

# Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District

February 24, 2010

## Board Meeting Minutes

Directors present: Steve Stierwalt, Eleanor Blackmon, Joe Rothermel, Lennie Heiser and Eric Suits.

Associate Director present: Kenneth Kesler

Staff present: Bruce Stickers, Terre Zeigler (Renee Weitekamp away on Maternity Leave)

Natural Resource Conservation Service Staff present: Kevin Donoho

Meeting was called to order at 5:22 pm on Wednesday, February 24, 2010.

January Minutes Eric Suits made a motion to amend January 8 Board minutes to reflect that “Staff will watch investment options closely and in pursuing options for the best yields available for a term not to exceed 5 years”. Further, the spelling of Rich Nichols name should be corrected from Rich Nicholas. Eleanor Blackmon seconds, the motion carries.

Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve the minutes of the January 8, 2010 board meeting as amended and corrected above. Joe Rothermel seconds, the motion carries.

January Financials Eric Suits made the motion to Place on File the financial reports for January 2010. Eleanor Blackmon seconds, the motion carries.

### **Old Business**

Annual Meeting – Bruce reports that final billing was received from Round Barn for just under \$1,900. Directors discuss that overall response from audience was very positive. A couple comments heard were the room was a little dark, the presentation was hard to see, the wind farm report was a great topic however the report was not what was expected (different than information presented to landowners).

Access to FSA’s name and address database – nothing new

Strip-till Soil Testing Invoice – Dan is working really hard. He may have a lead for another \$5,000.

Insurance – nothing new

Mississippi River Basin Initiative – RFP has not come out yet. Bruce and Kevin met with American Farmland Trust. This may turn into a Nitrogen push. They really want nitrogen application changed from Fall to Spring. *It* could take years to change this prospective. We hope to build on the people applying this Spring to promote others to do the same in the future. There is no Board action required at this time.

NACD Membership - Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to pay \$775 in NACD dues upon receipt of the first contribution of the State's payment to the SWCD; Eric Suits seconds, motion carries.

Greener Living Expo – Bruce reports that the Expo was held on a cold and rainy Sunday, February 21<sup>st</sup>. The News Gazette reported that attendance was not the number that was expected. The SWCD and City of Champaign combined their 8'X8' booths making a larger (8'X16') booth. They, worked together promoting rain gardens, rain barrels and speaking to the public. County Board member, Patsy Petry attended the Expo and asked Bruce to encourage the SWCD Board to take a position regarding the Olympia Drive expansion.

Board discusses Olympia Drive expansion in great detail and chooses not to publish a position. The SWCD Long Range Plan encourages development that takes place in compact and contiguous manor. This expansion fits into the existing SWCD position.

Fish, Tree and Aquatic Plant Sale – Sale is going ok. Bruce wrote a plan for 57 acres and was hoping the trees outlined in the plan would be purchased through the SWCD's sale. However, the Landowner has chosen to purchase from another source.

### **New Business**

Partners for Conservation – CPP: Jerry Rinehart's engineering is done. Steve to get contractor and will advise him not to purchase pipe until approved by the District.

We will be working on a small stream bank project. Wayne Kinney has completed the engineering. We have not yet received State money for this.

USGS Gauging Station – USGS sent an invoice on a quarterly payment cycle; however, the approved reimbursement schedule for SWCD was annually. It was a bit concerning at first, then USGS agreed to adjust their billing. We wanted to prepare and outline of what each station will do. Now that has been accomplished, we can work with the drainage districts to pay their part.

St. Joe Wetland Restoration and Maintenance Plan – South of 150 – Bruce presents an initial plan that was just completed today. We are moving forward working out the details of the storm sewer. It is deeper than we'd like. Currently they are proposing a 54 inch pipe buried 18' into the ground. Doug Eppich drew (for free) with Allen Plocher (National History Survey) a restoration plan which would address the low flow discharge of the pipe, and provide for a diverse habitat in this section of the wetland. We will meet with Clark Dietz to work out the storm sewer issue. St. Joseph is working to get EPA funding. We plan to spray sprouting trees this spring by hand (where we previously used the Fecon cutter.). No Board action is needed at this time. The Board expressed their approval and happiness that the project is progressing.

NRCS Contribution Agreement – Bruce presents that the Contribution Agreement has been written. Total work of \$19,000 will be completed this year. The SWCD will be paid half of that amount, \$9,500. Board wants to closely watch the work load as the District is short staffed at this time. They ask Kevin to report monthly on the volume of work being done in case additional staff needs to be retained on a short term

basis. Kevin explains that Bob Caveny, Pheasants Forever will be assisting with workload and promotion.

Joe Roethermel moves that the NRCS Contribution Agreement be approved as written. Eleanor Blackmon seconds, motion carries.

CREP – Steve asks Terre Zeigler to give CREP update. Terre reports that announcement of reopening of the CREP program could come as early as March 1<sup>st</sup>. Many anticipate that Mark Miller will make the announcement at the Lake Carlyle Summit. Champaign is in a good position when the program reopens as there are many FSA contracts that have not yet been contacted regarding the State program.

Board goes into Executive Session. After executive session, the following:

Computer Network/Agreement with NRCS – Extensive discussion regarding the loss of data, future procedure, damages sought, personnel to restore, options. The Board discusses how to go forward and determines that Steve Stierwalt will contact Pam Overbeck, asking NRCS to provide staff for GIS and technical services to reproduce the District's data. He will also contact Angela Biggs and ask to allow Jon Bonjean to continue his work with the SWCD. Everyone agrees that we need accountability for a functioning system.

319 Grant for Strip-till – There has been no word back from EPA regarding funds.

### **Reports**

DC Report – Attached

AC Report – Attached

RC Report - Attached

### **Other Business**

No Till – Interest Steve Stierwalt has experienced much interest in no-till and other options. The past committee will meet this Friday, February 26<sup>th</sup> at 8am to discuss public presentations and to categorize alternatives. Eric Suits requests emails from those who attend.

Emergency State Executive Meeting – Eric Suits reports that there was an emergency State Executive Meeting on the previous day to discuss the IL State Senate convening a Task Force on the SWCDs and their funding. The task force is to be lead by Jennings.

Piatt County Resolutions – Piatt County presented two resolutions to the Champaign Co SWCD Board for support.

Eric Suits moves that the Champaign County SWCD support as written Piatt County SWCD resolution *Soil and Water Conservation Districts Advisory Board*. Lenny Heiser seconds, motion carries. Attached

Joe Rothermel moves that the Champaign County SWCD support as amended the Piatt County SWCD resolution *Soil and Water Conservation District Websites*. Eric Suits seconds, motion carries. Attached

SWCD Support Petition – Request to utilize SWCD Support Petition dies for lack of motion.

Next meeting is scheduled for March 31, 2010 at 5:00pm.

Meeting Adjourns at 8:12pm

Respectfully Submitted,

Terre Zeigler