



ROCK ISLAND COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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RISWCD Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday, April 2nd, 2019 5:00 p.m.

PRESENT

Dawn Temple, AC
Gary Blanchard, Chair
Nathan Oak, Director
Sally Ferguson, Director
Twila Cederstrom, Director
Joe Gates, Conservation Specialist
Brian Parkinson, Director

ABSENT

Jason Hessman, NRCS DC
Bob Westfahl, RI County Board
Rep.
Marty McManus, IDOA R.R.
Rich Stewart, RC

1. Call to Order

Chairman Gary Blanchard called the meeting to order at 5:05 PM at the Rock Island County Soil and Water Conservation District Office. Roll call was taken.

2. Consent Agenda

The previous meeting Minutes, Paid Bills, Financial Packet and Agenda had been sent out via email to all board members for review. Temple presented the revised budget to be approved with minor changes for submission to IDOA. Question regarding Rock Island County funds....Stewart is following up with them, but prior year funds came in June so they should be coming soon. Ferguson reviewed and looks in order for the revised budget as presented. She recommends approving. Cederstrom seconded. **MOTION PASSED.** Ferguson reviewed financial packet with some questions that Temple responded accordingly and recommends approving both financial packet and bills and motioned to accept consent agenda items. Oak seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

3. Timesheets

Timesheets were reviewed and signed by Ferguson. Ferguson reported that everything was in order and made a motion to approve. Oak seconded. **MOTION PASSED.** Parkinson made a motion to approve prior meeting minutes. Oak seconded. **MOTION PASSED.**

4. Bills to be Paid

Ferguson signed checks for current bills previously discussed as well as normal operating invoices received during the month.

5. Public Participation

None

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Grant Applications

We received notice from National Fish & Wildlife Grant that we did not get the opportunity to send a full application. While our pre-app was considered as a quality contender, it was very competitive, and we were not in the top candidates. The NACD grant for NRCS work is still pending. Temple noted that she did finally get her DMS & Protracts permissions for NRCS, but is still waiting on Citrix. Temple received the training grant from IDOA to attend the grant writing course at UIC. \$500 was awarded to cover the cost of the workshop and travel expenses. No word yet on the 319 grant for Copperas Creek.

2. Flower & Garden Show

Temple reported that this show was a good way to share tree and plant sale information. Stewart and Temple were invited to be presenters at the show and did a presentation on rain gardens – a new program being offered through IDOA/PFC program. Still have about \$8,000 in FY18 PFC funds and will be getting an additional \$31,000 for FY19. Gates has a potential project he will be looking at next week. Temple thought the outreach was much more useful for marketing purposes than Bald Eagle Days.

3. Envirothon

Stewart attended. Temple was not able to attend. No teams from Rock Island County participated. Temple reported it went well. The coordinator of the committee is now going to be Carmen, RC/AC from Mercer County. We will continue to assist as needed.

4. Blackhawk Intern Contract

Temple presented the contract from Blackhawk to be signed (previously discussed back in October 2018). Temple would like to work with an intern and we will not be getting anyone from Augustana this summer. When we previously discussed this, there were some updates needed for location and a question about providing insurance for the intern. Temple clarified those items and Blackhawk would be providing the liability insurance for the intern. Ferguson asked about what programs the students would come from and Temple stated they would come from IT or Marketing areas. Ferguson noted that while Augustana students are specifically geared towards conservation whereas Blackhawk interns would be geared more towards administrative type work. Both could be beneficial. Augustana just didn't have any prospective students this summer. Blanchard concurred it would be good to try them. Ferguson made motion to pursue the Blackhawk internship program for business related intern. Oak seconded. **MOTION PASSED.** Ferguson signed the contract.

5. Audit Update

Temple reported that she doesn't have an update currently. No response from auditor likely due to tax season and being busy. Temple stated that the GATA report is not completed and needs clarification from the auditor on how to proceed. Temple stated that she is frustrated with not getting a response from him and is concerned about the GATA report and the potential of that affecting the 319 grant application. (skip to Item #4 on New Business)

6. AC 6-month review

Temple requests that her contract is updated to reflect the changes in pay rate from prior review. Temple also wanted clarification on when the pay increase should take effect. Ferguson stated that it should be based on the hire date to 6 months rather than by the meeting date since that can vary. Ferguson stated we could clarify this in the policy next time reviewed. She stated the date should be Feb. 27th for the pay rate increase (based on start date of 8/27). Ferguson explained this is a standard way to keep things consistent.

