



## ROCK ISLAND COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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### **RISWCD Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2020 5:00 p.m. via Zoom**

#### **PRESENT**

Gary Blanchard, Chair  
Brian Parkinson, Vice-Chair  
Sally Ferguson, Associate Director  
Dawn Temple, AC  
Rich Stewart, RC  
Joe Gates, Conservation Specialist  
Marcus Thomas, Associate Director  
Julie Voelker, Director  
Christine Nordick, Director  
EmiLee Novak, Graduate Intern

#### **ABSENT**

Marty McManus, IDOA R.R.  
Bob Westpfahl, RI County Board Rep.  
Wyatt Junis, NRCS  
Nathan Oak, Treasurer/Secretary

#### **1. Call to Order**

Chairman Gary Blanchard called the meeting to order at 5:07 PM. Roll call was taken.

#### **2. Motion to Approve Consent Agenda including Minutes, Timesheets, Bills & Staff/Partner Reports**

Ferguson reviewed and everything was in order. In addition to the minutes from the October 29<sup>th</sup>, 2020, meeting, an amended version of the August 4, 2020 minutes was included. These minutes were originally presented for approval at the September 1, 2020, meeting and were approved subject to inclusion of specific language documenting the closed session. When those revisions were being made Temple noticed that other revisions were necessary. A motion was made by Nordick, seconded by Voelker to approve the consent agenda items. A roll call vote was taken- Nordick- Yes, Oak- Yes, Parkinson- Yes, Voelker- Yes, Blanchard- Yes. **MOTION PASSED.**

#### **3. STAFF REPORTS**

Temple (AC), Stewart (RC) and Gates (Conservation Specialist) each gave written and verbal updates of current and upcoming activities. Gates reported that he has received confirmation of NRCS' Certified Planner Status. Temple gave an update on the election and informed that the date will be Friday 2/26. Ferguson needs to know who is up for election and she suggested herself, Jarin Rudsell and Jim Mueller as the nominating committee, to which the board agreed. Members of the nominating committee will reach out to the directors that are up for election to see if they would like to seek another term and report back next meeting. Temple also reported on current COVID office situation; office has been pushed back to Phase 0 and only 1 staff member is to

be in office at a time till further notice. Staff is working out schedules.

#### 4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

N/A

#### 5. **NEW BUSINESS**

##### a. **Mill Creek 604b Watershed Plan Grant**

Temple reported that the IEPA has approved the grant and will be sending paperwork and exhibits to sign in the next few weeks. Need verbal approval to proceed. A motion was made by Parkinson, seconded by Nordick to proceed. A roll call vote was taken- Nordick- Yes, Oak- Yes, Parkinson- Yes, Voelker- Yes, Blanchard- Yes.

**MOTION PASSED.**

##### b. **Resource Conservationist Apprentice Position**

Stewart plans to start phasing out of full-time RC beginning 2022 so need to start training someone soon. There was a discussion of options and procedure to post position. Ferguson made the recommendation the Board post on Indeed to get a wide variety of applicants. Novak made the suggestion of a specific job-board that is specific to conservation careers. Thomas provided HR insight into the job posting process. Other needs to consider: salary/pay, timeline, duties, and financial impact of increased payroll cost. Temple and Stewart will put a scenario together and present at the next meeting.

##### c. **Security Policy & Personnel Policy**

Temple reported that a security policy is required now that we take credit card payments. Ferguson modified a policy obtained by the servicing provider and it was sent to Board members in advance for review. Parkinson made a motion to approve the policy, seconded by Voelker. A roll call vote was taken- Nordick- Yes, Oak- Yes, Parkinson- Yes, Voelker- Yes, Blanchard- Yes. **MOTION PASSED.** It was also noted by Ferguson that the personnel policy is out of date and needs to be updated. She will work on that and present at a later date.

