

KANKAKEE COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Minutes October 18, 2021

The Kankakee County Soil and Water Conservation District held its regular monthly board meeting through Zoom on Monday, October 18, 2021. Chairman Jeff O'Connor called the meeting to order at 7:30 AM. Present were Directors Jeff O'Connor, Jim Frogge, Alan Wissmiller, Larry Kirchner, and Ed Brown, Resource Conservationist Crystal Sauder, Grant Coordinator Emilie Watkins, and District Conservationist Trenton Rader. Absent were Assistant Director John Settle and Administrative Coordinator Linda Settle.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA: O'Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion to approve the agenda with no additions. Motion passed five to zero.

CONSENT AGENDA: Wissmiller made a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented. Motion passed five to zero.

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

Minutes of September 13, 2021 Board Meeting

TREASURER'S REPORT:

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

CORRESPONDENCE: N/A

OLD BUSINESS:

PFC Cost Share – Watkins recapped that at the September Board meeting we changed the cover crop cost-share rate to 75% up to \$40/acre to match the IDOA's requirements. At the time of the meeting there have been seven projects that have been approved and Sauder and Watkins are waiting for farmers to start submitting their receipts. There were five different applications to approve for cost-share. Frogge made and Kirchner seconded a motion to approve the five cost-share applications. Motion passed five to zero.

Grants – Watkins shared she has received the grant award letter from the Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation. The award letter reviews the reports needed, when and how payments are received, and how to report on our progress with the grant. Watkins is scheduling a phone call with Rebecca Judd on October 20th to discuss hiring process and award letter. The approval of the Donnelley grant award letter is moved to the

November meeting pending Watkins's phone call with Rebecca Judd. Watkins can start working on the Conservation Committee in the meantime and brainstorming different partners from the surrounding area. Watkins shared the District was awarded \$14,250.00 for on-farm trials and outreach events from the Conservation Champions grant. She showed the draft agreement but there is no need to fully accept the grant award like the Donnelley Foundation. O'Connor is reaching out to the other three farmer champions to see where they are at in the process. Watkins will bring the final approval letter to the November board meeting.

Watkins shared Living Waters Consultants requested a Letter of Support for the Rock Creek Watershed Section 319 grant. The Letter of Support is not pledging monetary or technical assistance. Frogge noticed one small mis-typed error that needed to be made. After the error is fixed, Watkins will submit the letter to the Living Waters Consultants. Frogge made a motion to approve the Letter of Support with the changed mentioned

Education & Outreach – Sauder shared she had three separate outreach events in September. On September 15th she traveled to Kennedy Middle School and presented on Insect Collecting. The students from Kennedy Middle School mailed Sauder hand drawn thank you cards and photos as a thank you for coming to their class. On September 17th she traveled to Herscher High School to talk about soil conservation. On September 29th the District hosted a soil judging contest on Jeff O'Connor's father's farm. Four local ag classes participated in the soil judging contest and Mark Bramstedt came the day before to professional judge the soil pits for the contest.

Conservation Coordinator Job Posting – Sauder shared that Brown, Frogge, Watkins and herself interviewed a candidate for the Conservation Coordinator position. The candidate was a great fit for the District and they were working on scheduling an in-person interview. The candidate decided to accept a position with another company and did not come down for a second interview. Another round of soliciting applications will take place. Watkins is creating a hiring plan to submit to the Donnelley Foundation to show how we are going about the hiring process as we move forward. She is to add a footnote to the bottom of the hiring timeline stating it is a tentative schedule based on applicants found. Sauder will reach out to the past candidate to thank her for going through the process and see if there was anything the District could have done to make a difference in hiring. O'Connor made a motion to create an expense account of \$1,500 to help promote the hiring process and cover candidate travel expenses so hiring committee can keep the hiring process moving. Wissmiller seconded the motion. Motion passed five to zero. O'Connor mentioned he was adding minutes from earlier discussions with Directors in regard to the salary range of the Conservation Coordinator position. Those minutes are on the last page.

NEW BUSINESS:

NRI Reports – Sauder shared NRI Report 2021-08 for a 20-acre parcel for a new residential house being build and continued farming of additional acres in Limestone Township. The LESA score for this project was 158.1, indicating a low priority for protection. Wissmiller made and Frogge seconded a motion that the Board “approve” NRI 2021-08. Motion passed five to zero.

Sauder shared NRI Report 2021-09 for a 3.11-acre parcel being rezoned from A1 to A2 to remove the house lot from the farm parcel in Norton Township. The LESA score was 182.0, indicating a low priority for protection. O’Connor made and Frogge seconded a motion that the Board “approve” NRI 2021-09. Motion passed five to zero.

AISWCD Resolutions – Sauder shared the AISWCD sent out two resolutions up for vote at the winter annual meeting in December. Kirchner made and Frogge seconded a motion to appoint O’Connor as the voting delegate. Motion passed five to zero.

AISWCD Training – Sauder shared the AISWCD is hosting their winter training in Springfield December 8th and 9th. There is a \$30 registration fee and registrations are due by November 19th.

New Hire Salary Ranges – It was felt by O’Connor that the current job market for positions within the Agricultural/Environmental field were offering more than our own listing for our current job opening. Adjusting our salary range for the entry level position may help keep applicants who are interested in considering the SWCD. After discussion with Board members, it was decided to adjust our starting salary range to 40-45K.

REPORTS – in addition to printed reports, if necessary

RC Report – Nothing additional

AC Report – Nothing additional

Grant Writer – Nothing additional

DC Report – Nothing.

FSA Report – Nothing.

Committee Reports – None

The next regular District Board meeting will be held on November 8, 2021 at 7:30 AM.

Kirchner made and O'Connor seconded a motion to adjourn. The motion passed five to zero. The meeting adjourned at 8:53 AM.