

**Dubuque Soil & Water Conservation District Commissioner's Meeting**  
**Wednesday February 18, 2026**  
**210 Bierman Road, Epworth, IA 52045**

**Call Meeting to Order:**

The monthly meeting of the Dubuque Soil and Water Conservation District was called to order by Vice Chairperson Jeff Schmitt on Wednesday, February 18<sup>th</sup> at 4:19 pm at District office. Those attending in person were Mike Freiburger; Ken Behnke; Dave Ruden, Assistant Commissioner; Bill Meyer, DC; Eric Schmechel, Watershed Director, and Helen Backes, CA. Those attending via Zoom include Scott Hendricks, Allison Freihage and Dennis Rauen. Wayne Demmer came at 4:45 pm. Meeting guests were Ryan Schieltz and Danielle Schieltz. The meeting was scheduled for an earlier time to allow Eric Schmechel for a Watershed work session.

**Adopt Agenda:**

Several items were added to the agenda. 1) City of Dubuque for water sampling \$20; 2) Water Quality Infrastructure SF512; Buffer Strip application and (3) Dave Ruden as assistant commissioner. Schmitt entertained a motion to approve the agenda with the additions. **26-19** Motion was made by Freiburger to approve the agenda with the additions. Motion was seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

Due to other time commitments, Eric Schmechel, Watershed Director, was scheduled to the top of the agenda.

**Watershed:**

Watershed work session included

- Sand County Foundation (SCF) would like to see a contract with Farmer to Farmer (F2F) for F2F programs. Discussion was held at the January Supervisor meeting regarding SCF and the 28E agreement. Schmechel discussed the SCF reimbursement process.
- Schmechel gave a brief update of Watershed's cover crop program. The flyer is ready for distribution. Discussion with F2F to eliminate the \$10/acre fee and establish a \$300 annual fee unrelated to the drone program.
- Schmechel emailed an updated No Till/Strip Till proposal.
- The Watershed hosted a Buffer Strip Lunch & Learn. Approximately 25 landowners/producers attended the event. Staff has met with 5 landowners and has 1 application ready for approval.
- Women Land and Legacy hosted a Farm Succession Planning event. It was very well attended with 75 attendees. There is another event scheduled for March 24, 2026, due to the overwhelming response.
- Mattoon has been building an ARC GIS program to assist him in Storm Water monitoring. Schmechel asked for an AI Pro membership fee at \$30 per month to determine if it is helpful tool for watershed employees to use for GIS work and documents.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the AI Pro membership.

**26-20** Motion was made by Freiburger to approve the membership. Motion was seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Schmechel updated the group on the “Roots to Results” session. There are 26 participants. He also stated that Midwest Leadership Conference had 140 participants.

### **State Revolving Loan Application:**

- Ryan Schieltz and Danielle Schieltz gave an overview of their application for a State Revolving Loan (SRL). A lengthy discussion was held on the project. Schieltz’s and the commissioners had questions regarding the application. Meyers stated that he would reach out to the state office for clarification and provide the group with an update. Motion to approve the application was tabled until further information was received.

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

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the minutes from January 21, 2026, organizational meeting, and January 21, 2026, regular meeting.

**26-21** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the minutes from the previous meetings. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

### **Finance:**

- Approve the December TR - invoices, bank statements and deposits.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the December TR, - deposits, bank statement, and invoices as presented.

**26-22** Motion made by Freiburger approve the December TR – invoices, deposits and bank statements. The motion was seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

- Approve the January TR - invoices, bank statements and deposits. The district received sponsorship/membership from Dubuque County Farm Bureau for \$250.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the January TR, - deposits, bank statement, and invoices s presented.

**26-23** Motion made by Schmitt to approve the January TR – invoices, deposits, and bank statements. The motion was seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

- The January fund transfer was \$2454.30 from NACD 3412 account to Watershed account 3396 including 2 transfers: 1) NACD employee payroll \$2332.85 for 1/30/26, and 2/13/26; 2) Debit card reimbursement (office supplies) for \$121.45.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the January fund transfer.

**26-24** Motion made by Freiburger to approve the January fund transfer. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

- Backes presented the District’s Financial Site Visit (FSV) reply from the January site visit.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the District’s FSV reply.

**26-25** Motion made by Schmitt to approve the FSV reply. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion passed unanimously.

- Backes updated the commissioners that per the site visit information, the remaining Dupaco checks need to be destroyed. The checks need to be shredded by a commissioner.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve destroying the remaining Dupaco Checks.

**26-26** Motion made by Schmitt to approve destroying the remaining Dupaco Checks. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion passed unanimously.

### **FARMS Update:**

Backes presented various certifications and approval for State Cost Share program.

#### **Cover Crops - 340**

Name	Program	Practice ID	Total Acres	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
See attachment A					
40 applicants	WQI	340	4474.9	\$92,498	Certification

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the Cover Crop Certifications.

26-27 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the Cover Crop Certifications. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **REAP**

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Acres	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Jude Becker	380/490	REAP P	Windbreak	.1	\$1600	Approval

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the REAP P application for Jude Becker.

26-28 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the REAP P application. Motion seconded by Freiburger. Motion carried unanimously.

#### **Water Quality Infrastructure – Filter Strips**

Applicant	Practice ID	Program	Practice	Total Acres	Total Cost Share	Approval Status
Randy Gadiant	SF512	WQI	Filter Strip Harvestable	3	\$5250	Approval

Hendricks presented information on a Filter Strip – Harvestable application.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the REAP P application for Randy Gadiant.

26-29 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the REAP P application. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

### **NRCS:**

- Meyers gave an update on NRCS program. Currently they are processing applications and ranking. Selection will be held mid-April. There are 25-30 CSP applications and 50-60 EQIP applications. Funding for these projects is light.

### **New Business:**

- Freiburger presented Dave Ruden as a new assistant Commissioner.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve Ruden as an Assistant Commissioner.

26-30 Motion made by Schmitt to approve Ruden as an Assistant Commissioner. Motion seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously.

**Old Business:**

- Backes presented the Slough Bill applications for approval.

Demmer entertained a motion to approve the Slough Bill applications.

26-31 Motion made by Freiburger to approve the Slough Bill applications. The motion was seconded by Behnke. Motion carried unanimously

- Backes informed the commissioners of the CDI proposed resolutions that the commissioners can submit to CDI. They are due to the CDI office by March 27, 2026.
- An update was given on SWCD fundraising event – Trivia Night held on March 28 at Dyersville Commercial club.
- Backes discussed the scholarships CDI, Father Norman White and SWCD Partnership scholarship. She will email the applicants to the commissioners.

There was no further action to discuss.

Demmer entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

26-32 Motion made by Behnke to adjourn the meeting. Motion seconded by Schmitt. Motion carried unanimously.

The meeting adjourned at 6:51 pm.

Wayne Demmer      3/18/26  
Chairperson                      Date

Helen Backes      3-18-26  
Secretary                              Date