

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

January 17, 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 4:24 p.m. in person at the District office in Epworth, IA and online through Zoom on January 17, 2024. Those present included Staff: Bill Meyer, Allisen Freihage (Conservation Assistant), Eric Schmechel (Zoom) & Scott Hendricks (Zoom). Commissioners: Wayne Demmer, Mike Freiburger, Jeff Schmitt, Jack Smith & Ron Lindblom. Guests: Harley Pothoff.

Adopt Agenda:

The agenda was approved as presented.

24-6 Motion was made by Freiburger 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 December 19, 2023.

24-7 Motion made by Lindblom to approve the minutes from the regular meeting December 19, 2023. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

FARMS Program Summary:

Current **FARMS '23** Account information:

REAP P \$916.62

REAP F/NG \$119.65

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
Jason Ambrosy	109682	WQI	CC	\$4000.00	Approve Certification
Marvin Ambrosy	109689	WQI	CC	\$361.95	Approve Certification
Alice Cook	112566	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Terrence Cook	109709	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Todd Cook	112656	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Tony Cook	111823	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Timothy Cota	107863	WQI	CC	\$240.00	Approve Certification
Timothy Daly	109086	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Michael Deutmeyer	109696	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Brian Hermsen	108362	WQI	CC	\$2190.00	Approve Certification
Douglas Hoefler	107860	WQI	CC	\$600.00	Approve Certification
John Hoefler	108192	WQI	CC	\$1860.00	Approve Certification
Mark Klein	113783	WQI	CC	\$1143.60	Approve Certification
Jordan Kluesner	109083	WQI	CC	\$2787.50	Approve Certification
David Kurt	108477	WQI	CC	\$300.00	Approve Certification
Jason Lehman	112273	WQI	CC	\$714.00	Approve Certification

James Ostwinkle	112958	WQI	CC	\$675.00	Approve Certification
Paul Pins	108189	WQI	CC	\$525.00	Approve Certification
Matthew Riniker	107690	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Randal Riniker	107688	WQI	CC	\$2400.00	Approve Certification
Matthew Then	111573	WQI	CC	\$1050.00	Approve Certification
Their Farms Inc	108344	WQI	CC	\$2370.00	Approve Certification
Ronald Weber	108675	WQI	CC	\$900.00	Approve Certification
Jason Wolfe	113101	WQI	CC	\$2025.00	Approve Certification

24-8 Motion made by Schmitt to approve all twenty-four WQI certifications. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Conservation Plan

None

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

Finance:

December TR, Bank Statement & bills.

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

24-9 Motion made by Smith to approve the December TR, bank statement, and bills presented. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

WLL Sponsorship Request:

The Delaware and Jones County Women Land & Legacy group is looking for sponsorships from districts to support their upcoming June event at the Field of Dreams in Dyersville. With the event being held in Dubuque County they are wanting our support. They are looking for a monetary donation to their group.

Discussion was had regarding the possibility of donating some of the money currently held in our account for the Dubuque WLL group that has dissolved. Commissioners believe that Dubuque WLL group should be created again based on previous involvement. Would Dubuque be able to join in with Delaware and Jones County chapter?

Discussion was had of what the Commissioners would like to see in a future field day or WLL event. Spoke about succession planning and how helpful that could be for farmers in our area.

Watershed Project Update:

- Trevor and Brooke Invoice December

24-10 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the Trevor and Brooke December Invoice. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Eric Schmechel gave update regarding the Urban Watershed coordinator position. After the Resignation of the previous employee, the position was renamed the Stormwater/Erosion Control Coordinator. Interviews were held on January 9, 2024. Three applicants were interviewed. Position was offered and accepted. New Employee will begin on February 5, 2024.

*** Harley Pothoff exited meeting at 5:15 p.m.

- RCPP Meeting took place on January 11, 2024. Schmechel informed commissioners on what was discussed at meeting. There was a lot of discussion on the possibility of incentives and rates that may be paid out through RCPP. Believed there is still a lot to figure out regarding meeting NRCS standards. Since the meeting Schmechel has been doing research on model options. He would like to schedule another meeting for mid-February to discuss the options further. Demmer questioned the cost per acre versus incentive based payments and how we would monitor this. Schmechel believes there will be to be collaboration between the Farmer-to-Farmer group, the Waldos, Hendricks, and the future RCPP Coordinator. It will require the use of information given to us from the farmer. Schmechel stated we are kind of paving the way in terms of what a Farmer-to-Farmer group could do with an incentive payment like this. He will be setting up meetings with the groups in Wisconsin and Illinois that are also named on the RCPP grant to discuss further. Lindblom questioned how NRCS does their practice checks. Bill Meyer stated that NRCS requires receipts for the practices implemented to be turned in to them and

then they field check every practice to make sure it follows their standards. Lindblom likes the idea of the plan for the whole area. But that it needs some type of boundary. Schmechel stated that when the proposal was written, it was for the Farmer-to-Farmer groups to develop and create what works best for the area. Lindblom stated he hopes this will create commitment going forward after funds run out. Schmechel requests that if anyone has ideas for the program to please write them down and send them to the whole group. We will discuss this further in February.

- Farmer-to-Farmer conference is scheduled for February 6, 2024 at the NICC Conference Center. Registration for the event is online. Flyers have been hung around the county and there is some possibility for radio ads being created soon to promote.

***Eric Schmechel and Scott Hendricks exited meeting at 5:32 p.m.

Correspondence Received:

- CDI Connections

Annual Work Plan:

5 year plan was reviewed and annual work plan discussed. Allisen Freihage to type up what was discussed during meeting for review by commissioners.

Slough Bill Applications:

Demmer called for discussion the Slough Bill Applications received so far. Discussion had regarding still waiting on some applications from last year. It was mentioned that there are two new applications for this year that we are currently waiting on Brian Preston to field check. He stated this would occur in early February. County Assessor's office is aware of this and has stated that it is alright if we do not get those approved until our February meeting as long as we get things sent in to her immediately after.

24-11 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the eleven Slough Bill applications received so far. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Meeting Updates:

none

Personnel Updates:

- State Technician position was advertised. No interviews were held. Position will be reposted. State Technician position has a different pay scale than previously. There are three levels of the state technician position. When an employee begins in this position they will receive a raise after a six month probationary period, one year, and after eighteen months they will be considered for moving into the technician two position, which will come with another raise and begin the six month probationary period again. This allows for another raise after six months and one year. After eighteen months they may be able to move into the technician three position allowing for the process to begin again. This allows for a higher pay increase to occur over a shorter period compared to previous. They are doing this in hopes that they will keep a competitive wage comparable to federal employment opportunities.

NRCS Updates:

- Meyer gave update on NRCS. NRCS is currently working on assessing and ranking EQIP applications. NRCS has also redone their CSP payment structure.

Other Business:

- Assistant commissioner search was discussed. Freihage gave an overview of what roles IDALS and CDI recommend for an Assistant Commissioner. Document outlining the duties we are looking for an assistant commissioner to do was discussed. Freiburger stated this person should be promoting conservation everywhere they go. Wants someone who is passionate about it.

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

24-12 Motion made by Lindblom to adjourn. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:58 p.m.

The next meeting will be held on **Tuesday, February 20, 2024 at 5:00 p.m.** at the district office.

Chairperson Date

Secretary Date