

DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

August 15, 2024

1225 Seipple Road, Dubuque, IA

Call Meeting to Order: The monthly meeting of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioners was called to order by Chairperson Wayne Demmer on August 15, 2024, at 9:03 am at the Dubuque County office building at 1225 Seipple Rd, Dubuque, IA and online through Zoom. Those present included Commissioners: Wayne Demmer, Mike Freiburger, Jeff Schmitt, Jack Smith and Dennis Rauen, Bill Meyer DC, Helen Backes CA, Watershed staff: Eric Schmechel, Allisen Freihage, Scott Hendricks and John Sewel. Also present was Dave Ruden.

Adopt Agenda:

The agenda was approved as presented. Demmer called for a motion to approve the agenda.

24-96 Motion was made by Smith to approve the agenda as presented. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:

Demmer called for a motion to approve the minutes from the regular meeting held July 23, 2024.

24-97 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the minutes from the previous meeting held July 23, 2024. Motion seconded by Smith. Motion carried unanimously.

Finance:

- July TR, bank statement & bills presented. The US Cellular ACH withdrawal for \$484.92 was added to the bills presented as the statement wasn't received at the time when completing the TR. A correction was needed for check # 1148 to the City of Dubuque as it was written for the incorrect amount of \$618.85. A new check #1152 was issued to the City of Dubuque with the correct amount of \$570.00

With no further discussion, Demmer called for a motion to approve the July TR, bank statement, & bills presented with the US Cellular bill for \$484.92 and to void check #1148 to the City of Dubuque.

24-98 Motion made by Smith to approve the July TR, bank statement, & bills presented with the US Cellular ACH payment for \$484.92 and to void check #1148 to the City of Dubuque. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- A Transfer of funds from SWCD acct to the Watershed acct for \$146.00 postage that was originally paid out of the Watershed acct. Postage was for District use and should have been taken out of the SWCD acct originally.

Demmer called for a motion to transfer \$146 from the SWCD acct to the Watershed acct.

24-99 Motion made by Schmitt to approve the transfer \$146 from the SWCD acct to the Watershed acct. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

- Funds Transfer for payroll for \$2,264.48

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

24-100 Motion made by Schmitt to transfer \$2,264.48 for payroll funds. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

- Travel Requests from Watershed staff for upcoming conferences included Fishers & Farmers, and the Iowa Water Conference

With no further discussion, Demmer called for a motion approve the upcoming travel requests for the Watershed staff.

24-101 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the conferences for the Watershed staff. 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 staff person for the office. The current grant will end in the last quarter of 2024.

With no further discussion, Demmer called for a motion to apply for the TA2024 Grant.

24-102 Motion made by Schmitt to apply for the TA2024 Grant. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussion was held on the upcoming FY 24 Audit. A date will be determined for the Treasure, Jack Smith, and Co-Treasurer, Mike Freiburger, to reconcile the audit. Following that date, the Annual Financial Review will be completed by Commissioners: Jeffery Schmitt and Dennis Rauen. The Annual Financial Review cannot be completed by either the

treasurer/co-treasurer or a financial signatory representative. The final review must be completed by September 30, 2024.

FARMS Summary:

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

FARMS Cost Share Application:

None

FARMS Cost Share Cancellations:

None

FARMS Cost Share Amendments:

Demmer called for a motion to approve the amendment for an extension to Daniel West’s application for a Grassed Waterway. This will extend his current project to 12/31/24.

24-103 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the amendment. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Cost Share	Extension Date	Approval Status
West, Daniel	112127	IFIP	Grassed Waterway	\$10,000	12/31/24	Approve Amendment

FARMS Cost Share Certification & Maintenance Agreement:

Demmer called for a motion to approve the FARMS certification and maintenance agreement.

24-104 Motion made by Freiburger to approve FARMS certification and maintenance agreement. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Hendricks William	111384	REAP F/NG	Forest Stand Improvement	\$ 732.00	Approve Payment

FARMS WQI Update: Backes updated the Commissioners on the status of the cover crop program. As of August 15, there are 102 applications for CC with 12 first time users. There are approximately 10,600 acres enrolled in the cover crop program.

Backes stated that Sept 3rd, is the deadline to have IFIP/Reap applications in FARMS “waiting initial board approval” for Supplemental Allocations. Need to have 75% of IFIP obligated and 75% of REAP obligated to ask for supplemental funding.

Rauen suggested some type of education for first time users of cover crop on the termination in the spring. Other discussion was held on regarding field checks for waterways. Freiburger stated that it is an exceptional year for waterways. Another suggestion was to increase the maximum payment for waterways and maintenance on waterways. Demmer suggested to table this discussion for another meeting.

Soil Loss Complaint Update:

The Commissioners were updated on a Soil Loss complaint that was received. The issue is complicated as it has 2 separate issues within the complaint. Schmechel and Sewel are working on one end of the situation and NRCS is working on the other issue. Discussion by the Commissioners was held regarding educational opportunities for landowners and tenants.

Watershed Project Update:

- IPC Grant –Demmer needs to sign the revised grant proposal which is 1.2 million for 5 years. There is a technical support aspect to the grant which would cover cost for outreach – Trevor and Brooke, Farmer to Farmer meetings, Field Days, Conferences, Travel, Supplies and fund 1 part-time 10 hours per week and 1 full-time 40 hour per week position. The positions would be a consultant/contracted individual. It would start October 1, 2024. Discussion was held on needing an RFP for the positions.

With no more discussion, Demmer asked for a motion to approve an RFP for the contracted/consulting positions.

24-105 Motion made by Smith to approve a RFP for the contract/consulting positions. The motion was seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

- Watershed will begin implementing their drone cover crop program. It is the Watershed's goal to coordinate with the drone pilots weekly on where and when they will begin their applications. Hendricks and Freihage will contact the farmers when the drones are in the farmers' areas. Watershed will hold a Drone Day on September 26 at 11:00 am at the Tony Kutz farm. This will be done on bean ground.
- Other Upcoming Watershed events: Field to Market, September 16; Sinsinawa's Soul to Soil Conference
- Schmechel will complete Intergovernmental Recap '24 by mid to end of November

NRCS Updates:

Meyer gave a brief update on NRCS. Not a lot of projects are currently going on. They are following up on active contracts. Meyers & staff are completing CRP status checks.

Meeting Updates:

- Demmer along with Dubuque County Tourism to put together a Dubuque County Basket for Silent Auction for the CDI Conference. The funds raised from the auction will go towards the CDI Scholarship. Demmer will be attending the annual CDI conference this year.

Personnel:

With no further action items, Demmer asked for a motion to move to a closed session to discuss SWCD Benefits at 10:50 am.

24-106 Motion made by Schmitt to move to a closed session. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Discussions were held from the Commissioners regarding the benefit package. With no further discussion, Demmer asked for a motion to follow the State of Iowa benefits package with the exceptions of accruing comp time up to 36 hours, lifting the sick leave cap and continue with insurance through Dubuque County.

24-107 Motion was made by Schmitt to follow the State of Iowa benefits package with the exceptions of adding accrued comp time up to 36 hours, lifting the sick leave cap and continue with insurance through Dubuque County. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

With no further discussion, Demmer asked for a motion to move out of closed session at 11:31.

24-108 Motion was made by Smith to move out of closed session. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

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

24-109 Motion made by Smith to adjourn. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 11:40 a.m.

The next meeting to be determined.

Wayne Demmer 9/17/24
Chairperson Date

Heidi Backes 9.17.24
Secretary Date