

Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
April 28, 2010
Board Meeting Minutes

Directors present: Steve Stierwalt (leaving at 6:15pm), Eleanor Blackmon (arriving at 5:30pm), Joe Rothermel, Lennie Heiser and Eric Suits.

Associate Directors present: Kenneth Kesler.

Staff present: Bruce Stickers, Renee Weitekamp.

Natural Resource Conservation Service Staff present: Kevin Donoho.

Meeting was called to order at 5:20 p.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2010.

Joe Rothermel made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2010 and the minutes of the April 5, 2010, as corrected, board meetings. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Eric Suits made the motion to approve the financial reports for April 2010. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried. The district received FY10 first, second and third quarter operations money and will pay AISWCD dues based on the 3rd quarter allocation.

Old Business

Access to FSA's name and address database – No discussion took place

Strip-till Soil Testing Invoice – Dan Schaeffer is still working to secure funding.

Insurance – No discussion took place.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative – The district is collaborating with the American Farmland Trust (AFT) who is writing the grant proposal. Harold Reetz is providing assistance to AFT. The budget includes \$100,000, over three years, for the CCSWCD to cover labor costs. AFT is looking for funding from 4 different sources. Some money has already been secured. If the MRBI grant is not accepted, the district may have an opportunity to work with AFT on a project providing assistance to farmers for conservation practices. To help AFT complete the application, Champaign County SWCD and NRCS staff worked together to submit the types and number of practices to be accomplished under the grant. Staff will ask for the rough draft of the complete proposal and forward it to the board members on Friday. The grant application is due by the end of business on Monday. Growmark decided to submit their own MRBI application instead of partnering with AFT.

NACD Membership – Eric Suits made a motion to pay the \$775 NACD membership. Joe Rothermel seconded, motion carried.

319 Grant for Strip-till – The IEPA has not made any official announcements; however, staff feels confident the district will receive the grant. The grant may be altered from providing cost-share assistance to purchase equipment to provide cost-share assistance for custom strip-till applicators to lease equipment for two years.

Computer network/agreement with NRCS – Staff is looking at ways to achieve computer independence. With the two current computers approaching replacement time, the high NRCS seat cost and the Quickbooks issue, staff is proposing the district purchase a laptop through the AISWCD program. This laptop will be used for Quickbooks and be available for presentations. It will also serve as a test to see if the district can find ways to maintain productivity without being on the NRCS system. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to purchase 1 laptop, MS Office Professional, Acrobat Standard through the AISWCD computer purchasing agreement with HP and to purchase Quickbooks 2010. Eric Suits seconded, motion carried.

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

Fish, Tree & Aquatic Plant Sales – Everyone picked up their trees. 2010 sales projections were presented.

Personnel – The board decided to move ahead on hiring a part time watershed coordinator. Eric Suits made a motion to designate Eleanor Blackmon to work with staff to advertise the position for Watershed Coordinator and to serve as the point person to review and evaluate the applications. Findings will be presented at a later board meeting. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

New Business

Partners for Conservation (CPP) – Nothing to report this month.

Personnel Policy on Sick Leave – The current personnel policy states full time employees shall be allowed to carry over from year to year of continuous service any unused sick leave up to 12 days. At termination of employment, there is no cash reimbursement for unused sick leave. If applicable, short-term disability insurance starts 30 days after the last day of work. Under the insurance guidelines, employees become responsible for paying their own health insurance if they are on an approved, unpaid leave of absence. With limited sick leave, it becomes likely that employees would become responsible for their health insurance premiums if they have a medical issue. It was also discussed if sick leave may be used if an employee is caring for an immediate family member with a medical issue. After discussion, the board directed staff to inquire how sick leave is addressed in other districts, and review the personnel policy template on DARTS. The information gathered is to be presented at the next meeting.

Annual Meeting – Eric Suits made a motion to purchase a \$75 gift certificate for the musicians. Joe Rothermel seconded, motion carried.

Envirothon – Joe Rothermel made a motion to purchase \$25 dollar gift certificates for the two teams to local pizza restaurants. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Quickbooks – QuickBooks 2010 is not approved software and cannot be loaded onto any computer connected to the USDA system. If Quickbooks 2009 is purchased from eBay or another source, it can be installed under the waiver. With the board's decision to purchase a laptop, Staff will move ahead with purchasing Quickbooks 2010 to install on the new laptop.

D.C. Report - is attached. LWG will need to be reactivated in the future to review the list of concerns and reprioritize them.

A.C. Report - is attached. The AISWCD is hosting a FOIA training. Staff will be attending. The IL Dept of Ag has decided to postpone the transect survey this year.

R.C. Report – is attached. The ERMA rainfall simulator was originally paid for through matching grants; however, ERMA has been paying for the license and insurance. With their financial restraints, ERMA is asking the district to purchase the unit for \$1000. At this time, the board would like to wait to make any decisions on purchasing the Rainfall Simulator. Brad Uken with Farm Bureau would like to work with the CCSWCD to host a seminar for Drainage District commissioners to be held later this summer. Current topics may include, law, non-active districts and new technology. The board would like to organize a focus group, including drainage district commissioners, to play the meeting. The district provided bareroot tree seedlings to Unity West. Students have been working hard to help establish a windbreak around the school. Our Rain Barrels are now advertised on Craig's list. Another wind farm is looking around the Fisher area.

Committee Updates –

Salt Fork Implementation – Recently toured one of the gaging stations. Staff distributed pictures from the tour, which was well attended and a good networking event.

CIG – All the soil samples have been taken and the strips are in place.

Other

Kenneth Kesler would like staff to pull together information that can be presented in search of funding for the parking lot and viewing area at the St. Joseph Wetland Restoration Site.

The Champaign County SWCD Board will hold their next regular board meeting on Wednesday, May 26, 2010 at 5:00 p.m.

Eleanor Blackmon moved to adjourn the meeting. Eric Suits seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 6:41 P.M.

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