

## DUBUQUE SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT COMMISSIONER'S MEETING

Wednesday, June 25, 2025

Dubuque SWCD District Office

210 Bierman Road, Epworth, Iowa 52045

### Welcome:

Demmer welcomed Father Norman White Scholarship winner, Taylor Borgerding and her parents, Gary and Erica. The Commissioners presented Borgerding with a \$500 check for the scholarship. Photographs were taken with the commissioners, Borgerding and her parents.

**Call Meeting to Order:** The monthly meeting of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District was called to order by Chairperson Wayne Demmer on Wednesday, June 25 at 7:11 pm at the District office and through Zoom. Those in attendance were Commissioners Wayne Demmer, Jeff Schmitt, Mike Freiburger, Dennis Rauen and Ken Behnke; Bill Meyer, DC; Helen Backes, CA; and John Sewell, Watershed staff. Attending via Zoom were Watershed staff Eric Schmechel; Allisen Freihage; Scott Hendricks; and Ron Miller, Assistant Commissioner. Special guests in attendance for the evening were Taylor Borgerding and parents; Michelle Turner, Limestone River Bluffs RC&D; Alyssa Hall, Pheasants Forever Environmental Specialist; and Chuck Isenhardt, Dubuque Area Land and Water Legacy. Olivia Feldman, State Technician, attended during the FARMS – State Cost Share portion of the meeting.

### Adopt Agenda:

Backes had two additions to the agenda. Under FARMS: 1) James Ostwinkle – Approval: 412-Waterway Cost Share \$37,000 estimated costs and \$18,700 cost share amount. 2) Tom Pasker – Approval: 600 Terrace Cost Share \$14,300 and \$7,150 cost share amount. Three Corrections for the agenda 1) Rob Schmitt – 412 Waterway estimated cost should be \$31,750 and cost share should be \$15,875. Under Finance: TR report page 6 – Vendor Bills – 1) correct amount for Eric Schmechel is \$220.65 and 2) District mileage recipient Dennis Freiburger should be Dennis Rauen.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the agenda with those additions and corrections.

**25-106** Motion was made by Schmitt to approve the agenda with the additions and corrections presented. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

### Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:

Corrections were needed for May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, minutes, the motion number should be 25-94, not 25-82. Following the May 27<sup>th</sup> meeting, motions 25-83 and 25-84 should be 25-95 and 25-96 respectively.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the minutes from May 15<sup>th</sup> and May 27<sup>th</sup> as amended.

**25-107** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the minutes from May 15<sup>th</sup> and May 27<sup>th</sup> as amended. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

### Finance:

- May TR, bank statement, and bills were presented and reviewed. Backes gave a verbal review of the TR. A deposit of \$90 included \$40 Trivia Night and a \$50 membership fee.

With no further discussion, Demmer entertained a motion to approve the May TR, bank statement, bills, and deposits presented.

**25-108** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the May TR, bank statement, bills, and deposit presented. The motion was seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- The May funds transfer included 2 transfers. 1) NACD payroll account (5415) \$2,297.99 to the Watershed checking (2906) for NACD employee payroll. 2) IDALS deposit of \$747.69 from District Checking (2907) to NACD Payroll (5415).

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the two separate May funds transfer.

**25-109** Motion made by Schmitt to approve the May funds transfers. Motion seconded by Rauen. Motion carried unanimously.

- Discussion was held regarding the Watershed-District accounts. The Commissioners agree to move forward with finding the best interest-bearing accounts for the District/Watershed funds. The Commissioners will continue to investigate area financial institutions for the best interest rate.

Demmer entertained a motion to table the discussion at the next meeting.

**25-110** Motion made by Rauen to table the discussion until the next meeting. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer welcomed Michelle Turner from Limestone Bluffs RC& D to the meeting. Turner gave an overview of the various projects and partners RC&D is involved with. She would like someone from SWCD to attend their meeting and work with the various partners.

Demmer welcomed Alyssa Hall from Pheasants Forever. Currently she is stationed in the Maquoketa NRCS office. Hall gave a brief introduction to herself and her position/duties. She is still in her first month in this position.

**FARMS - State Cost Share Updates:**

**Current FARMS '25 Account information: Cost Share \$20,288; REAP F/NG \$0.00; & REAP P \$322.50**

- The commissioners discussed the state cost share applicants and certification projects. Feldman answered questions regarding the projects and resource concerns the commissioners had on the projects.

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Estimated Total Cost	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
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Rob Schmitt	412	Cost Share IFIP	Waterway	\$31,750	\$15,875	Approve
Tom Pasker	600	Cost Share IFIP	Terrace	\$14,300	\$7,150	Approve
James Ostwinkle	412	Cost Share IPIP	Waterway	\$37,400	\$18,700	Approve

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the Cost Share application for Rob Schmitt.

**25-111** Motion made by Schmitt to approve Rob Schmitt Cost Share Waterway Application. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the Cost Share application for Tom Pasker.

**25-112** Motion made by Freiburger to approve Tom Pasker Cost Share Terrace Application. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the Cost Share application for James Ostwinkle.

