

Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
January 8, 2010
Board Meeting Minutes

Directors present: Steve Stierwalt, Eleanor Blackmon, Joe Rothermel, Lennie Heiser and Eric Suits (arriving at 1:45).

Staff present: Bruce Stickers, Renee Weitekamp.

Natural Resource Conservation Service Staff present: Kevin Donoho.

Meeting was called to order at 1:10 p.m. on Friday, January 8, 2010.

Joe Rothermel made a motion to approve the minutes of the December 3, 2009 and December 18, 2009 board meetings. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried.

Lennie Heiser made the motion to approve the financial reports for December 2009 with the typo under state government support being corrected first. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried. Staff will provide a detailed report on the income and expenses associated with the strip-till soil testing at the next meeting. The board had a short discussion to update everyone on the status of the financial plan discussed at previous board meetings. New investment options are released Monday afternoons, so staff will watch investment options closely and pursue options for the best yields available for a term not to exceed 5 years. Around the holidays there are not typically as many options, and at this time, most options require a 7 year commitment.

Old Business

Annual Meeting – Staff provided the directors with an updated annual meeting budget, including sponsorship information. The agenda and program details were discussed. The flower and award arrangements have all been made.

Access to FSA's name and address database – No action has been taken at the AISWCD level. However, Bruce Stickers provided more background information to Rich Nicholas. Staff will work on an informational sheet for legislators to show the importance of having access to this information for conservation purposes.

St. Joseph Wetland Restoration Plan – No discussion took place.

Strip-till Soil Testing Invoice – No discussion took place.

Insurance – No discussion took place.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative – An informational meeting will be held in Pontiac on January 21, 2010. The request for proposal has not been released yet. Staff believes this will be an opportunity/cost-share to install practices.

NACD Membership – Discussion remained tabled. Eric Suits reported that around 60% of the districts in IL have paid their membership.

New Business

Partners for Conservation (CPP) – The area NRCS engineer will soon have the drop pipe plan for the Reinhart project completed, so that project can move forward. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve two projects including: strip-till for Shawn Walker and cover crops for Kevin Buck. Eric Suits seconded, motion carried.

AISWCD Membership Dues – Joe Rothermel made a motion to approve the partial payment of the AISWCD Dues based on the first two quarters of FY2010. This payment is to be made immediately without waiting until the district receives the operations money from the State of Illinois. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Employee Holiday Bonus – Eric Suits made a motion to give full time employees a holiday bonus of \$200.00. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried.

Greener Living Expo – The district participated in this event last year, partnering with the City of Champaign. This year, the Greener Living Expo will be held on Sunday, February 21, 2010 at the I-hotel and Conference Center. The registration fee is \$175. Staff will check into sharing a booth with the City of Champaign. Eric Suits made a motion to participate in the Greener Living Expo, spending up to \$175 for registration. Joe Rothermel seconded, motion carried.

Fish, Tree & Aquatic Plant Sales – Most details, including pricing, will remain the same as last year for the Fish Sale. Staff is working to make improvements on the Aquatic Plant sale; last year was the first year and many lessons were learned and suggestions were taken from customers. In years past, the tree sale pickup has been the first Saturday of April. This year, the date will conflict with Easter. The last couple of years there have also been issues receiving all the trees in time for the pick-up, so staff is proposing a pick-up date of April 17th. The fairgrounds are available, it is more likely staff can have all the trees on time, and the weather may be more conducive for planting trees; however, the weather may also be more conducive to corn and soybean planting. This means it may be harder for directors to help this year, so staff is willing to looking for alternate help, such as FFA or Pheasants Forever. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to set the tree pickup for April 17th. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Local Work Group – NRCS is going back to local input for local needs, so more information may be forthcoming on this topic. Recently, NACD released a survey regarding local work groups. After discussion, the board decided Chairman Steve Stierwalt would complete the survey on behalf of the district.

Envirothon, Poster, Photo & Stewardship for 2010 – After discussion, the board agreed it would be nice to continue the education efforts that have been started, provided staff had adequate time for the projects.

D.C. Report - Pheasant's Forever is hiring several people throughout central Illinois to help promote and encourage producers to enroll in CRP programs to increase wildlife habitat. With that, they are looking for office locations for these employees, and one may be located in Champaign County Service Center. At this time, all vacancies in NRCS Area 5 staff positions have been filled. The DC has been working the 2008 NRI, by finishing crop history, tillage info, etc.

A.C. Report - is attached. Discussion took place on the need for the wire transfer agreement sent from Illinois Funds. The board decided the agreement is not necessary, as they prefer other options over wiring money from one account to another.

R.C. Report – is attached. The January monthly WCIA television interview will be done by representatives from the county. The county contacted staff because they are interested in talking about the LRMP. Bruce Stickers will be out of town, so the timing will work well. The EcoCat report for the proposed wind farm in complete and one small NRI application was recently submitted.

Committee Updates –

CIG Grant – Dan Schaefer with Illini FS decided to wait to pull soil samples due to inclement weather. A strip-till committee meeting will be scheduled soon to discuss the timeline, funding and outreach efforts.

Other

The Annual Meeting is scheduled for Friday, January 29, 2010 at noon, and the Champaign County SWCD Board will hold their next regular board meeting on Wednesday, February 24, 2010 at 5:00 p.m.

Eleanor Blackmon moved to adjourn the meeting. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 2:48 P.M.

Minutes prepared by Renee Weitekamp for Eric Suits, Secretary
Champaign County SWCD