

NOVEMBER BOARD MEETING AGENDA

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Monday, November 13, 2023 at 7:30 AM

Approval of Agenda

Public Comment

Consent Agenda

Secretary's Report

1. Minutes of October 16, 2023 Board Meeting

Treasurer's Report

2. Approve Time and Travel
3. Approve Financial Report
4. Bill Approval

Correspondence:

None

FSA Report

NRCS Report

Unfinished Business:

Partners for Conservation (PFC) Cost-Share Grants
The Conservation Fund TA Agreement
Recent & Future Education & Outreach Events
Incentive Programs for Producers

New Business:

FY24 IDOA Grant Agreement Approval & Submittal
CD Rates Sign-Up & Approval
Spring Intern Job Posting Approval
Mid-term Employee Evaluations Date
Raymond Health Insurance Coverage & Policy Update
Nominating Committee

Reports – in addition to printed reports, if necessary

Resource Conservationist – Crystal Sauder
Administrative Coordinator – Linda Settle
Grants Coordinator & Special Projects – Emilie Watkins
Conservation Coordinator – Matt Raymond (last day with Kankakee SWCD 11/3/23)

For the Good of the Order

Adjournment

Date and time of next Board Meeting
December 11, 2023 at 5:30 PM

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes November 13, 2023

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting on Monday, November 13, 2023. Chairman Jeff O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:35 AM. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Jim Frogge, Alan Wissmiller and Ed Brown, Associate Director John Settle, Resource Conservationist Crystal Sauder, Grants & Project Coordinator Emilie Watkins(via phone), Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle and NRCS Soil Conservationist Matt Raymond representing District Conservationist Trenton Rader. Absent was Director Larry Kirchner. Guest in attendance was Valerie Thompson.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Motion passed four to zero.

PUBLIC COMMENT: Gina Halper spoke regarding the concerns of contamination of soil & water from the proposed Gotion Battery plant in Manteno.

Diana Motel spoke regarding the concerns of contamination of soil & water from the proposed Gotion Battery plant in Manteno.

Amanda Poker spoke regarding the concerns of contamination of soil & water from the proposed Gotion Battery plant in Manteno.

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Minutes of October 16, 2023 Board Meeting

TREASURER'S REPORT:

Approval of Time and Travel

Approval of Financial Report

Approval of Bills

CORRESPONDENCE: None

OLD BUSINESS:

PFC Cost Share – Sauder stated that everything is proceeding as stated last month with completing work and forms need to process payments. She stated that Raymond had emailed all participants to inform them of the new point of contact.

Grants – Sauder reported that all the Soil on Demand equipment had been removed from the fields for the winter except for one. The equipment firmware updates and maintenance will be completed over the winter.

Watkins stated that the application for a new Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation grant was submitted and a decision will be made by the end of November. Watkins said she sent an email to Rebecca Judd sharing Matt's new opportunity with NRCS and requested a phone call. She is waiting on a reply

Watkins stated that GDDF sponsored Federal Funding Navigator Workshops for grantees and she attended both workshops. Watkins stated that she and Sauder participated in a PRE Collective meeting on November 8th. Discussion was held on District barriers, Hazard Mitigation Plan and tapping federal funding. The District was directed to contact the University of Minnesota, Great Lakes Environmental Justice Thriving Communities Technical Assistance Center (TCTAC) with the 1-pager that was drafted. The center assists with projects in some Midwest states. They provide services for grant navigation, budget support, assistance in identifying partners and matching funds, project design and development, legal and engineering support. Watkins emailed the 1-pager on November 9th. She will report back to PRE Collective.

RCCP – Watkins reported that she had received an email from Jennifer Thum, Indiana State Department of Ag, with an update on the RCCP. NRCS & ISDA has signed agreement to officially launch the project. Project map and timeline will be sent to us by the end of November. The SWCD requested to join the education/outreach committee. With the reduction in District staff, our in kind contribution outlined in our Letter of Support will likely change.

The Conservation Fund TA Position – Watkins stated that she had zoom meetings on October 20th and November 3rd with TCF. Discussion centered on Pembroke farmer RCCP status. A log has been created for tracking farmer status. Sauder will be contacting farmers to get their status. The next meeting is November 17th.

