

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

Monday March 10, 2025

Dubuque SWCD District Office

210 Bierman Road, Epworth, Iowa 52045

Call Meeting to Order: The meeting of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District was called to order by Chairperson Wayne Demmer on March 10th at 5:01 pm at the District office and through Zoom. Those present included Commissioners Wayne Demmer, Jeff Schmitt, Mike Freiburger, Dennis Rauen, Ken Behnke; Helen Backes, CA; Watershed staff Eric Schmechel, and Scott Henderson. Attending via ZOOM was Allisen Freihage. State Tech Olivia Feldman was present for the Farms Summary portion of the meeting.

Adopt Agenda: The agenda was reviewed as presented.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the agenda.

25-48 Motion was made by Schmitt to approve the agenda presented. Motion was seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Watershed Project Update:

- Schmechel discussed the RCPP with Sand County Foundation. He stated that no payments were received for the December invoice yet.
- Schmechel discussed the ICP Grant. There has only been one payment since October 2024. It was suggested that Freihage submit an invoice to see if a payment will be made. Schmechel stated that the current contract with Megan Giorgenti and Andrew Waldo will need to be terminated since the funding is on hold. A new contract for them will be drawn up when funding is available again. Schmechel has been in contact with Giorgenti and Waldo and they are aware of the situation. Schmechel will write the letter stating the contract will be terminated. If/when the IPC funding is available, a new contract will be written. Discussion was held on the training for the consultants. IPC does not reimburse for training costs.

Demmer entertained a motion to terminate the consultants' contracts.

25-49 Motion was made by Schmitt to terminate the contracts. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- Hendricks gave an update on the Cover Crop program. Currently there are 4500 acres enrolled in the program. Three fourth of the applicants are new applicants. Tentatively August 1st is the fly date for the drone portion of the program. Discussion was held on the membership fees. Commissioners questioned if the memberships were approved with SCF. Schmechel state that this was discussed with SCF, and the membership fee will be a tax-deductible donation. Schmechel also stated that payments would go to the Farmer-to-Farmer group. Membership invoices would be sent out after the seeding is completed.
- The IPC contract needs 2 field days. Field Days are tentatively scheduled for August 14 or August 21. There may a pop-up field day in June or September. Watershed will sponsor the Field Days.
- F2F held a meeting at the end of February. They are working on their 501(c)3 status for the group. They will have a 7-member board with President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer. Schmechel discussed hiring a local attorney to assist with the 501(c)3 status.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve up to \$2,000 for legal fees for the Farmer-to-Farmer Group.

25-50 Motion made by Freiburger to approve up to \$2,000 for legal fees. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

- Sewell discussed the Low Impact Development Workshop held on March 12th & 13th. The first day was geared towards builders and contractors. Approximately 36 individuals attend the first day. The second day focus was on municipalities and communities for site planning and flood plain planning. It was a well-attended event overall.
- Schmechel updated the Commissioners on the University of Dubuque sponsorship for an upcoming speaker on April 8th and April 9th. The sponsorship fee is \$500. After further discussion with UD and the speaker, Schmechel felt it would be beneficial to support the speaker. He would like his staff to attend the training.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the \$500 UD speaker sponsorship

25-51 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the \$500 speaker sponsorship. Motion was seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

- Information was given from Watershed employees on the Leadership in Midwest Watershed Conference held in Wisconsin. Hendricks and Freihage were panelists on the drone program.

FARMS Summary:

Current FARMS '25 Account information: Cost Share \$16,309; REAP F/NG \$0.00; & REAP P \$1,586.91

- Discussion was held between the Commissioners, Feldman and Backes on the water way cap. Current cap is \$15,000. The State currently has supplemental funds available for state cost share projects. After much discussion, the Commissioners agreed to raise the water way cap to \$20,000.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the increase in water way cap to \$20,000.

20-52 Motion made by Rauen to approve the water way cap to \$20,000. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Supplemental Funding for State Cost Share

- Projects for Robert Riniker, Justin Schmitt, and Kenneth Hosch were presented. Feldman presented the water way construction projects for each of the 3 applications. Discussion was held between Feldman and the Commissioners on the projects.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the three water way cost share applications up to \$20,000 cap each.

25-53 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the three water way cost share applications up to \$20,000 cap each. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

State Cost Share Certification

- Backes presented approval for certification payment for Dan West. He completed his water way project and was approved by the technician.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve Dan West Certification for payment.

25-54 Motion made by Freiburger to approve Dan West Certification for payment. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Supplemental Funding REAP P

- Backes presented two applications by Lee Hoerner/ Stag Ridge LLC to the Commissioners for approval. One application is for Forest Tree Stand Improvement for 8 acres for a cost share of \$1,056. The second application is for Tree Planting for 4.3 acres for a cost share of \$1,290.

Demmer called for a motion approve the REAP P applications for Lee Hoerner/ Stag Ridge LLC.

25-55 Motion made by Rauen to approve the two REAP P projects for Lee Hoerner/ Stag Ridge LLC. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Backes presented Corp of New Melleray REAP P project for Certification for payment of \$960.

Demmer called for a motion approve the REAP P project Certification for payment for Corp of New Melleray.

25-56 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the REAP P project Certification for payment for Corp of New Melleray. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Supplemental Funding REAP F/NG

- Backes presented two applications for the Commissioners approval. One application is for Trappistine Nuns for Conservation Cover of .9 acres. Cost share would be \$177. Second application is for Tree Planting for 4.3 acres. The second application is for Robert Smith for Tree Planting of 5 acres for a cost share of \$3,000.

Demmer entertained a motion approve the REAP F/NG applications for the Trappistine Nuns and Robert Smith.

25-57 Motion made by Rauen to approve the two REAP F/NG cost share projects. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

WQI Cover Crop Payment Approval

- Backes presented a Cover Crop certification for Travis Cook. He has 160 acres for a cost share of \$3,200.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve Travis Cook for cover crop certification.

25-58 Motion made by Schmitt to approve Travis Cook for cover crop certification. Motion seconded by Rauen Motion carried unanimously.

Other:

- Backes presented information on District Fundraising options. Memberships were discussed
- Backes updated the Commissioners the possible Federal Shutdown.
- Backes asked for a SWCD email address to separate from the federal email address.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve a SWCD email address.

25-59 Motion made by Rauen to approve a SWCD email address. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- Backes discussed the presenting the CDI Scholarship winner with a check for \$25.00.

Demmer entertained a motion to present the CDI Scholarship winner \$25.00

25-60 Motion made by Schmitt to approve \$25.00 for the CDI Scholarship winner. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Being no further business to discuss, Demmer entertained a motion to adjourn after a lengthy meeting.

25-61 Motion made by Freiburger to adjourn. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 7:48 pm.

The next regular meeting will be **Wednesday, March 19 at 5:00 pm** at the District office in Epworth.

Wayne Demmer 4-16-25
Chairperson Date

Heidi Backes 4-16-25
Secretary Date