

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

July 18, 2023

210 Bierman Road, Epworth, IA 52045-9529

Call Meeting to Order: The monthly meeting of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners was called to order by Chairperson Wayne Demmer at 1:35 p.m. in person at the District office in Epworth, IA on July 18, 2023. Those present included Staff: Bill Meyer, Sarah Kelchen (Acting CA) & Eric Schmechel. Commissioners: Wayne Demmer, Mike Freiburger, Jeff Schmitt, Jack Smith, and Ronald Lindblom. Assistant Dave Ruden.

Adopt Agenda:

The agenda was approved with additions of CDI Registration information & three additional bills for Hefel Portable Services for \$330.00, Heritage Printing for \$297.00, & Eric Schmechel July Icloud for \$9.99.

23-58 Motion was made by Smith to approve the agenda with the additions of CDI Registration information & three additional bills for Hefel Portable Services for \$330.00, Heritage Printing for \$297.00, & Eric Schmechel July Icloud for \$9.99. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:

Demmer called for a discussion of the minutes from the regular meeting held June 13, 2023, and the special meeting held June 28, 2023.

23-59 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the minutes from the regular June 13, 2023, and the special meeting held June 28, 2023. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

FARMS Program Summary:

Current **FARMS '23** Account information:

REAP P \$7789.12

REAP F/NG \$2590.53

Cost Share \$65,605.05

Cost Share Application:

None

Cost Share Cancellations:

Practice Number	Name	Program	Practice	Amount	Action
97923	Hodge, Timothy	Reap F/NG	FSI	\$1,272.00	cancel application

Demmer called for discussion of Farms cost share cancellation.

23-60 Motion made by Freiburger to approve Farms cost share cancellation. Motion was seconded by Lindblom. Motion carried unanimously.

Farms Cost Share Amendments:

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Date to be changed	Old Value	New Value	Approval Status
Cose, Brian	101764	Reap F/NG	FSI	Completion Date	7/15/2023	12/31/2023	approve new completion date

Demmer called for discussion of Farms cost share amendment.

23-61 Motion made by Freiburger to approve Farms cost share amendment. Motion was seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Cost Share Certifications & Maintenance Agreements:

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Brimeyer, Mark	105885	IFIP	No-Till	\$1,400.00	Approve payment
West, Daniel	104711	WQI	No-Till	\$1,056.00	Approve payment

Demmer called for discussion of the Farms cost share certifications and maintenance agreements.

23-62 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the Farms cost share certifications and maintenance agreements. Motion was seconded by Lindblom. Motion carried unanimously.

Conservation Plan

None

(Board voted 6-13-22, motion #22-72 to not sign CRP Conservation Plans)

Finance:

- June TR, Bank Statement & bills.

Demmer called for discussion of the June TR, bank statement, bills presented.

23-63 Motion made by Smith to approve the June TR, bank statement, bills presented & three additional bills added to the agenda for Hefel Portable Services for \$330.00, Heritage Printing for \$297.00, & Eric Schmechel July Icloud for \$9.99. agenda. Motion seconded by Lindblom. Motion carried unanimously.

- CDI Scholarship appeal memo

Demmer called for discussion of the CDI Scholarship appeal memo.

23-64 Motion made by Freiburger to approve \$100.00 donation to the CDI Scholarship Fund. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Project Update:

- Fair Booth Scheduled was reviewed.
- RCPP meeting with some of the Farmer-to-Farmer group to be held following this meeting.

Correspondence Received:

- NACD – Contract with IDALS extension

Demmer called for discussion of the contract extension with IDALS for NACD grant.

