

Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District
September 26, 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 6:34 a.m.

Board Members

Brad Ponsler
Tom Schneider
Matt Branham
Kevin Morin

Staff

Kelly Kent
Becca McClellan
Andy Ertel

Associate Board Members

Jimmi Berkey
Kameron Garlitch

Partners

Jennifer Kipper

Reading of the Minute

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

Financial Report

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

Correspondence

Indiana Woodland – The district received a request to sponsor \$250 towards the printing cost of the Woodland Steward Newsletter. This newsletter goes out to woodland owner in Jennings County and has quite a bit of good information in each publication. Matt Branham made a motion to continue the \$250 support with a second from Tom Schneider, all were in favor.

Ongoing/Old Business

Annual Meeting Follow Up – Dennis Edens contacted the district back after discussing our Annual Meeting Proposal with the First Methodist Church breakfast group. The group felt that this would interfere with their usual crowd and declined our proposal.

Kelly contacted the Jennings Co Auditors office and spoke to Madelyn Suhre to see if the Community Building would be available on Saturday, February 17th. The space was available and is now reserved for our Annual Meeting. Kelly will reach out to some caterers on cost of a breakfast and report back to the board. There was discussion on what we would like to do as far as having a presentation, etc. A PowerPoint running in the background of the districts past year activities could be set up. Agency partners will be invited to set up a table and share information with the public. Ideally, we would like to host our breakfast from 8am – 9am, hold the election at 9am then go into a PARP training program. PARP credits have specific requirements and Becca is checking with Emily (New Extension ANR) and will get back with the board on subject matter that would be required for the credits. More details will follow on this. Kelly will reach out to get some pricing on caterers in the area for a breakfast meal.

Tentatively the breakfast would start at 8am, Election at 9am, then go into the required trainings/discussion for PARP credits.

Nominees for Appointment & Election

The Election committee selected Kevin Moring as their appointee for supervisor to serve a 3-year term, this term will be from 2024 – 2027. Matt made a motion, with a second from Tom and all were in favor.

Then Kameron Garlitch will run for election on the 2024 ballot.

Kelly will submit this information on Conservation Link by the due dates.

Soil Health Demonstration Field – Matt updated the board, flying the cover crops on this year may not be an option due to how dry it currently is. Also, in doing the 6 species, the cost of seed was more than the original allotted \$40/acre rate that was set. This year's cost averaged \$53/acre. Tom Schneider made a motion to cover the full cost of the 10 acres of 6 species seed with a second from Kevin Morin. All were in favor. Kelly will reimburse Matt the seed cost at a total of \$529.24.

2024 Budget Hearing – Becca reported that the county council will be giving the staff a 4% salary increase and they approved the purchase of the computers for 2 staff. Kelly reported that after explaining to the council the reasons that the district computers need to be replaced every 3 years (on the federal network, federal also cover the cost of phone and internet) they had no issue increasing our budget. They have asked Reedy Financial to plan for this in the future Capital Improvement plans as a 3-year rotation. The hearing to adopt the budget has been set for the County Council October 10 @ 6pm.

Seed Giveaway – Kelly reported that she had purchased 12lb of seed (6 species) and packaged 536 seed packets to be given away at the MUTC Open House and the 2024 SWCD Annual Meeting. These were labeled with the seed type and our district logo for promotion. The corn and millet for food plot planting was repackaged in small amounts to be given out at MUTC also.

CREP Administering District – The staff listened to the CREP Q&A a few weeks back and then Kelly submitted an email stating the district was interested in being selected as the administrator for this program. The deadline for submission is Oct 1 and Kelly will report to the board once we hear back.

CWI Grant Submittal – A 2024 CWI grant was submitted by Kelly for a joint program between Jennings and Jackson counties for the following practices: cover crops, HUAPs, Access Roads, and Hay/Pasture Plantings. The SSCB will award these grants at their Oct. 24 board meeting.

With the extra funding received from the state legislators there was 49 CWI applications received this year in comparison to only 18 received in 2023.

Potential CISMA Call out Meeting – Becca reported to the board that a small group (Dawn Slack, Emily McCorkle, Kameron Garlitch, herself, Chuck and Jimmi Berkey and Kelly) had met last week at the Jennings Co Public Library to discuss how to form a CISMA. Emily is taking the lead, with support from those individuals. Two dates for a call out meeting was set. January 18 in the evening and January 20 in the morning. Emily will be setting up the location and creating a flyer. The district will promote this.

America The Beautiful Grant Update – We should hear if this is funded sometime in November. Jennings County has 1 potential landowner that qualified at the time of submission for 108 acres. More info will be shared when more details and funding are certain.

New Business

Rule 5/Storm Water Prevention Plans – Andy reported that we have not increased our review rates for quite some time. After reaching out to other counties and seeing their rates a new rate schedule was created. The board reviewed the suggested new rates and Matt Branham made a motion to adopt the new rates with a second from Kevin Morin. All were in favor.

Future SWCD Events – Becca stated that depending on how our October Field Day goes she was looking at other options to plan in the future. She suggested that a spring pond clinic and Sweet Street. The pond clinic was discussed, and the board thought this would be a good field day. Sweet street was discussed and decided that it would not be something they would be interested in participating in.

IASWCD Annual Conference Registration – Kelly reported that the registration information for the IASWCD Annual Conference will be coming out October 2. This year’s registration will be \$395 per person. Kelly asked the board to approve sending supervisors, associate supervisors and staff that would like to attend so that when the registration and hotel information is published, she can get them booked. Matt Branham made a motion to approve the funds for those wanting to attend with a second from Kevin Morin. All were in favor.

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
Andy reported that the group is working on developing a logo, promotional material, etc. They will plan to meet again in late October or November once harvest is completed.

Job Evaluations – Kelly asked the board to move forward on doing job evaluations for the staff annually. Information has been gathered and will be provided to the board to begin compiling an evaluation form for the board to use.

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.

Strategic Plan

Becca and Kelly reviewed and updated the plan. A new copy was placed in each of the board members binders.

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 Tom Schneider with a second by Matt Branham at 8:15 am.

Minutes taken by Kelly Kent.

Minutes approved by:

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Member

Member

Member