

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

November 13, 2024

Dubuque SWCD Office

210 Bierman Road, Epworth IA 52045

Call Meeting to Order: The monthly meeting of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District was called to order by Jeff Schmitt, Vice Chairperson, on November 13, 2024, at 7:05 pm at the SWCD District office in Epworth, IA and through Zoom. Those present included Vice Chairperson Jeff Schmitt, and Commissioners Jack Smith, Mike Freiburger and Dennis Rauen; Bill Meyer, DC; Helen Backes, CA and Megan Giorgenti, Watershed Consultant. Those attending via Zoom included Watershed staff Eric Schmechel, Scott Hendricks, John Sewell and Allisen Freihage.

Schmitt welcomed Megan Giorgenti to the meeting. She gave a brief history about herself and her work experience.

Adopt Agenda:

Schmitt called for a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

24-127 Motion was made by Freiburger to approve the agenda. Motion was seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:

Schmitt called for a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held on October 16, 2024.

24-128 Motion made by Smith to approve the minutes from the previous meeting on October 16, 2024. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance:

- October TR, bank statement & bills presented and reviewed.
US Cellular bill for November has not been received in time for the Commissioners' meeting. US Cellular is an automatic withdrawal. Currently, the District does not receive a paper copy of the bill. Schmechel will check with US Cellular for the District to receive a paper copy.

With no further discussion, Schmitt called for a motion to approve the October TR, bank statement, & bills presented.

24-129 Motion made by Smith to approve the October TR; bank statement, & bills presented. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- Funds Transfer for NACD payroll for \$2,264.48 to the Watershed checking account.

Schmitt called for a motion to transfer payroll funds in the amount of \$2,264.48.

24-130 Motion made by Smith to transfer \$2,264.48 for payroll funds. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- Deposits for October included IDALS \$792.57 for their portion of the NACD grant, and Sand County Foundation \$7950.79 for RCPP reimbursement to the Watershed
- A brief discussion was held on moving the SWCD and Watershed accounts into some sort of money market account or CD's. Schmechel will reach out to Dupaco to gather more information to present at a future meeting.
- Backes stated that beginning in tax year 2024, the District will need to file 1099 NEC tax forms for consultants who receive more than \$600 per year. She also stated there will be an IPERS Compliance Review held on December 2. This will be held by phone.
- Schmechel suggested the District join the Soil Water Conservation Society (SWCS). Benefits of membership were discussed. Membership fee is \$230. The membership will be reviewed next year to determine if the membership is beneficial for the District.

Schmitt called for a motion to approve the membership for SWCD with review yearly.

24-131 Motion made by Rauen to approve the membership for SWCD with review yearly. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

FARMS Summary:

Current FARMS '25 Account information: **Cost Share \$45,998; REAP F/NG \$0.00; & REAP P \$2546.91**

- Notice was given by the State that any funds left over after December 31, 2024, will be returned to the State. Supplemental funding would be available but would need to be submitted by the December 31.

- There were no Cost Share Applications, Amendments, Certifications & Maintenance Agreements or Cancellations to approve at this time.
- **WQI Cover Crop Approval** – Backes presented a list of individuals who were eligible for Cover Crop Approval. There are sixteen applicants with 1,141.89 acres planted and a cost of \$24,466.70. See Attachment.

Schmitt called for a motion to approve the list of applicants for cover crop payments.

24-132 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the list of applicants for cover crop payments. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Project Update:

- Sewell discussed a situation on a waterway. He has spoken with the landowner and the City of Asbury. He suggested possibly future CRP area. He will have another on-site meeting after the crops are harvested.
- The Farmer-to-Farmer Conference is now scheduled for January 29 and 30th. The theme is Landowner/Tenant Relationships. The Watershed team is busy organizing the conference. A panel session of tenants and landowners would be presented on their relationships as tenants and landowners.
- Schmechel discussed the possibility of transferring Watershed funds into an interest-bearing money market account. He would like to discuss with Dupaco what the available options are. Smith is Treasurer with Freiburger Co-Treasurer. Smith has access to the bank statements. Demmer and Freiburger have signature authority for signing checks for the District.

Schmitt called for a motion to authorizing a meeting with Dupaco regarding best financial options for the District.

24-133 Motion made by Freiburger to authorizing a meeting with Dupaco regarding best financial options for the District. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

- Freihage discussed a buffer program with IDALS. IDALS is excited about the pilot project. The start date is scheduled for 2025 if approved.
- Schmechel mentioned the Sustainable Ag Summit will be held soon. The deadline to attend has passed. The Summit is on regenerative agriculture.
- Schmechel also discussed the addition of a temporary part-time employee for storm water and water testing. This position would assist Sewel with the backlog of work for storm water. He would like the position to begin in December. He has someone possibly interested in the temporary position. Starting wage would be between \$20 - \$25 per hour with no benefits.
- January 23 is a Women, Land & Legacy Beginning Farmer Meeting at Oh So Good Winery in Dyersville.
- Giorgenti and Freihage will have a pop-up field day in the spring. The field day would be an introduction into cover crops.
- Meyers asked what the out-of-pocket costs for the Watershed Drone Cover Crop Program. Hendricks stated that it was very minimal. Rauen shared photos of his cover crops which contains a variety mix of seeds. His cover crops were well established.

NRCS Updates:

- Meyers stated NRCS is busy with programs. Otherwise, he had nothing to report on at this time.

Meeting Update:

- The Watershed will host a Drone Input meeting on December 4 at 4:30 pm at the Fire Training Center. Drone operators and seed dealers will discuss how this past program went and how it can improve for next year.

Correspondence:

- Backes shared with the Commissioners the current CDI Connections Newsletter was available in hard copy for them.

Other:

- The results of the election for SWCD Commissioners were certified by the Board of Supervisors. Jeff Schmitt won re-election. Dennis Rauen won a new term and Ken Behnke won a new term by write-in votes. Their commission will begin January 2 and is a 4-year term. A District Organizational meeting will be held on January 2 to install the Commissioners and review policies for the District.
- Rauen encouraged the Commissioners attend the movie "Common Ground" which is a sequel to the popular "Kiss the Ground" film. The film will be November 19th at the Manchester theater. Door open at 5:30 with show at 6:00 pm.

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

24-134 Motion made by Freiburger to adjourn. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:42 pm.

The next meeting date will be held on December 11 at 5:30 pm at the Dubuque County Building at 1225 Seipple Road, Dubuque. Dr. Hoffman will be present to discuss sample testing.

Wayne Demmer 12/11/24
Chairperson Date

Ken Behnke 12-11-24
Secretary Date

