

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

**Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

**Dubuque SWCD District Office**

**210 Bierman Road, Epworth, Iowa 52045**

**Call Meeting to Order:** The monthly meeting of the Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District was called to order by Chairperson Wayne Demmer on February 19<sup>th</sup> at 5:10 pm at the District office and through Zoom. Those present included Commissioners Wayne Demmer, Jeff Schmitt, Mike Freiburger, Ken Behnke; Helen Backes, CA; Watershed staff John Sewell, IPC Consultant Megan Giorgenti and Harley Pothoff, County Supervisor. Those attending via ZOOM included Watershed staff Eric Schmechel, Scott Hendricks, Allisen Freihage and Dean Matton.

### **Adopt Agenda:**

Three additions were made to the agenda. They include 1) REAP P project; 2) corrections on voided checks; and 3) deposit to Watershed acct. Demmer entertained a motion to approve the agenda with the additions presented.

**25-35** Motion was made by Schmitt to approve the agenda with the additions presented. Motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Approval of Minutes of Last Meeting:**

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the minutes from the organization meeting 1/2/2025, special meeting 1/2/2025 and monthly meeting 1/23/2025.

**25-36** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the minutes from the previous meetings held in January. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Finance:**

January TR, bank statement, deposits and bills were presented and reviewed. Backes gave a verbal review of the TR. A deposit of \$18,756.09 included \$1,499 in donations and \$17,257.09 from Sandy County Foundation-RCPP payment. Checks #1202 - \$131.84; #1204 - \$51.04; #1205 - 52.99; #1206 - 20.00 were written on the Watershed account (2906) instead of the business checking account (2907). A transfer is necessary from business checking (2907) of \$255.87 to Watershed account (2906). Void #1203 \$52.99 CA Error. Funds transfer from Watershed account (5415) for NACD payroll \$2,406.82 – pay periods 1/31/25 and 2/14/25 to Watershed account (2906).

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

**25-37** Motion made by Schmitt to approve the January TR, bank statement, bills, deposits, and funds transfer presented. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

- Training Requests was presented from Scott Hendricks to attend PFI covers & Grains Conference and Eric Schmechel to attend the Wisconsin Land and Water Conservation Conference.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the training requests presented.

**25-38** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the training requests. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Backes discussed the NACD TA Outreach and Technical Assistance Grants. The TA Grant 2022 was completed 2/3/25. TA Grant 24 has begun.
- Discussion was held on the IRS 2025 1099 NEC forms to future contractors/consultants who were paid more than \$600 a year. Backes discussed an option for the payroll company to handle the consultant's/contractor's payments and future 1099 NECs. The payroll company would make the payments to the consultants/contractors and would complete the 1099 NEC as needed.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the use of the payroll company up to \$500 for consultants/contractors.

**25-39** Motion made by Behnke to approve the use of the payroll company up to \$500 for consultants'/contractors' payments & tax forms. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Discussion was held on the Conservation Assistant to be able to speak with the financial institution regarding SWCD banking and bank accounts to assist the Commissioners as needed.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the Conservation Assistant the right to discuss SWCD business with SWCD financial institution(s).

**25-40** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the Conservation Assistant the right to discuss SWCD business with SWCD financial institution(s) as allowed by IDALS regulations. Seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Demmer discussed moving some funding to other financial institutions to earn a higher yield on the accounts. He received information from local bank Fidelity Bank on a 6-month CD. Commissioners will table this discussion until next month so more information can be gathered.

#### **FARMS Summary:**

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

- Discussion was held on removing the water way cap. Commissioners did not want to remove the cap at this time. Discussion tabled for next meeting to gather more information.
- **Supplemental Funding for State Cost Share** for Robert Riniker and Justin Schmitt. Discussion was held on the Cost Share projects.

Demmer entertained a motion to table the cost share applications until next month.

**25-41** Motion made by Freiburger to table the cost share applications until next month. Motion seconded by Behnke.

Motion carried unanimously.

- **State Cost Share Payment** Discussion held on approval for Schwers 3 projects for cost share payments.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve Schwers cost share payments.

**25-42** Motion made by Schmitt to approve Schwers cost share payments. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

- **WQI Cover Crop Payment Approval/Cancellations** –
- Backes presented a list of individuals who are eligible for Cover Crop certification at this time. ***See Attachment A.***

Demmer called for a motion to approve the list of applicants for cover crop certification.

**25-43** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the list of applicants for cover crop certification. Motion seconded by Behnke. Demmer abstained from vote. Motion carried.

- Backes presented a list of individuals who cancelled their cover crop application. ***See Attachment A.***

Demmer called for a motion to approve the list of applicants with cover crop cancellations.

**25-44** Motion made by Schmitt to approve the list of applicants with cover crop cancellations. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- **Supplemental Funding REAP P** Two applications by Lee Hoerner/ Stag Ridge LLC to the Commissioners for approval. One application is for Forest Tree Stand Improvement for 8 acres. Second application is for Tree Planting for 4.3 acres.

