

Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District  
July 25, 2023  
Board Minutes

The regular meeting of the Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District was held at the USDA Conference Room. Brad Ponsler called the meeting to order at 6:37 a.m.

**Board Members**

Brad Ponsler  
Dan Megel  
Matt Branham

**Staff**

Kelly Kent  
Becca McClellan  
Andy Ertel

**Associate Board Members**

Jimmi Berkey

**SICIM**

Dawn Slack

**Partners**

Jenny Vogel

**Reading of the Minute**

Matt Branham made a motion to accept the June 2023 minutes as submitted, with a second from Dan Megel.

**Financial Report**

Dan Megel made a motion to accept the financial report as submitted, with a second from Matt Branham

**QuickBooks** – Kelly informed the board that the version of QuickBooks that she currently uses (2022) has gone to only a subscription desktop version and the renewal fee is \$550/year. The current desktop version is now locked out until this is paid. Matt Branham made a motion to pay the renewal fee with a second from Dan Megel. After the board meeting Kelly worked with QuickBooks to get this updated. First by submitting the ST-105 for tax exemption. After spending several hours on chat and the phone with QuickBooks and receiving all the subscription options Kelly opted to convert to the online version. QuickBooks is offering a 12-month subscription at ½ price then the rate will return to the current rate of \$55 barring any regular increase. QuickBooks assisted with migrating the districts data from desktop to online. Kelly may need to find a resource for training to get up to speed on the online version.

**Correspondence**

**Representative Letters** – Becca had letters for each of the legislators that represent Jennings County to thank them for their support by increasing CWI funding for 2023 and 2024. The board members were asked to sign these.

**SSCB Funding** – Kelly sat in on the last SSCB meeting via Teams. The SSCB asked ISDA to come up with a form to capture where the districts are utilizing the extra \$10k for 2023 and 2024.

**Coffee Creek Conservation Club Thank You Letter** – Becca sent a thank you to the CCCC for their donation to the district.

**Ongoing/Old Business**

**Drill Tires Purchased** – The drill tires needed replaced and Becca had emailed the supervisors with cost estimates to do this. Matt Branham made the motion to purchase the tires at Miller Tire with a second from Kevin Morin. All were in favor.

**Drill Parts & Repair** – Drill repairs are needing to be done. Quotes were sought and shared with the board via email. Matt Branham made a motion to purchase the parts needed and have Jeff Maschino make the repairs, with a second from Tom, all were in favor.

Post meeting – Kelly took the parts and the drill on to Jeff Maschino on 7/27/23 and asked Matt to contact Jeff for details of repairs needed.

**2024 County Budget** – Kelly reported that the county budget request was submitted with only the cost of 2 computer replacements and the staff salary increase. Becca is waiting on the Auditor to let her know when the Budget 101 session will take place and when the budget hearing will be held. Brad asked to be kept informed so he could get it on his calendar.

**Invasive Conf/Meeting w/Dawn Slack** – Becca met with Dawn about forming a CISMA and a letter of support for the America the Beautiful Grant. With additional questions that didn't have answers at this time it was decided to hold off on the letter of support until those questions could be answered.

Dawn Slack was in attendance to talk with the board about the SICIM and possibility of forming a CISMA in Jennings County. She stated that this is a 2 -3-year process to get up and running and that Jennings County citizen, Emily McCorkle, is willing to take the lead on this. Once it is a functioning group here in JC, they would possibly look to the SWCD to be the fiduciary for the group. Kelly asked how this would impact the district by requiring the district to front any cost share funding, tax documentation that may be required and liability of events. Dawn was able to assure the board that the group, once functioning, would receive a \$6k start up fund and all funding would be covered by SICIM or other outside sources. The tax documentation is a question that has been sent to their lawyer and she is awaiting an answer from them and will let the district know when she gets that. The liability is held by the public lands that Weed Wrangles and other events are held.