##### d. **FY21 Quarter 1 Review and Financial Forecast**

Ferguson presented some slides to help conceptualize the governance framework for RISWCD. Ferguson pointed out that RISWCD has grown in responsibilities and staffing over the past few years and the prior governance procedures may need updating to keep up with the changes. She made the following recommendations for tools for the board which will help them execute their governance duties: 1) A OneDrive account for a repository for board files and collaboration as well as backup 2) A board-managed videoconferencing account for board meetings and job interviews to ensure we are in compliance with the Open Meetings Act 3) A Board-managed Indeed.com account for job postings. Ferguson noted she has additional

recommendations to present at a later date, but requested permission to proceed with these initiatives which are low-cost. The Board agreed Ferguson could proceed with setup of those initiatives.

Ferguson presented a detailed verbal and corresponding report covering 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of FY21 and a forecast based on YTD data as of November 30<sup>th</sup>. She reported as of Q1 actual losses exceeded planned losses (adjusted for timing) by \$2,500; this number increased to \$8,800 when looking at data through 11/30. Ferguson noted there was a \$3,500 variance due to a Covid Relief Employee Retention Payroll Tax Credit. Ferguson noted concern that governments are not eligible for this program. The Board agreed that the District is not eligible for this program, the IRS did not catch the error when it was submitted, and attempts should be made to refund the money. The Board directed the Administrative Coordinator to research steps to refund the money.

Ferguson noted there will be additional impacts to the forecast due to difficulties encountered by the Resource Conservationist in completing the Contribution Agreement Work. This related to having the appropriate computer training. The Resource Conservationist noted the issue has been resolved going forward.

Ferguson forecasted year-end actual losses would exceed budget by almost \$16,000 with the largest variance and assumption being the Board would hire an RC II beginning in April. Ferguson noted we do have reserves to cover this position in addition to current staffing for a period if the board chooses to allocate the funds. Temple will prepare a budget amendment after 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter is complete.

**e. Envirothon**

Stewart reported the LUC is planning a virtual event for this year to be held in March. Several Rock Island County schools have shown interest.

**6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

**a. Nahant Marsh Education Program**

Ferguson presented an overview of where we are with the Nahant Marsh education partnership. The board approved initiating the discussion of a partnership at the August 2020 meeting. Brian Ritter, Executive Director of Natant Marsh presented a proposal at the September meeting and it was tabled by the board so minor revisions could be made to the contract. Ferguson recommended finalizing the contract and pursuing. Temple, Stewart and Novak all expressed concerns about timing, COVID restrictions and funding given our current deficit and recommended delaying the partnership. The board agreed that the best option would be to table this until a later date. Blanchard made a recommendation to table till March meeting.

**b. Copperas Creek**

Temple and Stewart provided updates on the grant.

Parchert III – Complete and Temple submitted invoice to IEPA

No other projects in progress currently. Will be setting up a committee/stakeholder meeting in January.

**c. PFC**

Stewart and Temple have been working with Friends of Hauberg and the City of Rock Island on a large rain garden restoration project. Construction completed; plants to be planted in Spring 2021. Total project funding: \$14,333.96. Need approval to submit for payment. Voelker made a motion to approve, seconded by Parkinson. **MOTION PASSED.**

**d. Financial Review**

Temple reported that the accounting firm we decided to reach out to at a prior meeting never responded. Temple and Ferguson agreed it was getting pretty late to find someone and Temple reported that since we are only required to get an audit every 4 years, she could do an internal audit/financial review prior to completing the required reporting (Comptroller AFR Report, IDOA FMP, and GATA CYEFR). The Board supported this idea and Temple will begin work on these right away.

**e. Board Calendar**

Ferguson will review and update prior to next meeting.

**7. Next Board Meeting**

Tuesday January 5<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm via Zoom.

**8. Adjourn**

**A motion was made by Nordick and seconded by Voelker to adjourn at 7:32 pm. MOTION CARRIED.**

Respectfully Submitted,

Nathan Oak, Secretary/Treasurer