

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes July 10, 2023

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting on Monday, July 10, 2023. Chairman Jeff O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:32 AM. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Jim Frogge, Alan Wissmiller, Associate Director John Settle, Resource Conservationist Crystal Sauder, Conservation Coordinator Matt Raymond, Outreach Intern Halie Kohl, Grants & Projects Coordinator Emilie Watkins (via phone) and Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle. Absent was Directors Larry Kirchner and Ed Brown and District Conservationist Trenton Rader.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of CD Rates, Voting Ability on Association Resolutions and Association Annual Dues under New Business. Motion passed three to zero.

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

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Minutes of June 12, 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 – Raymond stated that he has contacted the applicants on the waiting list to verify that they are still interested in participating in the cost share program now that the District has received the FY23 funds. He stated that all applicants receiving FY22 or FY23 funds will have to complete all new RCPP AFA documentation to receive payment. He is in the process of learning all of it and making sure all applicants have everything completed.

Raymond stated that the Region 2 Representative, Shelly Ray, is out of the office until September 11, 2023 and Marty McManus from Region 1 is covering for her.

Grants – Raymond stated he is prepping for the August event under the Soil on Demand project. There have been 6 sensors installed but 2 of the sites are not working properly. He is troubleshooting them with the assistance of Kohl and the website is being updated as the sensors come on line.

Watkins stated that the \$75,000 received under the Gaylord & Dorothy Donnelly Foundation Grant has been spent and recorded in QuickBooks and the Activity Logs.

Watkins stated that she had a phone call on June 30th with the grant officer to discuss the accomplishments the District achieved under the grant. The Conservation Collaborative was created, promotion and support for partner programs, specifically the Fund's RCCP work with Black Oak Farmland Restoration. The continued pursuit to access funding for land conservation easements, new and existing conservation initiatives and private general use and project based grants to help the District grow and sustain its mission.

She stated that during the phone call the District was invited to "re-apply" for additional funding for our project although the GDDF Board is not inclined to fund organizations that receive governmental funding.

The final report is due July 31st and the grant application is due August 4th. Watkins will complete both and send them to the Board for review prior to submitting.

Watkins reported that the Conservation Collaborative meeting process has been created. Sauder and Raymond will run the meetings in person with Watkins doing things remotely. An August questionnaire will be completed, edited and sent to members by Friday, July 14th.

Watkins stated that she, Sauder and Raymond will be participating in a PRE Collective Federal Funding Navigator workshop for the IJJA & IRA Funds on July 17th. The funds could be used to approach public works with conservation-centric solutions to existing problems (flooding, NARP, etc.). There will be a District planning meeting with any interested Directors participating after the next workshop.

Watkins reported that the Fund RCPP is seeking to hire a liaison between contractee and agency staff, either by contract, part-time or full-time. The liaison would work with farmers to understand their operations and plans, help translate USDA resources and work with farmers through USDA planning, contracting, implementation and payment. They are open to a partnership. Watkins states she has a phone call this week with them.

Education & Outreach – Raymond reviewed the future events being discussed/planned. August 8th is the Cover Crops presentation with Value Partners Seed Services hosting. There will be a drone/robot seeding demonstration. The Grass Waterways tentatively discussed for September may be postponed until next year due to the Soil Judging Contest also being held in September.

Sauder stated that the General Federation of Women's Clubs of Kankakee County has asked her to do a presentation about urban conservation/gardening. It will be on January 17, 2024 at noon.

Staff Training Needs – Sauder stated that she is looking at doing an online course on Understanding & Analyzing Financial Statements. It is an overview of basic financial statements and how to interpret their information. She is tabling it for now though and will look at it in the future.

Raymond stated that he has completed the Conservation Planner 1 course and is waiting on live in-person trainings for the Conservation Planner 3. All self-paced training is complete. He also

attended in-person training with Iroquois SWCD for the CRP/NRCS Sub-agreement. Topics covered were field visit status review procedures, documenting work in conservation desktop and reporting tasks for invoicing.

NEW BUSINESS:

FY24 Personnel Policy – Sauder stated that the Personnel Policy had been updated to include approved health insurance stipend of up to \$350 per employee. A copy was sent to all Directors for review. O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the Personnel Policy with the updated health insurance stipend. Motion passed three to zero.

CD Rate – Sauder stated that she had inquired about current CD rates at Bank of Bourbonnais. Current rate for a 9 month CD is 4.10%. Wissmiller made and Frogge seconded a motion to move \$50,000 from the operations account to a 9 month CD. Motion passed three to zero.

AISWCD Resolutions – O'Connor stated that he will be attending the Summer Conference as a delegate for the District. Frogge made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to give O'Connor, Board Chairman of Kankakee County SWCS full voting authority at Summer Conference. Motion passed three to zero.

AISWCD Annual Dues – Tabled until next meeting.

REPORTS – in addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC Report – Sauder reported that her and Raymond will be out of the office July 10th & 11th. She will be gone August 23rd – August 28th.

AC Report – AC Settle stated that there will be an additional QuickBooks charge for the year. There are 2 annual renewals, one for QuickBooks Payroll and one for QuickBooks itself.

Grant Writer – Nothing additional

Conservation Coordinator – Nothing additional

DC Report – Nothing new

FSA Report – Nothing

Committee Reports –

The next regular District Board meeting will be held on August 14, 2023 at 7:30 AM.

O'Connor made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed three to zero. The meeting adjourned at 8:55 AM.