

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

April 09, 2024

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 1:38 p.m. in person at the District office in Epworth, IA and online through Zoom on April 09, 2024. Those present included Staff: Bill Meyer, Sarah Kelchen, acting Conservation Assistant, Eric Schmechel, Allisen Freihage, John Sewell & Scott Hendricks. Commissioners: Wayne Demmer, Mike Freiburger, Jeff Schmitt, & Jack Smith. Guests: Erin Erickson (Zoom), Ed Raber, Ann McDonough & Paul McDonough.

Adopt Agenda:

The agenda was approved as presented with the addition of a bill from Northeast Iowa Community College for facility rent for a Watershed Meeting in the amount of \$878.00 and an upcoming event "Party For The Planet" on April 20, 2024.

24-35 Motion was made by Schmitt to approve the agenda with the additions. 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 March 13, 2024.

24-36 Motion made by Smith to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held March 13, 2024. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

NRCS Updates:

- Meyer discussed that the deadline for first round of EQIP obligations has been moved up. Not a lot of funds will be available for 2nd round EQIP/CSP.

Watershed Project Update:

- Hendricks detailed how the RCPP cover crop drone application project is progressing. 9200 acres currently signed up. They will be doing an RFP or RFQ for seed and drone operators. Hendricks will send a spreadsheet of applicants so staff can confirm their eligibility. RCPP dollars can start to be spent after July 1. Possibility of doing multi year contracts next year was discussed.
- Schmechel outlined the Iowa Partners for Conservation (IPC) grant announcement. Currently using this grant with City of Dubuque as the lead applicant. Current grant started in 2018, had an extension and is set to expire August 2024. Uses of this grant has included to model where potential structural conservation practices could be placed in Dubuque County. Using the Agricultural Conservation Planning Framework (ACPF) this was completed back in 2020 with the assistance of Houston Engineering. In 2021, Andrew and Marissa Waldo were hired under this grant to begin working on writing NRCS conservation plans for landowners as well as hosting outreach events and field days. Over 30 conservation plans have been written and over 10 farmer field days have been completed. With support of the Dubuque County Watershed program, the Waldo's started the Dubuque County farmer to farmer group in 2023, a group that has had input and discussion on what projects (programs) the newly acquired RCPP funding for Dubuque County could be used for. Would like the District to apply as the lead applicant and has identified potential partners that could be collaborated with similar goals. If awarded this grant, the main objectives would be to continue to grow and develop the Dubuque County farmer to farmer group, extend (invite) the farmer to farmer group to Delaware and Jones Counties, continue field days, outreach events, and annual conference, and continue writing conservation plans for farmers and assisting with NRCS programs and reporting (CPA-52). There are some items needed to complete the applications including the District to pledge in-cash contributions as well as in-kind contributions. District also needs to apply for a unique entity identifier number (UEI) from sam.gov.

Demmer called for a discussion of applying for the Iowa Partners for Conservation (IPC) grant.

24-37 Motion made by Smith to approve applying for the IPC Grant. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer called for a discussion of accepting presented in-cash and in-kind pledge agreements for the IPC Grant application.

24-38 Motion made by Schmitt to accept the presented in-cash and in-kind pledge agreements for the IPC Grant application. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.
 Demmer called for a discussion of applying for a unique entity identifier (EUI) number and registration from sam.gov
24-39 Motion made by Freiburger for Freihage to apply for an EUI number and registration from sam.gov for the District. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

- Schmechel detailed the Iowa DNR Water Monitoring contract.

Demmer called for a discussion of the Iowa DNR Water Monitoring contract.

24-40 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the Iowa DNR Water Monitoring contract. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

- Sewell discussed the upcoming Stormwater Workshop Event at the Dubuque County Fairgrounds from 4 – 6:30 pm on April 25th for designers and contractors aimed at providing the latest insights and solutions in stormwater and erosion control. Meal included.
- Group discussion on the Dubuque County Green Energy Ordinance. Concerns shared on preventing soil erosion on and from these sites and if there is anyway to prevent losing prime agricultural land to these sites. Any criteria that could be set to limit conversion? Average CSR rating for Dubuque County is around 48. Soil & Water Commissioners want to protect soil resources now and keep soil preservation in mind for the future. Lindblom was unable to attend the meeting but did provide input through an email that was shared with the group.