**25-113** Motion made by Schmitt to approve James Ostwinkle Cost Share Waterway Application. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Estimated Total Cost	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Mitch McDermott	410	Cost Share IFIP	Grade Stabilization	\$55,733.50	\$20,500	Certification
Justin Schmitt	412	Cost Share IFIP	Waterway	\$13,758.26	\$6,879.13	Certification
Dan Zauche	412	Cost Share IFIP	Waterway	\$11,987	\$5,695	Certification
Robert Smith	612	REAP F/NG	Tree Establishment	\$4,000	\$3,000	Certification
Jason Rohner	612	REAP	Tree Establishment	\$7,000	\$4200	Certification

Demmer entertained a motion to certify for payment for Mitch McDermott Grade Stabilization project.

**25-114** Motion made by Freiburger to certify payment for Mitch McDermott Grade Stabilization project. Seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer entertained a motion to certify for payment for Justin Schmitt Waterway project.

**25-115** Motion made by Schmitt to certify payment for Justin Schmitt Waterway project. Seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer entertained a motion to certify for payment for Dan Zauche Waterway project.

**25-116** Motion made by Freiburger to certify payment for Dan Zauche Waterway project. Seconded by Rauhen. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer entertained a motion to certify for payment Robert Smith REAP project.

**25-117** Motion by Schmitt to certify for payment Robert Smith REAP project. The motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

Demmer entertained a motion to certify for payment Jason Rohner REAP project.

**25-118** Motion by Schmitt to certify for payment Jason Rohner REAP project. The motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- Backes gave an update on the State Cost Share Cover Crop program. Currently there are 66 applicants with 7,237 acres enrolled in the program.

#### **Watershed Update:**

- Schmechel brought up a CAFO application that was brought before the County Supervisors. The Supervisors will hold a public hearing on July 7. The Supervisors would like input from the SWCD Commissioners.
- A F2F Meet & Greet will be held in July with the producers, drone operators, and seed dealers for the producers to ask questions, gather more information and establish a rapport. Drone seeding will begin on August 1.
- A field day scheduled at Dennis Rauhen's has been postponed until a later date. There is another Field Day scheduled for August 21<sup>st</sup> at Zach Timm's farm. More information to follow.
- The Watershed's Cover Crop Drone Program will be highlighted on a PBS segment of "This American Land".
- Staff have been having issues with the YSI water testing equipment that was purchased which led to inconsistent readings for nitrates. After discussions with customer support, it finally was determined that an additional sensor, which reads electric conductivity (EC) and temperature, was needed for the Nitrate and Ammonia sensors calculating the correct values. Schmechel had added the item to the agenda to purchase the EC and temperature meter to add to Watershed's probe arrangement. However, an anonymous doner bought and shipped it to the Watershed before the meeting happened. The commissioners do not need to move forward on the agenda item to purchase the sensor anymore.
- Genetic testing of E. coli on Catfish Creek – North Fork of Catfish Creek, can give information on what type of E. coli is present and what source is contributing to the contaminated water.

#### **NRCS Update:**

Meyer gave a brief update on NRCS programs.

- Staff are checking on field practices throughout the county.
- Staff are working on Conservation Plans for CRP applications.
- Meyer stated he was happy with the fee schedule for participants in the Drone Cover Crop project. He feels it shows producers care about soil health and conservation practices versus no commitment to the program

#### **Meeting Updates:**

No meeting updates.

#### **Other:**

- Demmer welcomed Charles Isenhardt from Dubuque Area Land Water Legacy to the meeting. Isenhardt presented history on the grassroots community-based organization supporting and engaging in research, education, advocacy and coalition-building to protect, conserve, enhance and enjoy our natural resources. One strategy developed was "Recommendations for Dubuque City Council and Parks and Recreation Master Plan" The Master Plan partners with the City of Dubuque, Dubuque County, Dubuque SWCD, and other local, state and federal entities. It supports conservation principles and practices for the benefit of future recreational investments.
- Thoughtful discussion was held on Keith Burns "We Have a Problem" video presented at the 2025 Soil Health Coalition Conference. Rauhen discussed the soil health agricultural problem. "As in the video, it took a few people to do a little bit at time" stated Rauhen. Freiburger will forward the video and information to the Archdiocese of Dubuque to support conservation practices.
- Rauhen informed the Commissioners of the Soil to Soul Conference will be held in September. He asked if Dubuque SWCD would be a sponsor for the event.

Demmer entertained a motion to table the financial request for the Soil to Soul Conference until next month.

**25-119** Motion made by Freiburger to table the request until next month. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

- Demmer read the CDI Resolutions aloud for discussion among the Commissioners and for their individual vote on the resolutions. Backes recorded the comments and votes for the resolutions. She will submit the votes and comments to CDI. Demmer stated he will be attending the CDI Conference in August and anyone who is able can join him.

There was no further business to discuss, Demmer entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

**25-120** Motion made by Rauhen to adjourn. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 10:27 pm.

The next regular meeting will be **Wednesday, July 16** at the District office in Epworth.

Wayne Demmer 7/16/25  
Chairperson Date

Helen Backes 7.16.25  
Secretary Date