

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes April 11, 2022

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting on Monday, April 11, 2022. Vice Chairman Jim Frogge called the meeting to order at 7:38 AM. Present were Directors Jim Frogge, Larry Kirchner, Alan Wissmiller and Ed Brown, Associate Director John Settle, Resource Conservationist Crystal Sauder, Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle, Conservation Coordinator Matt Raymond and Grant Coordinator Emilie Watkins (by phone). Absent were Chairman Jeff O'Connor and District Conservationist Trenton Rader.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: Frogge made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to approve the agenda with the addition of State Budget under new business. Motion passed four to zero.

CONSENT AGENDA: Kirchner made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion passed four to zero.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Minutes of March 14, 2022 Board Meeting

TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

CORRESPONDENCE: Information from Jill Kostel with The Wetlands Initiative regarding the new partnership with Ducks Unlimited that will expand "Smart Wetlands" program.

OLD BUSINESS:

PFC Cost Share – Raymond stated that 2 fields are done, 1 remaining. Training with Regional Representative Elliot Legacy has been completed. Raymond stated that there is a new PFC-3 Prioritization form and SWCD boards are able to prioritize practices, giving extra points in ranking. Contract extensions could be given 15 extra points to ensure participation in maximizing the cover crop benefits over the long term. Frogge made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to prioritize contract extension with 15 extra points. Motion passed four to zero.

Grants – Conservation Champions Grant – Raymond reported that Jeff O'Connor's plot has been sited. Equipment from Soil Scout has been received and is being installed. A Conservation Business Directory is being created by collecting information and networking with businesses.

Donnelly grant - Watkins stated that the Kankakee Conservation Outreach Committee formal invitation was sent last week. Committee members will be confirmed by the end of April. The 1st meeting will be in May or June.

Watkins reported on the Pembroke Farmland Restoration Project. The first SWCD health event will be held the first week of May.

Watkins stated she is looking at some short-term grant opportunities. The IL Farm Bureau Nutrient Stewardship Grant for nutrient loss reduction strategy outreach and implementation possibly partnering with Kankakee Farm Bureau. The Compeer Financial General Use Grant that could be used for an elected official's conservation tour. The Compeer Educator Grant, working with Katlyn Post from the Herscher FFA.

Education & Outreach – Sauder stated that there are some educational/outreach programs planned.

Pembroke Water Testing virtual meeting set for April 13th 6:30 – 7:30 where the District will be presenting cost-share opportunities.

Heldt Park Summer Programs to be held June – August. There will be 3 classes – insects, ecosystems and composting.

BTPD BioBlitz currently in the planning stages.

Raymond stated that he is working on the Conservation Planner Training. DC Rader has been assigned as his supervisor. He has completed 10 courses with 25 to go in Level 1 & 3 and is enrolled in virtual courses for Conservation Planning Part 2,

Sales – Sauder stated that the Fish sale pick up is April 14th and the Tree sale pick up is April 15th. She is also working on a date and location for early September for a Pond Workshop.

Personnel Policy – Sauder and AC Settle presented information on setting up direct deposit for paychecks. Bank of Bourbonnais does not charge a fee for the service. A business banking account would need to be set up by an administrator. 2 people would review and approve the amounts to be direct deposited after they have been submitted for transfer. Brown make and Kirchner seconding a motion to set up the direct deposit. Motion passed four to zero. Kirchner will work with AC Settle to get the direct deposit set up.

Sauder stated that there is a discrepancy between the personnel policy and the employee contract about when a new full time employee is eligible for health insurance. Personnel policy states they are eligible in 6 months, the contract states 60 days.

Sauder also stated that there needs to be clarification of how many hours an employee works to be considered a full time employee.

Both of these issues are tabled until all the directors are able to attend the meeting.

NEW BUSINESS:

State Budget – Sauder provided the information that the FY23 allocation for the SWCD's will be the same as FY22. PFC has been extended one more year.

Aqua IL – Watkins stated that she participated in a zoom meeting with Brandi Curvin, Aqua IL Business Development Coordinator. Aqua is concerned with reducing Ag runoff into the Kankakee River. They are a possible RCPP partner.

Aqua is now a part of Essential Utilities along with Peoples brand. Essential Utilities partners with others to complete restoration and watershed improvement projects. Many projects and partnerships seem to be centralized around Pennsylvania.

REPORTS – in addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC Report – Nothing additional

AC Report – Nothing additional

Grant Writer – Nothing additional

Conservation Coordinator – Nothing additional

DC Report – Nothing additional

FSA Report – Nothing additional

Committee Reports –

The next regular District Board meeting will be held on May 9, 2022, at 7:30 AM. Brown made and Wissmiller seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed three to zero. The meeting adjourned at 9:26 AM.