** Raber and Meyer exited the meeting at 2:50 pm
 ** Erickson and McDonough’s exited the meeting at 3:00 pm

FARMS Program Summary:

Current FARMS '24 Account information:

REAP P \$916.62 REAP F/NG \$121.15 Cost Share \$0.00

Cost Share Application:

None

Cost Share Cancellations:

None

Farms Cost Share Amendments:

None

Cost Share Certifications & Maintenance Agreements:

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Brimeyer, Mark	108359	WQI	Cover Crop	\$450.00	approve payment
Feldmann, Amy	111331	WQI	Cover Crop	\$1,020.00	approve payment
JPT Inc.	108211	WQI	Cover Crop	\$2,400.00	approve payment
Ries, Dale	108060	WQI	Cover Crop	\$250.00	approve payment
West, Daniel	109678	WQI	Cover Crop	\$300.00	approve payment
Wolf, Kevin	109687	WQI	Cover Crop	\$390.00	approve payment
Zauche, Daniel	108177	REAP F/NG	Forest Stand Improvement	\$1,125.00	approve payment

24-41 Motion made by Schmitt to approve Farms cost share certifications and maintenance agreements. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Conservation Plan

None
 (Board voted 6-13-22, motion #22-72 to not sign CRP Conservation Plans)

Finance:

- February TR, bank statement & bills correction

Demmer called for discussion of the correction to the February TR, bank statement, bills presented with the addition of the bill from Eric Schmechel for \$267.50 for supplies. TR had been missing check # 3277 written February 13th.

24-42 Motion made by Smith to approve the correction to the February TR, bank statement, and bills presented with the addition of the bill from Eric Schmechel for \$267.50. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- March TR, bank statement & bills presented.

Demmer called for discussion of the March TR, bank statement, & bills presented with the addition of the bill for \$878.00 facility rent to the Northeast Iowa Community College for a Watershed Meeting that was held.

24-43 Motion made by Smith to approve the March TR, bank statement, & bills presented with the addition of the bill for \$878.00 facility rent to the Northeast Iowa Community College. Motion seconded by Demmer. Motion carried unanimously.

- Funds transfer approval

Demmer called for discussion of transferring funds from savings to checking for \$804.50 for Woman, Land and Legacy and \$2264.22 from savings to checking for Klostermann's payroll.

24-44 Motion made by Smith to transfer \$804.50 from savings to checking for Woman, Land and Legacy and \$2264.22 from savings to checking for Klostermann's payroll. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

Freiburger will contact bank to transfer.

- US Cellular – set up auto payment. Kelchen stated with a due date of the 14th, a check would always be late.

Demmer called for discussion of setting up US Cellular as an automatic payment.

24-45 Motion made by Smith to set up an automatic payment with US Cellular. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

Freiburger will work with Lindblom and Schmechel to get this set up.

- Verizon Credit – Kelchen stated District has a credit of \$178.09. Since we are no longer using their service, we need to request a refund. Freiburger will work with Lindblom and Schmechel to request a refund.
- Trevor Brooke Invoice for March

Demmer called for discussion of Trevor and Brooke Invoice for March

24-46 Motion made by Smith to approve the March invoice for Trevor and Brooke. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Request for reimbursement from IDALS for NACD Jan 1 to March 31, 2024 for \$754.60

Demmer called for discussion of the request for reimbursement from IDALS for NACD Jan 1 to March 31, 2024 for \$754.60.

24-47 Motion made by Schmitt to request reimbursement from IDALS for NACD Jan 1 to March 31, 2024 for \$754.60. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Correspondence Received:

- CDI Connections

Meeting Updates:

- Party for the Planet to be held from 10:00 am to 2:00 pm on Saturday April 20th at the Mississippi River Museum.

Personnel Updates:

- State Technician is set to start on April 26, 2024. Conservation Assistant interviews being conducted on Friday April 12, 2024. Two Commissioners should attend.

Other Business:

- Funding opportunities – will talk about more after a new CA is in place.
- IDALS Awards Nominations – Kelchen stated Jone's County Commissioner suggested a name. Kelchen will reach back out to Jones County ask request more information.
- CDI Poster Contest due to SWCD 4-26-24. Local winners to CDI by 6-21-24
- Father Normal White Scholarship due 4-5-24. – Kelchen stated no applications were submitted.
- Soil & Water Conservation Week April 28 to May 5, 2024. No activities planned at this time.
- Election – 25 signatures; due to County Auditor 8/28/24

** Schmechel, Freihage, Sewell & Hendricks exited the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

- Discussion returned to the Dubuque County Green Energy Ordinance.

Demmer called for discussion of submitting a letter to the Supervisors and Zoning Committee from the Soil & Water Conservation District.

24-48 Motion made by Schmitt to approve submitting a letter to the Supervisors and Zoning Committee from the Soil & Water Conservation District about the Green Energy Ordinance. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer will work on drafting the letter. Letter will be shared before being sent.

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

24-49 Motion made by Freiburger to adjourn. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

The next meeting tentatively be held on **Tuesday, May 21, 2024 at 1:30 p.m.** at the district office.

Wayne Demmer 5/21/24
Chairperson Date

Sarah Kelchen, Acting CA May 21, 2024
Secretary Date