Dawn spoke about the Annual SICIM Conference that 250 people attended and the concern of more and more invasive species that need to be on the state banned list.

**Annual Meeting** – The staff brought up the fact that each year we are mandated by state to hold an annual meeting to provide the public with our Annual Financial Report and the activities that the district completed for the year prior. Each year we have hosted an evening event and our attendance keeps dwindling. The staff asked the board for ideas on how to change it up to hopefully reach more people. Many ideas were discussed, and it was decided to have Kelly check with the First Methodist Church to see if we could partner with them on one of their breakfast dates. We would like to have a table to set up with our information that needs shared, possibly a PowerPoint running on a continuous loop and ballots for those that would like to vote for a supervisor. Kelly will also reach out to our DSS to confirm that this would be an acceptable option and partnership. More details will be given at the next meeting.

**CWI Grant Application Ideas** – Matt brought up the idea to apply for cover crops and Kelly mentioned that we should reach out to surrounding districts to see if they are applying for that and would want to partner as this is a more favorable option to the SSCB. Jenny Vogel mentioned that perimeter fencing might be something to consider. Matt also mentioned the possibility of a mulching head for skid steer, something like a Fecon Machine with standard flow. Matt will do some research on these machines and get back with the staff.

**Miscellaneous** – Kelly mentioned that there is an abundance of Purple Loosestrife growing on 500 N west of Highway 3, Jenny mentioned that at one time, the Muscatatuck National Wildlife Refuge had treated it and Kelly will reach out to them to see if they are still doing that.

Kelly needs to update the Contractors List and in doing this thought it might be a good idea to have a local Plant/Nursey List also. She will work on getting a letter and form out for these updates and creation of the Plant/Nursery list.

## **New Business**

**Possible Field Day Fall & Spring** – Becca mentioned hosting a Mid Contract Management Field Day at Cardinal Lake property this fall where Nate Yazel would talk about what is needed to comply with the CRP program. If possible, they may do a prescribed burn that day also, then in the Spring host an invasive species field day to start gauging interest within the county for more information that would be needed to form a CISMA.

## **Native Species Planting List**

Jimmi had brought Becca a native species planting list that she had received from a Dearborn County event. Becca took information from this list and created a new list to possibly provide to people at field days, on the website and when they come into our office. After reviewing this it was suggested that more information be provided like what our plant sale brochure provided. Kelly will get the plant sale brochure information to Becca for guidance in adding informational details and photos of the native species recommended.

## **Summer Summit Registration**

Kelly informed the board of the upcoming meetings in August and shared that these meetings are meant for board members to get engaged with their district and form partnerships with other counties. The cost is \$25 per person. Kelly will send out a reminder email to see who would like to attend. Dan Megel made a motion to support staff and supervisors that would like to attend by paying the registration fee, with a second by Matt Branham. All were in favor.

## **Air Compressor Purchase**

Matt brought up that he felt it would be important that the district have a small air compressor that they could use to air up the rental equipment tires. Kelly mentioned that there is no power at our storage building so they would need a small portable one. Dan Megel made a motion to purchase a “pancake” type air compressor with a second from Matt Branham. All were in favor. Kelly will order one.

## **Agency & Committee Reports**

Jenny Vogel – NRCS DC

Written Report

Jenny also informed the board that this very well may be her last board meeting. She had applied and was offered the State Contract Manager position and is awaiting her start date. There will be an acting DC appointed for Jennings Co.

Becca McClellan – SWCD

Written Report

Andy Ertel - SWCD

Written Report

Kelly Kent – SWCD

Written Report

**District Policy**

Nothing New

**Strategic Plan**

**Claims**

Kelly has a packet prepared for review and the board members will need to sign these along with the Financial Report and prior months meeting minutes.

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Matt Branham with a second by Dan Megel at 8:37 am.

Minutes taken by Kelly Kent.

Minutes approved by:

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Chairman

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Vice-Chairman

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Member

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Member

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Member