

Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District  
October 24, 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 6:32 a.m.

**Board Members**

Brad Ponsler  
Tom Schneider  
Matt Branham  
Dan Megel

**Staff**

Kelly Kent  
Becca McClellan  
Andy Ertel

**Associate Board Members**

Jimmi Berkey

**Partners**

Jennifer Kipper

**Reading of the Minute**

Matt Branham made a motion to accept the September 2023 minutes as submitted, with a second from Tom Schneider.

**Financial Report**

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

**Correspondence**

NACD Dues – Dan Megel made a motion to support NACD with dues in the amount of \$250, with a second from Tom Schneider. All were in favor.

No-Till Conference – Brad shared that the 2024 National No-Till Conference is following the IASWCD State Conference.

**Ongoing/Old Business**

**Annual Meeting Follow Up** – Becca reported that she had reached out to Emily Peterson, Jennings County Extension ANR, to see what requirements there would be for PARP credits. After some discussion it was decided to pursue this option with the subject matter as soil fertility and pesticide management. The meeting will start at 8am with breakfast, at 9am the supervisor election will be held and then at 9:15am start the PARP credit session for the required time.

Kelly is waiting to hear back from 2 catering vendors to see if they are available, what they serve for breakfast and the cost. Once that information is obtained it will be shared with the board via email.

Dan asked if we were going to select a Conservationist of the Year,

**Soil Health Demonstration Field** – Matt has the corn harvested and is getting the no-till drill to plant the cover crops.

**2024 County Budget Update** – The county budget request submitted was approved by the J.C. Council.

**CREP Administering District** – Julie Harrold with ISDA reached out to Kelly about possibly considering administering the Flat Rock Haw creek Watershed. After some discussion in the office, it was decided that we would consider, with the option to decline if we are selected for the Muscatatuck Watershed. The SSCB will be make their decision on this in January.

**CWI Grant Submittal** – Kelly reported that the SSCB would be making their announcement at their meeting later this morning. Update – Our grant request was not funded.

**Potential CISMA Call out Meeting** – No new information was shared.

**America The Beautiful Grant Update** – We should hear if this is funded sometime in November. There will be meetings held to explain the process and funding available once the group has been notified of funding. The committee met to finalize the application process and create a timeline for the grant in preparation of funding.

**Field Day Update** – The Wildlife Habitat field day was held Oct 18 with 35 staff, agency partners and landowners in attendance. The prescribed burn went well, plants ID and DNR personnel shared valuable training with those present.

**Vernon Fork of the Muscatatuck Watershed Update** – Andy reported that the steering committee is scheduled to meet on Nov. 17 and will discuss the marketing plan and options.

**Fall Conference Update** – Becca reported that she enjoyed the conference. She had attended a Hydroponics session along with the bird session.

Kelly reported that the planning committee had planned a great conference and she was able to present on District Finances which was well attended, and she has since had many follow up questions.

### **New Business**

**IASWCD Annual Conference Registration** – Kelly reported that the early bird registration ends November 16.

Brad will be the delegate for the SSCB meeting and Matt will be the alternate.

**Supervisor Scholarship Application** – The IASWCD has sent out the applications to apply for a free registration and hotel stay for supervisors. The district staff will fill out the form and submit once it has been confirmed of which supervisors will plan to attend.

**2024 Board Meeting Dates** – Kelly has put together the 2024 meeting dates. The meetings will continue to be held on the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday of the month at 6:30 a.m. Each board member was given this schedule in their board meeting binder.

**Resignation Letter** – Kelly Kent has given her resignation letter to the board. Pending the decision of the board how her earned accumulated time will be paid out, her last day will be Nov. 3, 2023. Kelly has agreed to train the new Administrative Assistant once hired. The board has set aside fund tor up to 10 hours of training per week for a maximum of 6 months. Matt Branham made a motion to accept the resignation and training agreement with a second from Dan Megel. All in favor.

**Approve Job Description** – Over the last few months the staff was asked to update their job descriptions, this has been completed and is ready for board approval. Matt Branham made a motion to accept the Executive Director and Administrative Assistant Job Descriptions with a second from Dan Megel. All were in favor.

**Job Posting** – A brief job description was written and will be posted to the districts Facebook page and the County HR will post on the county's government website. Applications will be accepted Oct 24 -31. At that time Kelly will send out the resume received to the hiring committee (Brad, Dan, Matt & Becca). Kelly asked if the board intended to start a new employee out at the salary rate she was leaving or to start out at a bit lower and have a 90 day probationary period with a small raise at that time and then within 6 months to a year increase to the budgeted salary for that position. There was discussion and the board opted to go with what is in the budget.

Once the posting is closed and the hiring committee will review the resumes and select the ones that they would like to have come in for an interview. This was tentatively scheduled for Nov 1, 2 or 3. Ideally interviews would take place the

following week and a job offer would be given by Nov. 10 with an anticipated start date of Nov. 27. This is all tentative and could change as necessary.

**New Drill Purchase Information** – At a previous board meeting it was mentioned that the district might want to look at purchasing a Multi-Purpose Seeder. Kelly was told that Scott Co had just completed getting quotes on this type of equipment and should call them for their quotes. The quote was from Fraley Implement for a 9’ seeder. The board discussed the possible need for this type of seeder and what size might be the best option. They asked Kelly to contact Jacobi’s at Seymour to see what pricing they would have on a 7’ and 9’ model. Kelly completed this that day, and those quotes will be presented at the next SWCD board meeting.

**Brillion Seeder Tires** – Kelly noticed that the seeder tires have worn smooth in spots and then researched the cost of replacement tires. Miller Tire offered 3 different brands of tires. After some discussion Matt Branham made a motion to purchase the Regent by Firestone brand with a second from Dan Megel, all in favor. Kelly worked with Andy to get the seeder taken to Millers and the tires have now been replaced.

### **Agency & Committee Reports**

To follow along with what the County HR department recommends, Becca and Kelly will be printing their timesheets for the board to review at each meeting. The information that will be included is the clock in, clock out, time earned, and time used.

Jennifer Kipper – NRCS Acting DC  
Written Report

Becca McClellan – SWCD  
Written Report

Kelly Kent – SWCD  
Written Report

Andy Ertel – 319 Grant Education Coordinator  
Written Report

**Job Evaluations** – Tabled

### **District Policy**

Kelly reported that it is time to review the Internal Controls and Sexual Harassment Videos. She will email that info out and the board members are asked to review each of these and then sign a form stating they did this review at the next board meeting – This was tabled due to time.

### **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 Dan Megel with a second by Matt Branham at 8:22 am.

Minutes taken by Kelly Kent.

Minutes approved by:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Vice-Chairman

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member