

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

September 17, 2024

1225 Seipple Road, Dubuque, IA

Call Meeting to Order: The monthly meeting of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District was called to order by Vice Chairperson Jeff Schmitt on September 17, 2024, at 3:07 pm at the Dubuque County Office Building at 1225 Seipple Rd, Dubuque, IA and online through Zoom. Those present included Vice Chairperson Jeff Schmitt, Jack Smith, Mike Freiburger and Dennis Rauen, Bill Meyer DC, Helen Backes CA, Watershed staff: Eric Schmechel, Allisen Freihage, Scott Hendricks and John Sewel. Wayne Demmer arrived at 3:22 pm

Adopt Agenda:

The agenda was approved with three additions. They include Finance- Deposit of \$40,120; FARMS- addition of approval for two cost share applications and Other – commissioner elections. Vice Chair Schmitt called for a motion to approve the agenda with the additional items forementioned.

24-110 Motion was made by Smith to approve the agenda with the additions. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:

Schmitt called for a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held August 15, 2024.

24-111 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the minutes from the previous meeting held August 15, 2024. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance:

- August TR, bank statement & bills presented and reviewed. Check #1157 was voided as the check was written to Trevor Fannon and Brooke Boddicker for Outreach. Trevor would like the check made out to him only and then he pays Brooke for her work. New Check # 1160 issued to Trevor Fannon for \$2,041.67. A deposit will be made to the Watershed checking account for \$40,120 by City of Asbury for their portion of the 28E agreement. Freihage questioned Backes regarding the IDALS ACH deposit of \$580.57 for the NACD Grant to the SWCD checking account. She questioned if it should be moved to SWCD savings account. Backes will review past deposits and make necessary changes if needed.

With no further discussion, Schmitt called for a motion to approve the August TR, bank statement, & bills presented with voided Check #1157, deposit \$40,120 and to review the account for IDALS deposit.

24-112 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the August TR, bank statement, & bills presented with voided Check #1157, deposit \$40,120 and to review the account IDALS deposit. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

- Funds Transfer for 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.

24-113 Motion made by Rauen to transfer \$2,264.48 for payroll funds. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

- NACD RFP for '24 Outreach and Technical Assistance Grant (TA2024). This grant currently assists the District with funding a Program Management Specialist for the office. The current grant will end in the last quarter of 2024. The deadline has been moved to October 7, 2024. Backes and Meyer are working on the grant for submission.
- Backes presented the FY 2024 Financial Review Report. Treasurer, Jack Smith, and Co-Treasurer, Mike Freiburger, reconciled the audit on September 6, 2024. The final audit was conducted by Commissioner Jeff Schmitt and Dave Ruden on September 17, 2024. A discrepancy was found in a payment missed to Eric Schmechel in the amount of \$ 149.97. A payment was presented in the August bills to reimburse Eric Schmechel for supplies for \$149.97.
- Backes presented the FY 2024 Annual Review Report. The Review included the Financial Review Report along with the 1M (Commissioners) account information and the FARMS summary for 2024.

With no further discussion, Schmitt called for a motion to approve the FY 2024 Dubuque SWCD Financial Audit Report and Annual Review Report.

24-114 Motion made by Smith to approve the FY 2024 Dubuque SWCD Financial Audit and Annual Review Report. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

FARMS Summary:

Current FARMS '25 Account information: *Cost Share \$71,298; REAP F/NG \$0.00; & REAP P \$2546.91*

FARMS Cost Share Application:

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Ploessel Jeff	121520	IFIP	Grassed Waterway	\$7,800	Approve Application
Vogel Chris	123047	IFIP	Grade Stabilization	\$17,500	Approve Application

Schmitt called for a motion to approve the FARMS Cost Share applications for Jeff Ploessel and Chris Vogel.

24-115 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the FARMS Cost Share applications. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

FARMS Cost Share Cancellations:

None

FARMS Cost Share Amendments:

None

FARMS Cost Share Certification & Maintenance Agreement:

None

FARMS WQI Update:

Backes updated the Commissioners on the status of the WQI Cover Crop program. The program ended August 30. There are 119 applications for cover crops with 19 first time users. There are over 12,400 acres enrolled in the cover crop program.

Watershed Project Update:

- IPC Grant – Starts October 1, 2024. The RFP has been posted and will close soon. Commissioners will oversee hiring the contracted/consulting positions.
- RCPP funding “Field to Market” Program is a pilot program. Watershed will work with NRCS
- Hendricks gave an update on their drone cover crop program. To date, of the total 9600 acres, 6,300 acres have been seeded. There are 4 drone operators with region 2 as the least number of acres completed. This fall, discussions will be held with local seed dealers regarding suppling seed for next year. A few local seed dealers have noted that the seeding for this year is from out of state.
- 2nd Annual Farmer to Farmer Conference will be held in February 2025. Discussion was held on topics for the conference. A target audience would be to landowners and renters and how they can use conservation practices to enhance their operations to promote soil conservation and improve water quality.
- Schmechel gave a brief update of recent conferences that Watershed staff attended. The conferences include Fishers and Farmers and the Iowa Water Conference.
- Freiburger asked about the phosphorus water sampling with University of Dubuque (UD). It has been several months since the District received data from UD. Phosphorus sampling is a good determination factor of soil loss. The District would like to see more data on a regular basis. Does the District/Watershed look at funds for a baseline phosphorus level. It was determined to add this item to the agenda for the next meeting.
- Several members of the Watershed staff and Commissioner Dennis Rauen will be attending the Soul to Soil Conference at Sinsinawa. They have several notable presenters for the conference. Other commissioners are interested in attending as well. Rauen stated that they are looking for more members on the Steering Committee for Sinsinawa. If anyone is interested or knows someone who might be interested, contact Rauen.

NRCS Updates:

Meyer gave a brief update on NRCS. There are administrative changes regarding programs. He attended a weed management conference. It was very informative on addressing various weed treatments and new research on cover crops suppressing weeds without using herbicides.

Soil Loss Complaint Update: Nothing to report at this time

Meeting Updates:

- Demmer attended the CDI Conference in August. Participation for the conference was about 50 %. The conference had good speakers. A Dubuque County Basket for Silent Auction raised \$250 for scholarships. Demmer stated it was the highest bid of the silent auction items. The funds raised from the auction will go towards the CDI Scholarship.

Personnel:

Discussion from the Commissioners was held regarding the benefit package. With no further discussion, Schmitt asked for a motion to approve the updated Dubuque SWCD Benefits package with July 1, 2024, as the retroactive date for increased vacation and sick leave accrual rates and continue with insurance through Dubuque County.

24-116 Motion was made by Freiburger to approve the updated Dubuque SWCD benefits package with July 1, 2024, as the retroactive date for increased vacation and sick leave accrual rates and continue with insurance through Dubuque County. Motion was seconded by Demmer. Motion carried unanimously.

Other:

- Backes questioned the reimbursement policy regarding payments to staff for travel expenses. The policy states staff would be reimbursed through the payroll. This is currently not being done. Schmechel remembers when former CA Siefken did travel payments with the payroll. Discussion was held on how to handle the policy – either change it to the current process or follow the policy as stated. Backes said she would investigate the payroll process further.
- Dubuque SWCD will celebrate their 80th anniversary in March 2025
- Only 2 individuals are on the ballot for the SWCD Commissioner election on November 5th. A write in candidate will be determine the 3rd commissioner.

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

24-117 Motion made by Demmer to adjourn. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 5:04 pm.

The next meeting date is to be determined.

Wayne Demmer 10/16/24
Chairperson Date

Helen Backes 10-16-24
Secretary Date