

DEKALB COUNTY SWCD
Minutes from February 18, 2021 Board Meeting

Supervisors:

Jeff Conrad, Chairman
Sarah Delbecq, Vice Chair
Steve Provines
Steve Watson
Judy Strock, via teleconference

SWCD:

Nellie Peffley
Julie Knudson
Cameron Bell
Bill Ward

Absent:

Kate Sanders, ISDA

NRCS:

Derek Thompson

Chairman Jeff Conrad called the February 18, 2021 board meeting to order at 7:00p.m. (This meeting was held at the County Courthouse Annex conference room due the Covid 19 pandemic and to easily comply with social distancing rules. In addition masks were made available.)

DISTRICT BUSINESS

Minutes: Chairman Jeff Conrad asked if there were any additions or corrections to the January 2021 minutes that had been provided to the board members. With no additions or corrections the January 21, 2021 minutes are approved as written.

Financial Report: Jeff Conrad asked for approval of claims 8438-8450 and deposits D671-D674. The board reviewed all claims and deposits. No corrections were made. Jeff Conrad moved to approve claims 8438 through 8450 and deposits 671-674 as presented. Steve Watson seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.

REPORTS AND UPDATES

District Director: Nellie Peffley

- Updates/Requests:
 - Nellie reported she has been working with Extension on the Cedar Creek Collaboration project. The next meeting is scheduled for April 1st.
 - Nellie reported the Cedar Creek LARE project is continuing. Flatrock who is the contractor will be doing some studies of the creek. Nellie asked to go along when the studies are being done.
 - Nellie updated the board on the Septic Issues Committee. She was introduced at the January meeting and brought up to date. The ordinance is still on hold.
 - Nellie looked into getting a tablet for Cameron to use during inspections. She contacted the County IT Dept. They had a tablet that the District was able to use.
 - Nellie asked the board for permission for a cell phone. The board discussed the request and gave their approval.
 - Nellie asked the board what they thought about changing the office hours to 7:30am-3:30pm. She explained it would be a good time to try it out and if there are issues could be re-evaluated. The board was OK with the change but asked that she check with the Commissioners.
 - Nellie asked if the board would want to offer the annual meeting virtually. She explained IASWCD has a Zoom license districts are allowed to use or the district could purchase their own for \$150/year. The board discussed the idea. Jeff Conrad made a motion to check into the IASWCD license and if not available purchase a one year license for the annual meeting. Sarah Delbecq seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.

- Other Business:
 - Nellie informed the board that Joe Schmees, IASWCD is holding a virtual Legislative Update on February 26 at noon. The update will go over the first half of the Legislative session and what the second half looks like. Nellie will send the link to the board members.

District Coordinator: Julie Knudson activity report as sent.

- Contracts/payments: District Cost Share Program (DCSP)
 - Julie reported she received one request for payment from C. Carrel for a septic replacement. Mr. Carrel sent a copy of the contractors invoice and stated the Health Dept. has been at the property for inspection. Julie contacted Cathy Manuel requesting a Completion Notice. Cathy said she has done an initial inspection. However she has not been able to complete a final inspection due to working at the COVID Vaccine Clinic and the recent snow events. She will complete the final inspection and forward the paperwork as soon as she can. The board discussed the request and issue. Jeff Conrad made a motion to approve payment of \$2500 from District Cost Share funds to C. Carrel pending the Health Department's final inspection and receipt of Completion Notice. Steve Watson seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.
- Updates/requests:
 - Annual Meeting: Julie reminded the board the annual meeting is scheduled for March 16th at the County Annex building's conference room. She had a draft copy of the letter/press release available for the board to review. Julie will add the option to attend virtually to the release. The board suggested sending the release to the newspaper, post on website and Facebook page. It was also suggested mailing or emailing a copy to those who regularly attend the meeting.
 - Julie asked the board for approval to send 2021 membership dues to IDEA for all staff members. Membership dues are \$25/piece and are due by the end of April. The board discussed the request. Jeff Conrad made a motion to approve payment of \$100 to IDEA for four 2021 membership dues. Steve Watson seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.
- Other Business:
 - Julie had sent a copy of the Annual Financial Report prior to the board meeting for the board members to review. The board reviewed and discussed the report. Jeff Conrad made a motion to approve the 2020 Annual Financial Report as sent. Steve Watson seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.

Conservation Technician: Bill Ward activity report as sent.

- Contracts/payments: Clean Water Indiana (CWI); Lake And River Enhancement (LARE); DCSP
 - Bill received one application from C. Butler for participation in the District Cost Share Program (DCSP) for a tree planting. The board reviewed the application. Jeff Conrad made a motion to approve participation in DCSP for C. Butler. Sarah Delbecq seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.
- Updates/requests:
 - Bill had a quote from RTA Power Equipment for a chainsaw and safety equipment to be used for maintenance at the Hague Nature Area. The chainsaw quote was \$449 and safety equipment which included chaps, helmet and gloves was \$155-\$275. He also explained the distributor was going to look into any discounts for government agencies. The board discussed the quotes. Jeff Conrad made a motion to approve the purchase of a chainsaw and safety equipment from RTA Power Equipment. Steve Watson seconded the motion. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed.
- Other Business: No other business reported.

District Technician: Cameron Bell activity report as sent.

- Updates/requests:
 - Cameron reported she has been using the tablet provided by the County IT Dept. for inspections. She found an app that allows her to complete reports while in the field. Everyone she forwards the reports to likes the new format.
 - Cameron reported she has reached out to the Elkhart County MS4 Technician regarding the software they use for MS4 inspections. She was impressed by what it is able to do. She is discussing it with the City of Auburn's MS4 Operator.
 - Cameron reached out to Steuben County SWCD regarding a contractor's workshop they recently held. She is working with the City of Auburn's MS4 Operator about potentially holding a workshop in Auburn.
- Other business: No other business reported.

NRCS District Conservationist: Derek Thompson gave the following report.

- Updates:
 - Derek reported the tillage transect that is normally done in the winter has been pushed back to early spring. This is a directive from the State Office. Derek hopes completing the transect at that time of the year will capture late planted cover crops. The staff will schedule the transect after the snow melts.
 - Derek reported NRCS does not have a program for carbon credits at this time. He has not heard if a program may happen in the future or not.
 - Derek reported the CRP deadline has been extended. A new deadline date has not been announced at this time.
 - Derek reported he is waiting on a list of CRP checks that will need to be done this year. Once the list is received he and Bill Ward can start to coordinate the field checks.
- Other Business:
 - Derek reported NRCS has hired new staff for the area.

ISDA: Kate Sanders, RS absent.

- Updates: no updates given

OTHER ITEMS NOT ON AGENDA

No other business was presented. Jeff Conrad moved to adjourn the meeting. Steve Watson seconded. Vote was unanimous. Motion passed. Meeting adjourned at 7:41pm.

Chairman: Jeff Conrad_____

Judy Strock _____

Sarah Delbecq_____

Steve Provines _____

Steve Watson_____

Recorder_____

Date: _____