7. NEW BUSINESS**1. Spring Conservation Sales**

Temple reported we currently have tree, fish, & plant sales going on. Trees orders through 4/10, fish orders through 4/30 and plant sale orders through early May. Not a lot coming in yet, but we were late in getting newsletter out so should start picking up. Temple sees a need to update and revise the mailing list going forward. Ferguson brought up the need to obtain names and addresses of owners/operators from FSA in order to better target market. Gates stated that he also has been fighting to get it as well. It used to be shared, but in recent years FSA hasn't been providing it. This would allow us to be able to reach out and market to landowners better and increase promotion for the various programs through NRCS. Ferguson suggested bringing it up with LUC and/or AISWCD. Gates will talk to Jason Hessman and see if he can find out anything.

2. FOIA Request

Temple received a Freedom of Information Act request from SmartProcure. They were looking for purchase order history. They had done a request previously so just ran a new report per her instructions. The organization keeps a database of government purchases. Temple is handling it.

3. PFC Program

Stewart not in attendance to discuss. Tabled for next meeting.

4. Sam.gov Update

Temple needs to update the DUNS # for this website to be in compliance for GATA as it has expired. Gates informed this is required for all entities considered a vendor for any federal or state entity. Needs updated annually. Parkinson enters meeting.

Temple is trying to get further clarification on how to resolve this issue. Temple reviewing the GATA manual. Account was set up previously under McCala (prior AC) with a different email and in order to get a new account set up and get this updated, Blanchard must get a letter signed by a notary changing the administrator permissions. (Return to Item #6 OLD Business)

8. OTHER BUSINESS

1. AC Report

Temple gave a brief verbal and full written report highlighting work and activities/projects during March and upcoming activities. She will attend grant writing workshop on Thursday. She will do a presentation at an Earth Day event on composting. Tree sale pick-up dates are 4/25 & 26th. Eco-Camp is on May 2nd & 3rd. She is having issues dealing with the Blackhawk trying to arrange everything. Ferguson suggested reaching out to Nahant for a naturalist for presenter. Gates suggested Scott James. We are almost full on Thursday and full on Friday. The committee is weak, and Temple is finding that she is doing all the work for the event. Temple reported that we did receive \$1,500 for Eco-Camp from QCCA again this year. Ferguson suggested we should see if Nahant would be interested in being a strategic partner in this event. Temple will reach out to them. Organizers need to be fully invested.

2. RC Report

Stewart provided a written report highlighting work and activities/projects during March and upcoming activities. Temple highlighted verbally. Both Temple and Stewart have been attending BI-CAN meetings to plan an invasive species workshop in August which is a partnership between Nahant, U.S. Fish & Wildlife, Living Lands & Waters, us among others. We are also working on a 3-year conference series for state of the natural resources beginning in 2020. Stewart is working on CRP reviews next few weeks.

3. DC Report

Jason Hessman provided a written report for current and upcoming activities. Gates discussed highlights. All renewals for EQIP & CSP will be extended one year, but there will be no automatic renewals going forward. NRCS is implementing a staffing plan expecting 25 contracts per employee within a group. Currently our group has 19 per employee including technicians. So, no staff will be replaced for 3 people who have left within the group recently. Currently there are 5 employees within the group. Need 28 more contracts to meet current target. Gates suggests promoting smaller 1-year contracts to increase numbers rather than focusing more on larger longer-term contracts that are harder to process. He continues to have regular bi-monthly area staff meetings. Next one will be on May 13th.

Added: 5. Conservation Specialist Report

Gates provided and written and verbal report of current projects and activities. Currently coordinating plant sale and working on various ways to promote sales. He provided some plants for a giveaway at Flower & Garden show and we got a bunch of names and email addresses to add to our email mailing lists. He attended the event and did talk to some people about rain gardens. He picked up the drill from Gary and cleaned it up. Thinks one of the couplers is leaking. Has made some conservation planning contacts and meetings set up. Went with Stewart to construction site reviews and will be able to help out with those. Struggling with USDA network access. He reported per request from Greg Thorpe from Rock Island County to attend meeting to review & update the County land use plan. He requested permission for him and Stewart and/or Blanchard to attend on behalf of RISWCD to provide input and feedback. He's been working about 1 ½ days per week. Temple noted that the ILEPA grant will be expiring June 30th. There was a discussion about the grant and what it entails.

9. Next Board Meeting

The next meeting will be tentatively scheduled for Tuesday May 7th, 2019 at 5:00 pm depending on farm conditions. Ferguson requested to meet with Temple and Stewart to discuss transfer of Board treasurer duties, etc. They will set something up. (Circle back to Item #3 Timesheets)

10. Adjourn

**A motion was made by Oak, seconded by Ferguson to adjourn at 6.45 pm.
MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Sally Ferguson, Secretary/Treasurer