

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

November 21, 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 6:00 p.m. in person at the District office in Epworth, IA and online through Zoom on November 21, 2023. Those present included Staff: Bill Meyer, Allisen Hallahan (Conservation Assistant), Eric Schmechel (Zoom) & Scott Hendricks (Zoom). Commissioners: Wayne Demmer, Mike Freiburger, Jeff Schmitt, Jack Smith & Ron Lindblom. Guests: Ashley Neises (Zoom)

Adopt Agenda:

The agenda was approved as presented.

23-99 Motion was made by Smith to approve the agenda. 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 meetings held September 13, 2023 and October 17, 2023.

23-100 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the minutes from the regular September 13, 2023 meeting with correction of two motions that were originally missed. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

23-101 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the minutes of the regular October 17, 2023 meeting. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

FARMS Program Summary:

Current **FARMS '23** Account information:

REAP P \$916.62

REAP F/NG \$119.65

Cost Share \$65,805.00

IDALS will be recalling all Cost Share funds at end of day December 29, 2023. Districts will have the option of sending their REAP P and REAP F/NG back or retaining them into next year.

Cost Share Application:

None

Cost Share Cancellations:

None

Farms Cost Share Amendments:

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Date to be changed	Old Value	New Value	Approval Status
Matthew Casey	104797	Cost Share	Grassed Waterway	Completion Date	11/30/2023	06/01/2023	Approved
Matthew Casey	104798	Cost Share	Grade Stabilization Structure	Completion Date	11/30/2023	06/01/2023	Approved
Schwerts Brothers LLC	106067	Cost Share	Grassed Waterway	Completion Date	11/30/2023	05/01/2024	Approved
Schwerts Brothers LLC	106078	Cost Share	Grassed Waterway	Completion Date	11/30/2023	05/01/2024	Approved
Schwerts Brothers LLC	106079	Cost Share	Grassed Waterway	Completion Date	11/30/2023	05/01/2024	Approved

23-102 Motion made by Freiburger to approve all five Cost Share amendments. Motion seconded by Lindblom. Motion Carried unanimously.

Cost Share Certifications & Maintenance Agreements:

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Brian Hoefler	108067	WQI	CC	\$1155.00	Approved
Matt Simon	107935	WQI	CC	\$750.00	Approved

Dale Menke	108725	WQI	CC	\$600.00	Approved
James Wulfekuhle	107866	WQI	CC	\$1155.00	Approved
Robert Lahey	108677	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approved
Louis Cook	113799	WQI	CC	\$600.00	Approved
Lloyd Kennedy	108063	WQI	CC	\$1350.00	Approved
Scott Brant	108481	WQI	CC	\$675.00	Approved
Thomas Burlage	111407	WQI	CC	\$1200.00	Approved
Benjamin Funke	107567	WQI	CC	\$1650.00	Approved
Rick Hirsch	113523	WQI	CC	\$210.00	Approved
Joe Jarding	108205	WQI	CC	\$480.00	Approved
Gene Langel	107500	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approved
John Lynch	111297	WQI	CC	\$600.00	Approved
Robert McCarthy	108849	WQI	CC	\$3375.00	Approved
Donald Schuster	107499	WQI	CC	\$127.20	Approved
Andrew Wilwert	108194	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approved
Brian Hodgson	107870	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approved
Gerald Wuchter	108070	WQI	CC	\$1650.00	Approved
Russell Bahl	108356	WQI	CC	\$870.00	Approved
James Vaske	109087	WQI	CC	\$682.20	Approved
James Decker	111571	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approved
Robert Decker	112899	WQI	CC	\$555.90	Approved
Daniel Steffen	113371	WQI	CC	\$897.00	Approved
David Hermsen	113791	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approved
Ploessl Farms Inc	108661	WQI	CC	\$1697.40	Approved
Joseph Schmitt	107865	WQI	CC	\$1350.00	Approved
Scott Steffensmeier	108312	WQI	CC	\$630.00	Approved
Kathy Schmitt	108318	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approved
Joshua Behnke	109144	WQI	CC	\$930.00	Approved
Scott Steffen	113439	WQI	CC	\$897.00	Approved
Timothy Steffen	113440	WQI	CC	\$897.00	Approved

23-103 Motion made by Schmitt to approve all thirty-two WQI certifications. Motion seconded by Lindblom. Motion carried unanimously.

