

Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District
March 2, 2021
Board Minutes

The regular meeting of the Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District was held at the Jennings County Community Building due to the Level 2 at the USDA Service Center. Brad Ponsler called the meeting to order at 12:37 p.m.

Board Members

Dan Megel
Jerry St. John
Brad Ponsler
Matt Branham
Bob Steiner
Kevin Morin
Jimmi Berkey
Tom Schneider – via phone

Staff

Kelly Kent
Andy Ertel
NRCS
Jenny Vogel

Guests

Beth Steiner
Janet St. John
Don Biehle

Reading of the Minute

Matt Branham made a motion to accept the January 2021 minutes as submitted, with a second from Dan Megel.

Financial Report

Dan Megel made a motion to accept the financial reports (January 26 – March 2) as submitted, with a second from Matt Branham.

Correspondence

IDEA Membership – Indiana District Employees Association dues are \$25 per employee annually. Dan Megel made a motion to pay the dues for Andy and Kelly’s membership to this organization, this was seconded by Matt Branham. All in favor.

HHH Dues – The annual dues are \$500 per year. Discussion was held about the value of this organization to the district. Bob and Andy explained that the Central Muscatatuck Watershed is an ongoing program within our county. Bob spoke about a group called VISTA which is a volunteer organization that will have a young lady working within the area promoting education in the STEM program and that our local schools could participate in this. Matt brought up concerns about paying these dues and what we assistance we were seeing for them. Dan agreed but due to the past year

dealing with COVID he was not comfortable pulling the plug on this. Matt stated he would like to see something happen this year through HHH in Jennings Co. besides the standing committees. Dan made a motion to pay the dues this year and reevaluate the benefits prior to next year's renewal, a second was made by Tom and all approved.

SAMS Letter – Kelly asked the board for approval to have Brad sign a letter of authorization allowing Kelly to have access to the System for Awards Management. This is a required annual renewal to apply for federal grants. Matt Branham made a motion for Brad to sign this with a second from Kevin. All approved.

IU Pollinator Study

A recent article was published in The Republic newspaper where the ERI (Environmental Resilience Institute, part of the IU prepared for Environmental Change Grand Challenge completed a case study on the Jennings County Pollinator Project. The article was shared with those present.

Coffee Creek Conservation Club

The district received a \$500 donation from this organization and Andy shared the Thank You letter being sent to the group for their generosity.

Old Business

GGG Update

Andy updated the board that the grant was moving forward and that we had made our In-Kind match.

New Business

Disposal of Laptop and Desktop

The district has a laptop and desktop computer that has exceeded its usable time on the Federal network and has been wiped clean and has no operating system and ready for disposal. Matt Branham made a motion to take closed bids for these items. With a second from Dan Megel. All in favor. This will be advertised on the district website and the district Facebook page. The deadline for bids received will be March 29th and they will be opened and awarded at our next board meeting on March 30th.

Urban Soil Health List– The staff has created a list of potential landowners to share with the new Soil Health Specialist that will be housed in the North Vernon USDA center, to assist them in getting out in Jennings Co to work with them on improving their soil.

Election of Officers

Dan made a motion to nominate Brad as the Chairman, with a second from Matt. All were in favor. Matt made a motion to nominate Dan as the Vice Chairman, with a second from Tom. All were in favor. Dan made a motion to nominate Kelly as the Secretary/Treasurer, with a second from Matt. All were in favor.

Calli Nature Preserve Prairie Habitat

Andy explained that some of the area we had planted to pollinator habitat has been seeing an increase in Golden Rod taking over. He is working with Nate Yazel and the Jennings County Community Foundation Director to create a better habitat for song and game birds as well as pollinators.

County Fair

Dan asked if we had heard of any plans for a 2021 County Fair. Kelly reported that the 4-H Council is working on alternate plans to have some sort of in person 4-H exhibits and shows but details are still being worked out. Beth Steiner had attended the most recent Fair Board meeting and reported that they are still planning to host a fair (midway) and would be following the CDC guidelines. More information should be forthcoming.

Agency & Committee Reports

Jenny Vogel – NRCS

Written Report

Andy Ertel – SWCD

Written Report

Kelly Kent – SWCD

Written Report

District Policy

Kelly updated the district policy book and reviewed with those present. These will be signed at the end of the meeting.

Claims

Strategic Plan

Andy created a document that was shared with the board about adopting soil health practices. The district will be looking for a “Soil Health Field Demonstration Area” to be used for field days so the public can learn and see the changes as we apply different soil health techniques. The plan would be for the district to have a board member or other landowner that is willing to commit to this program for 8 years. More information will be shared through an email at a later time.

Adjournment

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Dan Megel with a second by Matt Branham at 1:29 p.m.

Minutes taken by Kelly Kent.

Minutes approved by:

Chairman

Vice-Chairman

Member

Member

Member