymond will be conducting field training with IDNR CREP Coordinators for monitoring CREP easements. There are 8 in Kankakee County and 1 in Iroquois County that the District will be monitoring. Late February/early March is the target date for the training.

**Grants** – Watkins stated that she had sent Rebecca Judd snippets of the reporting/tracking methods that the District is using to document the use of the Donnelley Grant. Judd thanked her for going above and beyond in the methods being used to track the grant.

Watkins stated she will continue to have bimonthly meetings with Emy Brawley. The Fund's intern is wrapping up the ag impact policy research and will be sharing it when completed.

Watkins talked about the Conservation Outreach Committee that she is trying to put together to attain the goals set for sustainable farming, preservation of farmland and establishing wildlife habitat.

Raymond stated that the staff completed a 2-day virtual training for the Conservation Champions Grant. There are 4 Farmer Champions set to participate in the on-farm trials. Evaluation and scouting of sites is partially completed. Cost of the project has been discussed and what the grant funds will cover. Watkins will be in contact with the Soil Scout, the company that is being suggested for the equipment purchase to see what assistance they might offer. Kirchner made and Frogge seconded a motion to spend District funds up to \$5,000 after exhausting all other options to purchase the sensors. Motion passed five to zero.

Watkins stated that a soil health series is in the works for Pembroke as part of the Pembroke Farmland Restoration Project. This ties into the Donnelley grant goals to support the Fund's RCPP efforts.

**Education & Outreach** – Sauder stated that she has been approached by Kankakee Park District to do an educational presentation or activity for their Earth Day event on April 23<sup>rd</sup> from 9AM-12PM. She will be out of town, is there anyone else who would like to do it? Consensus was that Raymond can do it as long as he has some experience with another event prior to this.

Sauder stated that Kids Day at the Farm wants to enhance the videos from last year by providing supplies to teachers for activities to go with the videos. Her suggestion is for the District to do Native Plants and Pollinators activity, providing native plant seeds, soils, compostable cups and activity booklet. Consensus is for the District to provide these supplies.

**Sales** – Sauder provided the dates for the Spring Fish, Tree and Native Plant sales. The Fish sale orders will be due March 23<sup>rd</sup> with pick up April 4<sup>th</sup>, Tree sale orders due April 1<sup>th</sup> with pick up April 15<sup>th</sup> and Native Plant sale pick up May 28<sup>th</sup>. The District is partnering with Iroquois SWCD and possibly Ford SWCD for the plant sale.

**Internet Update** – Sauder stated that she and Frogge were able to switch the WiFi for the District to 5G through T-Mobile. It is \$50 month, unlimited, with no activation fee or device fee. She says it works amazingly, much better than the MiFi with Verizon. Settle has cancelled the Verizon MiFi, it is prepaid so will still be active until March 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Computer Update** – Sauder shared the pricing that she had for new computer equipment being proposed for the District. Discussion was held, more thumb drives are to be added. Wissmiller is going to check with 'Puter Pros for pricing before the equipment order is placed.

**River Basin RCPP Proposal** – Watkins stated that she is working to bring more information to board on the proposal.

## **NEW BUSINESS:**

**Business Cards** – Sauder shared pricing for business cards for herself, Raymond and Universal cards.

**Watkins Annual Leave** – Watkins has been with the District 6 years and the policy for annual leave states that after completion of 5 years earns an increase in the # of days for annual leave. A short discussion determined this is policy, does not require approval from the board for the increase to take effect.

**Sauder Vacation** – Sauder stated that she will be on vacation March 16<sup>th</sup> – 21<sup>st</sup>.

## **REPORTS – in addition to printed reports, if necessary**

**RC Report** – Sauder stated that the next meeting is March 14<sup>th</sup> at 7:00PM. She will not be able to attend if it stays an evening meeting. Consensus was to leave it at 7:00PM with Raymond running the meeting.

**AC Report** – Nothing additional

**Grant Writer** – Nothing additional

**Conservation Coordinator** – Nothing additional

**DC Report** – Sauder reported for NRCS – CSP payments are being processed

**FSA Report** – Sauder reported for FSA - Karen is having training for CRP

**Committee Reports** – O'Connor stated that there needs to be an Annual Plan of Work meeting. Meeting was set for February 24<sup>th</sup> at 8:00AM. Sauder will reserve the conference room at the Farm Bureau.

The next regular District Board meeting will be held on March 14, 2022 at 7:00 PM.

O'Connor made and Brown seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed five to zero. The meeting adjourned at 10:30 AM.