Conservation Plan

None

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

Review District caps on State Cost Share:

Demmer called for discussion the district caps on grassed waterways and grade stabilization structures. Concerns were voiced of removing the caps due to some structures and waterways being filled in due to poor management practices on the surrounding land. Freiburger asked if we can establish a policy requiring that 75% of the upland must be maintained at T-value to receive cost share. Schmitt, Lindblom, and Smith believe there would be benefit to this regulation. Discussion of Iowa Code 10.41(4) special watershed projects requiring 75% of land in a watershed to be included for additional cost share. Discussion was had regarding the increase in cost of things like tile. Bill Meyer mentioned that tile may increase the amounts of nitrates going into streams. Schmitt suggests that 100% of the applicant's land should be at T-value to increase the caps. Freiburger questions if we can work with applicants more about doing other practices, ex. Buffers or contour strips etc., along with the waterways/ grade stabilization structures to increase the caps. Lindblom

suggests bundling other practices with the cost share to pay more. It was then pointed out that we can only cost share up to 50% of a project and nothing more. Discussion was had that NRCS does not have the resources to provide immediate technical assistance for things like conservation plans. Scott Hendricks was discussed as being an option to provide education and assistance to applicants to better understand how to care for their waterways and grade stabilization structures.

23-104 Motion made by Lindblom to raise district cap for grassed waterways to \$15,000 and district cap for grade stabilization structures to \$35,000 with the requirement that they meet with a member of our watershed/conservation team and that we will only pay the cost of a maximum tile size of 5". Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance:

October TR, Bank Statement & bills.

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

23-105 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the October TR, bank statement, and bills presented. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Project Update:

- Trevor and Brooke Invoice October

23-106 Motion made by Smith to approve the Trevor and Brooke October Invoice. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- 28E Watershed Meeting November 28, 2023- Eric Schmechel reminded commissioners of the upcoming 28E agreement meeting with the City of Dubuque, City of Asbury, and Dubuque County on November 28, 2023. He would like as many commissioners present as possible. Everyone agreed they would do their best to attend.
- RCPP update- our RCPP application has been approved. Eric will be discussing more at a later date regarding how we plan to use the funding.
- Farmer to Farmer meeting & commissioner work session (December)- Eric will be sending the commissioners a poll regarding the best dates and times for them for this meeting.
- State employees will be off November 22, 2023 through November 24, 2023 and December 26, 2023. District employees usually follow the state employee days off.

Demmer called for discussion the approval of holiday pay for district employees for the additional November and December days.

23-107 Motion made by Schmitt for the District employees to receive a vacation day on November 22, 2023, November 24, 2023, and December 26, 2023. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

*** Hendricks exited the meeting at 7:32 p.m.

Correspondence Received:

- CDI Connections

Meeting Updates:

- REAP Assembly- Freiburger attended. Packet was passed around detailing the funding each county in the region has received from REAP for projects.

Personnel Updates:

- NACD employee- Employee is still working through the onboarding process with NRCS. Waiting for an official start date.

NRCS Updates:

Meyer gave update on NRCS. The 2018 Farm Bill has been extended. CRP status checks are underway. Luke Hirsch has started his new position as a Federal Technician. The State technician position is now empty, but a request has been made to advertise for it.

Other Business:

- Lindblom brought up his previous request for assistant commissioners since the retirement of the last assistant commissioner. He believes that there should be some requirement for the prospect to attend two meetings and write a letter detailing why they would like to become an assistant commissioner. Bill Meyer brought up the

Iowa extension office Master Naturalist class as a possible pool to draw from for candidates. He will contact them regarding if they may be able to share more information about attendees of the program with us.

- Ashley Neises expressed possible interests in becoming an assistant commissioner but would like more information regarding the expectations and tasks we would give to the assistants.
- SWCD website was discussed and commissioners will look through the updated website and give suggestions of things they may want included.

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

23-108 Motion made by Smith to adjourn. Motion seconded by Lindblom. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:55 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, December 19, 2023 at 5:00 p.m.** at the district office.

<u>Wayne Demmer</u>	<u>12/19/23</u>	<u>Wili Fralder</u>	<u>12/19/23</u>
Chairperson	Date	Secretary	Date