

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING
December 19, 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 4:02 p.m. in person at the District office in Epworth, IA and online through Zoom on December 19, 2023. Those present included Staff: Bill Meyer, Allisen Freihage (Conservation Assistant), Eric Schmechel (Zoom) & Scott Hendricks. Commissioners: Wayne Demmer, Mike Freiburger, Jeff Schmitt, Jack Smith & Ron Lindblom. Guests: Ashley Neises (Zoom)

Adopt Agenda:

The agenda was approved as presented.

23-114 Motion was made by Smith to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:

Demmer called for a discussion of the minutes from the regular meeting held November 21, 2023 and the special meeting held December 14, 2023.

23-115 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the minutes from the regular meeting November 21, 2023 and the special meeting held December 14, 2023. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

***Bill Meyer entered meeting 4:04 p.m.

FARMS Program Summary:

Current **FARMS '23** Account information:

REAP P \$916.62

REAP F/NG \$119.65

Cost Share \$65,805.00

Cost Share Application:

None

Cost Share Cancellations:

Practice Number	Name	Program	Practice	Amount	Action
104798	Matthew Casey	Cost Share	Grade Stabilization structure	\$25,000.00	Cancel application

23-116 Motion made by Lindblom to approve the cancellation of Matthew Casey's grade stabilization structure. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

Farms Cost Share Amendments:

None

Cost Share Certifications & Maintenance Agreements:

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Julie Dupont	108374	WQI	CC	\$300.00	Approve Certification
Randy Dupont	108210	WQI	CC	\$958.50	Approve Certification
Friedman Brothers INC	109959	WQI	CC	\$1605.00	Approve Certification
Charles Knepper	107879	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Michael Knipper	107862	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Schwerts Brothers LLC	108720	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Spencer Schwerts	110920	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Ronald Then	110363	WQI	CC	\$825.00	Approve Certification
Kenneth Wille	110360	WQI	CC	\$1800.00	Approve Certification
Loras Wolfe	113171	WQI	CC	\$1650.00	Approve Certification

23-117 Motion made by Schmitt to approve all ten WQI certifications. 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:

October TR, Bank Statement & bills.

November TR, Bank Statement & bills.

Demmer called for discussion of the October TR, bank statement, bills presented. October TR was approved last meeting with an error. Discussion was had about the error and corrected TR was reviewed.

23-118 Motion made by Smith to approve the corrected October TR, bank statement, and bills presented. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

***Scott Hendricks entered meeting 4:11 p.m.

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

23-119 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the November TR, bank statement, and bills presented. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Project Update:

- Trevor and Brooke Invoice November

23-119 Motion made by Lindblom to approve the Trevor and Brooke November Invoice. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

- Update given by Eric Schmechel regarding the resignation of previous Urban Coordinator John Wiley. New job posting was approved at the December 12, 2023 meeting to begin the hiring search for the reworked position. Schmechel recently met with the board of supervisors and with the loss of John and the money coming in from RCPP grant we now have the opportunity to make the new Stormwater/Erosion Control Coordinator position more focused on MS4/stormwater work. Looking forward we will also have plenty of additional work that would call for creating a new position with the watershed team. This new position would be more centered around outreach, water monitoring, and administrative work with the RCPP grant. The hope is to hire both of these positions in January. Question was asked by Wayne regarding the cost associated with administering this new position. Per Schmechel, recent discussions with Sand County Foundation have indicated that we are looking at receiving possibly \$80,000+ per year in grant funds to assist in the administration of the grant. This role would also take some of the load off of our county auditor who are concerned about the additional work that would be added to process the payments for each producer. While we are still waiting on the supplemental agreements, Schmechel is confident we have the money currently in the watershed account available to pay this position until we begin receiving the grant money. Ron questioned if the plan is to fill the Stormwater/ Erosion Control Coordinator position first. The answer is yes. Mike questioned how many applications we have received if any for the Stormwater/Erosion Control Coordinator position. Schmechel discussed that we have already begun receiving applications but review will need to be done with the personnel committee in early January to determine the applicants that will be interviewed.

23-120 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the addition of the RCPP administrative position (name to change) and the immediate publication of the position description once finalized. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

- RCPP meeting January 11, 2024 will take place at the Fire training building starting at 11:00am. Members of Sand County Foundation will be present.
- Schmechel discussed the current cellphone plan and possible changes. Wiley requested to keep his phone number and phone when he left. Phone line was paid off by Wiley and the termination fee was paid by him as well. Schmechel discussed the need to purchase a new phone for the Stormwater/ Erosion Control Coordinator as well as adding an additional line and phone for the new RCPP position. Discussion was had regarding previous policy that had been established regarding the cost of purchasing new phones for the watershed team. **22-100.** Schmechel discussed looking at other cellular companies to compare costs in January.

- Farmer to Farmer conference on February 6, 2024 poster has been finalized and event page has been created in constant contact. Schmechel would like to connect our constant contact account with the watershed checking account to accept registration fees for this event.

23-121 Motion made by Freiburger to connect the Dubuque Watershed checking account to the constant contact event registration to accept the registration fees. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

*** Schmechel exited the meeting at 4:36 p.m.

Correspondence Received:

- CDI Connections

Meeting Updates:

- Discussion had regarding when to schedule the next meeting. On even numbered years the district is not required to meet on the first business day of the year. Discussion was had regarding when we usually receive our bank statements. Due to not receiving the bank statement in time and wanting to have only one meeting instead of two the month of January, the next meeting will be held on the third Tuesday of the month beginning at 5pm as we have been doing in previous months.

Personnel Updates:

- NACD employee- Tracy Klostermann has started and NRCS is working on providing her with computer privileges.

NRCS Updates:

- Meyer gave update on NRCS. NRCS is currently advertising for a CET position and/or a federal technician position in the quad. This position would help all 4 counties in our quad. Scott Hendricks has been allowed access to NRCS files dependent on passing the federal background check process. This is taking some time, but he should have access to the files once finished. He will not be given a government computer or linc pass card. Discussion had regarding Rusle program available to Hendricks.

Other Business:

- CDI Poster contest guidelines reviewed. Commissioners would like to participate in the contest this year. Previous years they had not due to lack of interest. There was at least one teacher who had shown interest in the contest. Allisen Freihage to reach out to local teachers in the area to inform about contest. Discussion regarding funding this contest was had.

*** Hendricks exited the meeting at 5:09 p.m.

23-122 Motion made by Schmitt to approve a \$25 prize for the winner of each CDI poster contest division. Motion seconded by Lindblom. Motion carried unanimously.

- Assistant commissioner search video recorded with the Watershed team. Video has details about the district and what it means to be a commissioner and an assistant commissioner.
- Assistant commissioner expectations sheet reviewed. Concerns were voiced regarding what some believed the assistant commissioner roles should and shouldn't be. Item was tabled until next meeting when we will have more time to review the document and have further discussions on what everyone believes an assistant commissioner's tasks should be.
- New Plat Books discussion tabled.

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

23-123 Motion made by Smith to adjourn. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 5:36 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, January 16, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.** at the district office.

Wayne Demmer 1-17-24
Chairperson Date

Allis Freiburger 1/17/24
Secretary Date