Education & Outreach – Sauder reported that recent events she participated in was ONU Environmental Sciences Lab on October 17th, her and Raymond did a presentation at Green Drinks also on October 17th and she presented at a STEM Conference on October 28th. She met with Cherie from the BTPD on November 11th to discuss summer outreach opportunities and facility rentals for District events.

Sauder reported that future events worked on is a presentation on Precision Farming in January or February. Location still to be determined. A Pond Management Workshop with Seth Love from IDNR is being planned for February 21, 22, or 23. Willowhaven is in the works for a possible location.

Incentive Programs for Producers – Sauder shared the incentive programs currently being offered to producers.

S.T.A.R. & IL Soybean Association is offering an incentive to NON-GMO soybean growers. Applications are due December 4, 2023. Flyers available in the SWCD office.

American Farmland Trust & ADM re:generations has incentives for cover crops. Applications are due November 17, 2023 with flyers available at the SWCD office.

S.T.A.R. & Soil & Water Outcomes Fund (SWOF) has incentives for new conservation practices or additional acreage for current practices. Flyers are available in SWCD office.

Fall Covers for Spring Savings requires cover crops reported to FSA prior to December 15th to be eligible. Applications then open at 8am on December 15th and runs to January 15th. More information will be on the IDOA website soon.

NEW BUSINESS:

FY24 IDOA Grant Agreement Approval & Submittal – Sauder reported that the FY24 grant agreement has a decrease in the base operation allocation of \$12,000. There is an incentive payment possible for Districts that have a Certified Planner Level 1 or Level 3. Maximum payment possible would be \$8,000. O'Connor made and Brown seconded a motion to approve, sign and submit the FY24 Grant Agreement. Motion passed four to zero.

CD Rates - Sauder reported that the CD from February 2023 matured on November 9, 23. It can be re-enrolled at the same rate for another 9 months. Does the Board want to enroll additional funds in a new CD with the FY24 IDOA grant funds? Wissmiller made and Frogge seconded a motion to re-enroll the current CD. Motion passed four to zero.

Spring Intern – Sauder presented a job posting for the Spring Intern for review. Discussion was held on what the pay range should be. Wissmiller made and Frogge seconded a motion to have the pay range \$16 - \$17 hourly. Motion passed four to zero.

Mid-Term Employee Evaluations – Sauder stated that the December board meeting will be December 11th at 5:30 pm. Consensus was to have Mid-Term Employee Evaluations at 5:00 pm prior to the meeting.

Raymond Health Insurance Coverage & Policy Update - Sauder stated that Raymond's last day on SWCD health insurance will be November 30th. There is no specific guidance in the Personnel Policy on what to do when an employee with health insurance leaves. She asked if an update to the Personnel Policy was needed. Discussion was held and consensus is to leave as is.

Nominating Committee - Sauder reported that a nominating committee is needed for the February election. Wissmiller, Kirchner and Brown are up for re-election. She will contact Matt Raymond NRCS, Chad Miller Farm Bureau and Karen Bohrensen to form the committee. She will bring it back to the next meeting for approval.

REPORTS – in addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC Report – Sauder stated that she will be out of the office on November 24th, at Winter Training December 5th & 6th and on vacation December 20, 2023 – January 1, 2024. She will be doing some remote work during her vacation.

AC Report – Nothing additional.

Grant Writer – Nothing additional.

Conservation Coordinator – Nothing additional.

DC Report – Soil Con Raymond reported that NRCS is working on CSP renewals and payments. He stated that a Soil Conservationist is now needed in the New Lenox office due to the employee moving out of state.

FSA Report – There currently is not a new farm bill or continuing resolution or spending bill. Employees will start furlough on November 17th if a spending bill is not passed. A full-time temporary position is available in the FSA office due to an employee moving out of state. Applications are due by December 1st.

Committee Reports –

The next regular District Board meeting will be held on December 11, 2023 at 5:30 PM.

O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed four to zero. The meeting adjourned at 9:22 AM.