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

**25-45** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the two REAP P projects for Lee Hoerner/ Stag Ridge LLC. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Watershed Project Update:**

- Schmechel stated he had not heard of any new information concerning the IPC Grant freeze. The two IPC Consultants were told to pause on their activities until further notice.
- Schmechel gave an overview of the F2F conference. The keynote speakers were very good. There was a good turnout for the conference. He received both positive and constructive comments for next year's conference.
- F2F met with many ideas within the group. Schmechel is in discussion with attorneys for information regarding 501(c)3 status for the group. Schmechel will bring more information next month regarding the discussions and information gathered. F2F steering committee is working on membership fees.
- "Common Ground" movie was held February 5. The weather may have affected the attendance. Forty-three people attended the showing held at the River Museum. The movie will be shown on Earth Day on cable tv. The movie would provide an educational opportunity for schools in the future.
- Sewell discussed the Low Impact Development Workshop to be held March 12th & 13th. The first day will be geared towards builders and contractors. Second day focus is on municipalities and communities for site planning and flood plain planning. The group would look at nature-based solutions.
- Schmechel gave information on a University of Dubuque sponsorship for an upcoming speaker on April 8<sup>th</sup> and April 9<sup>th</sup>. The sponsorship fee would be \$500. The speaker would lead discussion on communication and

storytelling with controversial science and farmers. The Commissioners and Schmechel declined the sponsorship at this time pending more information.

- Schmechel recommended to join Field to Market as an affiliate member. There is no cost to join.

Demmer entertained a motion to join Field to Market as an affiliate member.

**25-46** Motion made by Schmitt to join Field to Market as an affiliate member. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- Information was given from Watershed employees on the various conferences that they attended.
- IPC Consultant, Megan Giorgenti, gave a brief update on her activities in January. She attended a recent event hosted by Women, Land and Legacy. Approximately 70 attending the Beginning Farmer event.

#### NRCS Updates:

- Meyers was unable to attend the meeting. He did provide notes for the Commissioners. Currently, no payments can be made on contracts funded with IRA funds. A list of Climate Smart practices for 2025 provided by NRCS was given to the Commissioners. EQIP and CSP have upcoming first round selections. Meyers noted that the Federal Government is currently operating under a continued resolution. If Congress does not agree on a budget, there is a possibility of a shutdown.

#### Correspondence:

- Backes shared with the Commissioners the February CDI Connections Newsletter available in hard copy.

#### Meeting Updates:

- CDI Region 4 Spring Regional Meeting is Thursday March 6, 2025, in Waukon. Registration is due by February 26, 2025. Demmer, Freiburger and Behnke plan to attend.
- New Commissioner Orientation available online **Conservation Districts of Iowa**  
<https://www.cdiowa.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-Commissioner-Orientation.pptx>
- Freiburger stated Ron Miller has agreed to become an Assistant Commissioner. Backes will contact him to get his information.

#### Other:

- Backes presented a policy revision for "District Employee Travel/Training & Supply Reimbursement. An addition was made concerning out of state travel expenses.
- Backes updated the Commissioners on the CDI Scholarship. Deadline is February 21.
- Backes discussed the upcoming Dubuque Racing Association (DRA) Grant. Backes would like to apply for marketing/fundraising for the SWCD. The grant would fund a Dubuque SWCD Annual Newsletter for this fall. This brought a lengthy discussion on fundraising for the District. Discussion was tabled for the next meeting.
- Discussion amongst Commissioners on various topics. The Watershed Drone project and Nitrate Strips available to farmers were some of the ideas discussed.

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

**25-47** Motion made by Freiburger to adjourn. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 8:27 pm.

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

	
Chairperson	Secretary
Date	Date

Attachment A

### WQI - Cover Crop - SWCD Board Approval

1/10/2025	Demmer	Ryan	121810	160	138.61	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 2,772.20	
1/10/2025	Demmer	Wayne	121692	160	127.45	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 2,549.00	
2/14/2025	Then	Todd	118883	160	72	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 1,440.00	
12/2/2024	Schieltz	David	118911	160	160	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 3,200.00	
12/2/2024	Schieltz	Elaine	119826	160	160	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 3,200.00	
12/12/2024	Schuelller	Peter	116486	125	125	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	
12/12/2024	Knapp	David	117321	39	39	\$ 780.00	\$ 780.00	
12/9/2024	Digmann	Matthew	116477	28	28	\$ 560.00	\$ 560.00	
	Cook	Holly	120639	160	160	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 4,800.00	1st x
	Cook	Terry	118661	80	80	\$ 1,600.00	\$ 1,600.00	
	Decker	Robert		37.6	37.6	\$ 752.00	\$ 752.00	
12/17/2024	Meier	Bradley	119855	160	60	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 1,200.00	
1/2/2025	Daly	Timothy	120590	160	160	\$ 3,200.00	\$ 3,200.00	
			<b>Totals:</b>	<b>1589.6</b>	<b>1347.66</b>	<b>\$ 33,392.00</b>	<b>\$ 28,553.20</b>	
			<b>Difference</b>		<b>241.94</b>		<b>\$ 4,838.80</b>	
<b>WQI - Cover Crop Cancellations - SWCD Board Approval</b>								
	Kress	Steven	117951	37.5		\$ 750.80		
	Bahl	Michael	119870	160		\$ 3,200.00		
	Hermesen	David	122662	126		\$ 2,520.00		
			<b>Total</b>	<b>\$ 323.50</b>		<b>\$ 6,470.80</b>		

Attachment A

2/19/2024