

Champaign County Soil and Water Conservation District
June 10, 2010
Board Meeting Minutes

Directors present: Steve Stierwalt, Eleanor Blackmon, and Lennie Heiser.

Associate Directors present: Kenneth Kesler.

Staff present: Bruce Stickers, Renee Weitekamp.

Natural Resource Conservation Service Staff present: Kevin Donoho.

Additional present: Bryon Kirwan (RC&D Coordinator)

Meeting was called to order at 3:40 p.m. on Thursday, June 10, 2010.

Bryon Kirwan, the new RC&D Coordinator, was present to introduce himself and provide a brief overview of his role as coordinator. He is interested in hearing from the six counties the RC&D represents on what projects they would like assistance with as he would like to see the RC&D expand their current activities.

Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve the minutes of the March 31, 2010 executive session and the minutes of the April 28, 2010 board meeting. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Eleanor Blackmon made the motion to approve the financial reports for May 2010. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Old Business

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

Strip-till Soil Testing Invoice – Cash donations from Illini FS are helping to recover expenses.

Mississippi River Basin Initiative – Staff will work to coordinate a meeting with Mr. Bill Gradle, NRCS State Conservationist, American Farmland Trust (AFT) and Chairman Stierwalt if and when the grant is awarded.

319 Grant for Strip-till – Strip-till bar leasing portion - Illini FS has made a verbal commitment they would like to lease a strip-till bar and participate in the program. The board wants to ensure all area companies have an equal opportunity. However, there is concern on how to prioritize those that are interested in participating, since there is only enough funding for two bars. The board concluded the following will be used to help prioritize the list: number of farmers served, acres, and geography. Language in the grant names Salt Fork as the priority watershed, so this will aid in the prioritization. Strip-till cost share to producers portion - Decisions also need to be made on how to calculate the cost-share provided to farmers trying strip-till. The CCSWCD needs to be careful to meet the 40% match component. This grant focuses on phosphorus application and staff will need to do a NMP for participating producers. The board directed staff to schedule a strip-till committee meeting to discuss these items. This meeting shall take place before the next board meeting, so the committee's proposal can be discussed.

Computer network/agreement with NRCS – The computer purchased through the AISWCD program has been received, Quick books has been loaded and is functioning.

St. Joseph Wetland Restoration Plan – The NRCS landscape architect can help produce a rendering of the proposed parking lot/education center plan for the wetland. Staff will be doing some maintenance to control the silver maples that are re-sprouting. Staff was directed to talk with Betty Routh on her plan for the approximately 1 acre of land adjacent to the wetland.

Employee hiring – Eleanor will work with staff to advertise and prioritize. The board will re-evaluate financials before hiring.

New Business

Partners for Conservation (CPP) – Staff reported on the IDOA field and office review performed by Elliot, the regional representative. A formal letter will be received soon; however, Elliot found few problems and most of the items noted, staff had already changed their procedure and these same errors are not found in the current paperwork. The updated average cost list shall be submitted to IDOA in July. The district had few projects that could be calculated in to change the 2009 average cost; therefore, Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve using the same average cost list for 2010. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried. Three projects were brought to the board for approval. Each project is to provide \$800 cost-share for cover crops for Gary Place, Bill Routh and Joe Rothermel. Lennie Heiser made a motion to approve the three projects. Eleanor Blackmon seconded. Motion carried.

Contribution Agreement Report – The goal is for staff to provide an updated report to the board each month showing the progress towards completing the contribution agreement.

Rainfall Simulator – In further discussions with ERMA, if the district does not agree to purchase the rainfall simulator, ERMA will request it back soon. Staff worked with neighboring counties and discovered that Vermillion County can fund 60% of the purchase through a 319 grant they currently hold. Vermilion and Champaign would then each be responsible for \$200 towards the purchase. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to enter into an agreement with Vermillion County for the purchase and maintenance of the Rainfall Simulator. Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Personnel Policy on Sick Leave – Staff presented the board with the findings from neighboring counties. Eleanor Blackmon made a motion to approve the sample on DARTS which states:

Sick Leave

All regular full-time employees shall accumulate sick leave at the rate of one day for each month's service. Regular part-time employees shall accumulate sick leave on a prorated basis.

Intermittent employees earn no sick leave. Sick leave may be used for illness, disability, injury of the employee, appointments with a doctor, dentist, or other professional medical practitioner for the employee and immediate family members, caring for immediate family members who are ill, time off for newborn care (in conjunction with non-service connected disability leave) or any other purpose that the Board shall determine as acceptable use of sick days. Such determination by the Board shall occur prior to the employee's use of accrued sick days. A doctor's statement may be required upon request from the employee's supervisor for continuous sick leave for more than three (3) days.

Employees shall be allowed to carry over from year to year of continuous service any unused sick leave. At termination of employment, there is no cash reimbursement for unused sick leave.

Lennie Heiser seconded, motion carried.

Drainage District Meeting – CCSWCD and the Champaign Farm Bureau are partnering together to host a drainage meeting on July 9, 2010. Three speakers will be on hand to discuss drainage law and other legal issues such reactivating an inactive district, etc. The meeting is open and free for everyone, however, drainage district commissioners are the target audience.

Pond Meeting – Working with the U of I Extension, the CCSWCD will help host a pond meeting on June 15th. This meeting will focus on pond plants. In the future, the district will contact and include the City of Champaign during the planning process.

Summer Conference – Joe Rothermel will be the delegate for Champaign County and Eric Suits will be the alternate. By the next board meeting, directors and staff will need to have decisions made on attendance and meals.

Budget – Staff will work together on some preliminary numbers and then work with Eric Suits before the next board meeting to put together a draft FY11 budget.

Audit – The board directed staff to move forward and schedule LeCleur, Yerem to perform the FY10 audit.

Certificate of Deposit – The consensus of the board is to keep the money in a CD with approximately a 7 month term. The board directed staff to call CIB and several other local banks to find rates for CD with a term around 7 months.

Champaign County Fair – The fair will be held the same week as AISWCD Summer Conference.

Employee Contract – Staff presented the updated contract for the AC showing the part-time status. The board approved, and Chairman Steve Stierwalt signed the contract.

D.C. Report - is attached. Kevin Donoho asked the board to look at resource concerns derived from a previous meeting of the Local Work Group. Please have any additions, or changes submitted by the next board meeting. NRCS program ranking is becoming local; and this list will be an essential part of the prioritization.

A.C. Report - is attached. Mark David with the U of I received a USDA CSREES grant and his group has been working with district staff. Staff will do a mailing for the group since FSA cannot provide operators names and addresses to the group.

R.C. Report – is attached.

Committee Updates –

CIG – Board is still interested in working with IDOA on winter program. Howard Brown with Growmark, may donate \$25,000 cash to help meet the matching portion of the grant.

The Champaign County SWCD Board will hold their next regular board meeting on Wednesday, June 30, 2010 at 5:00 p.m.

Lennie Heiser moved to adjourn the meeting. Eleanor Blackmon seconded, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:46 P.M.

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