

Jennings County Soil & Water Conservation District  
April 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 6:35 a.m.

**Board Members**

Brad Ponsler  
Tom Schneider  
Matt Branham  
Dan Megel  
Kevin Morin

**Staff**

Kelly Kent  
Becca McClellan  
Andy Ertel

**Associate Board Members**

Jimmi Berkey

**Partners**

Jenny Vogel - NRCS  
Laura Fribley - ISDA

**Reading of the Minute**

Matt Branham made a motion to accept the March 2023 minutes as submitted, with a second from Kevin Morin.

**Financial Report**

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

**Correspondence**

Wolfe Creative Solutions, Annual bill for website maintenance and updates \$250. Matt Branham made a motion to continue with this service with a second from Tom Schneider. All in favor.

**Ongoing/Old Business**

**Landfill Update** – Andy and Becca reported that they had met with IDEM about the landfill corrections. IDEM was pleased with what the county had accomplished with their corrective actions. A report was given to the district.

**Bridge #29 Update** – Andy reported that a meeting was held with City Council to discuss the match required from them and the county to secure the funds from INDOT to move the historic bridge from its current location to connect Calli Nature Preserve and Tripton Park. The city council voted to support the project with a \$1million commitment over the next 3 years. The County Council will discuss later this month at their May meeting.

**319 Grant – Windshield Survey** – Andy reported that the survey assisted them in narrowing down areas that are not critical within the watershed. Those within the watershed that have permits must meet the standards set forth so that eliminates some of the blame going to farmers directly.

**CISMA** – Becca share a bit more information about forming a group. Dawn Slack will be at our Fair Booth on Monday of the fair to talk to people about invasive species. Becca reported that Dawn has had a few people in Jennings County inquire about at CISMA but no one has stepped up to form a group. After the fair the board will look at what need there may or may not be to form a group. Then decide what if any involvement the district may have.

**Pollinator Pathway** – Morin's Landscape presented a bid to remove the old fabric and dig down to remove the weeds and mulch in the amount of \$1250. After some discussion Matt Branham made a motion to approve the bid with a second from Dan Megel. All in favor, Kevin Morin, abstained.

The group decided to place new fabric in the center section and cover with river rock along with placing pavers and flowerpots to gain color in the pathway. The South side and North side will be cleared, and the new perennials will be planted. Along with the section behind the pergola. Kelly will get bird baths, pavers and landscape staples for this. Any additional flowering perennial plants needed will be purchased and used in the flower pots this year then planted in the pathway. Monoculture plantings will be divided with geo-textile fabric covered with river rock to separate and make for easier weed control.

Kelly will send Kevin a Conflict of Interest form for the state.

### **New Business**

**Fair Booth Ideas** Becca asked Dawn Slack to attend one night, and she chose Monday. Kelly has reached out to Cindy Baker and waiting to see if she would be available to discuss bees. Others mentioned some beekeepers to consider also. After the meeting Jenny mentioned asking Don Duncan to attend one night and speak about Forestry and someone to speak about ponds.

**County Budget Request** – The county is supposed to be hosting a Budget 101 meeting to educate the county offices on budget request. In the meantime, Kelly asked the board if there were any items, they would like to request additional funding for. The districts laptops are due to upgrade at the end of 2022. To maintain access to the USDA server and IT support these laptops must be purchased through the federal program. Based on the pricing from 2020 and the state of price increases Matt Branham made a motion to ask for an additional \$3500 to purchase 2 laptops with a second from Tom Schneider. All were in favor.

**Strawblower** – Tom Schneider recommended that the board increase the rental fee on the Strawblower based on who would be using it. If a landowner is renting it will remain at \$100/day but if a commercial business is renting it will now be \$150 per day. Tom made the motion with a second from Dan and all were in favor.

### **Agency & Committee Reports**

Jenny Vogel – NRCS DC  
Written Report

Kelly Kent - SWCD  
Written Report

Becca McClellan – SWCD  
Written Report

Andy Ertel - SWCD  
Written Report

Laura Fribley – ISDA

Laura asked the board how they would like to see trainings in the future, such as watching a training video at a board meeting. Matt recommended no longer than an 8-minute video. Laura also informed the board that CCSI has a grant opportunity with a simple 1-page application. Kelly then discussed the potential of applying for this to get seed tubes for the cover crop display at the county fair. The board was in favor of applying.

Laura also mentioned the upcoming CWI discussion to be held in May with applications due in September. Keep this in mind if the district is interested in applying.

### **District Policy**

Nothing New

### **Strategic Plan**

**Claims**

**Adjournment**

Motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Matt Branham with a second by Tom Schneider at 8:03 am.

Minutes taken by Kelly Kent.

Minutes approved by:

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Chairman

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

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member

\_\_\_\_\_  
Member