

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes June 13, 2022

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting on Monday, June 13, 2022. Chairman Jeff O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:34 PM. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Jim Frogge, Larry Kirchner, Alan Wissmiller, and Ed Brown, Resource Conservationist Crystal Sauder, and Conservation Coordinator Matt Raymond. Absent were Associate Director John Settle, Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle, Grants & Special Projects Coordinator Emilie Watkins, and District Conservationist Trenton Rader.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the agenda with edit of the date listed. 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 May 9, 2022 Board Meeting
Minutes of May 26, 2022 Committee meeting

TRERASURER'S REPORT:

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

CORRESPONDENCE: Sauder shared Jackie Haas, IL State Representative, invited the District to the Agriculture and Conservation Advisory Council meeting on June 27th at the Kankakee Public Library. Sauder will be attending the meeting. Raymond shared the Kankakee Farm Bureau has a couple different events planned this summer the District could help at. The Kankakee County Fair is from August 3rd through 7th and they are hosting a tire recycling event on August 27th. Board decided to not be involved, other than advertising on our website and social media accounts.

OLD BUSINESS:

PFC Cost Share – Sauder shared Watkins has had no RCPP updates from Jennifer Thum. The RCPP is in review.

PFC Cost Share – Raymond shared the final strip-till submission is being processed for reimbursement. The second cost-share sign-up period is now open and will close on Friday, July 15th.

Grants – Raymond shared he is maintaining the Soil Scout website and the staff is planning the outreach events. The first event will be on O'Connor's farm on July 26th. The remaining sites are still being discussed. Sauder shared NWF invited the District to partake in a video interview about the grant process. The Kankakee County Conservation Collaborative is coming together. Chad Miller from Kankakee Fam Bureau is interested but reporting back with his board's decision. There still needs to be a local famer invited to the committee. The first GDDF progress report is due at the end of June. Watkins is waiting the arrival of an email with the report instructions from Rebecca Judd.

Sauder shared Watkins submitted the Compeer Financial General Use Grant. The application was submitted on May 30th and should hear back in 4-6 weeks. Watkins found a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation Grant to continue doing soil health outreach and providing technical assistance. The application is due July 13th.

Education & Outreach – Sauder shared Raymond presented at a virtual townhall meeting for the Pembroke Water Testing project and shared District cost-share opportunities. Around 10 people were in attendance. The June Heldt Park summer program was canceled due to rain. The next event will be on July 6. Sauder has a Presentation for the Will County Farm Bureau Teacher Conference on July 7th in Yorkville. The BTPD and District have scheduled the BioBlitz to be on September 16 and 17.

Sauder received one Conservation Kit application from Katlyn Post at Herscher High School. She applied for the Soil Health Kit. Sauder recommended the approval of the application and the purchase of kit supplies.

O'Connor made and Kirchner approved the awarding of a Soil Health Kit to Katlyn Post and for Sauder to purchase supplies for the kit. Motion passed five to zero.

Raymond is completing Conservation Planner 1 training and is about 70% completed. There is a state-wide CREP taking place on 6/15/2022 for the re-opening announcement.

NARP – Sauder shared that a Nutrient Assessment Reduction Plan (NARP) is required by the EPA for permitting purposes by the end of 2023 for KRMA. KRMA hired Strand Associates to take inventory of current water quality efforts to submit to the EPA. Sauder, Raymond, Frogge, and O'Connor attended the advisory meeting. Watkins reached out to Strand Associates on 6/2 for an update and had no reply. She will be reaching out again.

Personnel Policy – Sauder shared the Personnel Policy and Health Insurance Policy do not have the same language and need to be edited to match. Brown drafted a revision of the Personnel Policy to match the language. Kirchner made and Frogge seconded the motion to accept the changes made to the Personnel Policy as presented by Brown. Motion passed five to zero.

Health Insurance – Sauder shared the health insurance premiums went up for FY23 and the new rates will start in July. Raymond is now eligible for the health insurance stipend and will submit his application before the end of the month.

Employee Evaluations – O'Connor shared the employee evaluations were conducted the previous week. All employees have accepted the terms of their new contracts. Sauder shared she will update the FY23 Contracts reflecting approved terms and will have employees and O'Connor sign. O'Connor made and Kirchner seconded a motion to approve the FY23 Employee Contracts with updated terms. Motion passed five to zero.

NEW BUSINESS:

NRI Reports – Sauder shared NRI report #2022-06 to build a single family home with a septic system and well on a 7-acre parcel in Aroma Township. Sauder recommended a Letter of No Effect due to no zoning change and only needing a building permit. O'Connor made and Brown seconded a motion to approve a Letter of No Effect for NRI report #2022-06. Motion passed five to zero.

Sauder shared NRI report #2022-07 for a Special Use Permit for a photovoltaic solar energy farm in Ganeer Township. The LESA score for the project was 227.7, indicating a high priority for protection. O'Connor made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to oppose NRI report #2022-07 due to a high LESA score. Motion passed five to zero.

Sauder shared NRI report #2022-08 for a Special Use Permit for a photovoltaic farm in Manteno Township. The LESA score for the project was 162.1, indicating a low priority for protection. Kirchner made and Frogge seconded a motion that the Board approve the staff recommendation of “do not oppose” for NRI report #2022-08. Motion passed five to zero.

Sauder shared NRI report #2022-09 for a Special Use Permit to create a community shelter for young girls in Ganeer Township. The LESA score for the project was 135.0, indicating a low priority for protection. O'Connor made and Kirchner seconded a motion that the Board approve the staff recommendation of “do not oppose” for NRI report #2022-09. Motion passed five to zero.

FY23 Budget – Sauder shared she will update the FY23 Budget to match the employee contract updates. The contingency on the staff outlook will be edited to reflect the raises received. Sauder will share with Kirchner the updated staff outlook when she finalizes the numbers. Kirchner made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the FY23 budget. Motion passed five to zero.

Job Descriptions – Sauder shared herself and Watkins will rework their job descriptions and see board input and approval at the next Board Meeting.

Hazard Mitigation Meeting – Sauder shared she attended the County Hazard Mitigation meeting on May 26th. Delbert received the Planning Grant from FEMA in 2021 to update the county's current Hazard Mitigation Plan. Next meeting will be on August 3rd at 9:00 AM.

Office Printer – Sauder shared the staff would like to purchase a small laser printer for the SWCD to use in the office to make work more efficient. Kirchner made and O’Connor seconded the motion to approve the purchase of a small laser printer for the office. Motion passed five to zero.

REPORTS – in addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC Report – Sauder shared the District received their FY22 Operations funds and FY22 Cost-Share funds.

AC Report – Nothing additional

Grant Writer – Sauder shared Watkins will be visiting Illinois June 14 through June 27th and will be working 2-3 days a week during that time.

Conservation Coordinator – Nothing additional

DC Report – Nothing additional

FSA Report – Nothing additional

Committee Reports – Nothing additional.

The next regular District Board meeting will be held on Monday, July 11, 2022 at 7:30 AM. O’Connor made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed five to zero. The meeting adjourned at 8:42 PM