23-65 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the contract extension with IDALS for NACD grant. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

- CDI Connections
- Supplemental Funds requests for IFIP due 9/1/23
- Talking Points from Susan Kozak
- CDI Registration for Annual Conference on August 28th & 29th

***** Schmitt joined the meeting at 2:45 p.m.**

- CDI Resolutions & Proxy cards – ballots due July 28th -- Resolutions were reviewed and voted upon. Proxy cards not available currently. Will get them signed in August. Demmer plans to attend the conference.
- Tim Daly is the Region 4 winner for the Conservation Farmer of the Year. Award will be ordered and dropped off in Epworth sometime in August. Will notify him and possibly present at a Farmer-to-Farmer meeting or another event.

Meeting Updates:

No updates

Personnel Updates:

- New CA to start on Friday July 21st.
- Personnel reviews were conducted July 12th & 14th. Schmitt, Freiburger & Lindblom attended one or both days.

Reviewed and/or discussed David, Scott, John and Eric.

Recommendations for the commissioners from Jeff, Mike, and Ronald:

- 1) *A 5% raise for Eric and John which is primarily a cost-of-living raise; while in full recognition of their merit and performance. This is less than the private sector's 7% but in line with the city/county raises for this fiscal year which were 4 to 5%. Last year our raise was 6%. Discussion at length on their work and ideas – all positive. Discussion on changing workloads with RCPP, maturation and evolution of programs, department focus, and staffing.*
- 2) *A 2.5% raise for Scott with another review 6 months into the fiscal year (review in January raise in February). At that time another 2.5% may be awarded. This is in conjunction with a milestone plan Eric is to present to Scott.*

Discussion on his good ability to focus and study. Discussion on gaining confidence and follow through, thus the milestone goals. Discussion on mentorship and experience.

- 3) *To increase David's (intern) pay from \$16 to \$20/hr.* Discussion: we don't know David future but he is well or overqualified for the work he is doing. We don't want to lose him before exploring his future here and how it fits into evolving roles and positions. Eric will discuss ideas for the future with him. RCPP may rebalance roles and allow a more permanent inspector's position with benefits.
- 4) *To increase Eric's automobile stipend from \$350 to \$400 per month and implement the same for John.* Discussion on pros and cons of fleet vehicles, miles driven, recognition of an employee's status and devotion to our program at the 3-year mark for John.
- 5) *Recommendation to add a budget line item for continuing education.* This would be distinct from conferences and travel, which would stay the same. Continuing education would be for specific credit or certificate programs of study which would be outlined and approved by the director at the beginning of the year for an employee. The employee would then pay for the study. After obtaining credit from the institution, the employee would be reimbursed from this line item for tuition fees only.

Discussions:

We explored roles and ideas of facilitating work and employees. For example, Eric's idea of perhaps drifting Scott toward the Farmer-to-Farmer structure the Waldo's have built, and drifting David or his role toward permanence with inspections to free John for administration, mapping, program management. Much hinges on RCPP.

John has interest in solidifying ArcGIS capabilities. John has capacities in biological/species work which are untapped. His near-term goals include refining the CRM App for Scott, completing his detention basin audit, BMP mapping, and continuing wildlife/habitat discussions with the city - which relates to general outreach he would also like to do more of if he had the time.

Eric's performance was discussed in the context of the programming, finances, and all the work under way.

Demmer called for discussion of the Personnel Committee recommendations.

23-66 Motion made by Freiburger to approve recommendations from the Personnel Committee. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

NRCS Updates:

Meyer gave an update on NRCS. New Team Lead, Helen Leavenworth has started and will be stationed in Epworth.

Other Business:

- Treasurer update. We will continue to discuss and explore options for Ruden to step down as Treasurer. Lindblom shared some ideas on recruiting new Assistants.
- Review District caps on State C/S. We will talk about this in August.
- Demmer still working on getting a Legislative meeting set up. Looking at August of September.

Being no further business to discuss, Demmer requested a motion to adjourn.

23-67 Motion made by Freiburger to adjourn. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

The next meeting will be tentatively held on **Tuesday, August 8, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.** at the district office.

Chairperson _____ Date _____

Secretary _____ Date _____