



ROCK ISLAND COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

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RISWCD Board Meeting Minutes Tuesday January 19th, 2021 at 5:00 p.m. via Zoom

PRESENT

Gary Blanchard, Chair
Dawn Temple, AC
Rich Stewart, RC
Joe Gates, Conservation Specialist
Julie Voelker, Director
Sally Ferguson, Associate Director
Christine Nordick, Director
Wyatt Junis, NRCS
Nathan Oak, Treasurer/Secretary
Marty McManus, IDOA R.R.

ABSENT

Brian Parkinson, Vice-Chair
Bob Westfahl, RI County Board Rep.
Marcus Thomas, Associate Director

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chairman Gary Blanchard called the meeting to order at 5:04 PM. Roll call was taken.

2. Motion to Accept Consent Agenda Items

(Agenda, Previous Minutes, Financial Statements, Bills, Partner Reports)

ACTION

Ferguson reviewed and everything was in order, apart from the former meeting minutes due to an issue of them not getting recorded. A motion was made by Nordick, seconded by Oak, to revise the minutes and approve the consent agenda items at the next meeting. A roll call vote was taken- Blanchard-Yes, Nordick- Yes, Voelker- Yes, Oak- 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. McManus and Junis submitted their partner reports.

Stewart reported that he and Gates completed four surveys. Stewart gave an update on the rain garden/retention basin project at the Hauberg Estate in Rock Island. He also wrapped up all FY '19 PFC projects and submitted the payments. He completed the STAR forms for most PFC projects, working on Copperas Creek, and CRP sign-ups. A letter was sent to flood prone areas in northern part of the county highlighting CRP and ACEP programs.

Temple reported the completion of several projects including: the FY20 financial review, comptroller report, IDOA FMP report, GATA report, and the Copperas Creek quarterly report. Temple reported that the following works are in progress: tax reporting (W-2s, 1099s, quarterly reports), NACD grant report (plus develop additional funding request due 2/15), Mill Creek follow-up, sales preparation, newsletter, upcoming meetings for Copperas and Mill Creek. Nordick raised a question concerning streamlining the financial review and audit reports using quickbooks. Temple agreed with Nordick's suggestion and plans to use her notes to categorize for next time however, she struggles to find the extra time to devote to that.

Gates reported his survey work with Stewart and touched upon the completion and submission of a design for a WASCOP for Dave Rursch, and the design for Blanchard's basin. He reviewed and signed off on two prescribed burn plans that Novak worked on. Has a full computer set-up at home that is working good now. He is waiting to hear back from NRCS engineer Katie Gisi on Nordick's irrigation project. Working on Debbie Girls project as well. He has also been doing CRP plans with conservation desktop and entering the other Copperas Creek in Conservation Desktop. He also talked about the old sign that staff restored and installed out in front of the office.

Jason Hessman provided a written NRCS report. **Junis** reported that approved the final EQIP payments made out in 2021. Waiting on end of February deadline for EQIP applications. So far there are 4 new EQIP applications that have been submitted, and 10 deferrals.

Kayli **Puig**, Admin Assistant (not in attendance) provided a written report. Junis commented that she is picking up things quickly and has done payments and modifications. Still needs to learn the process for new contracts.

**Stewart brought up an email that was received regarding the opportunity for this new PCM position being offered in our area by IL Corn Growers Association and it was shared with the Board via email. Temple is doing some research and shared some initial input she got from IL Corn Growers contact. The person would be staffed in Rock Island County, but would cover Knox, Henry, Mercer and Rock Island. Stewart shared some of the prospective job duties. After discussion, Board has some questions, but approve on further inquiry. Action items: Temple will reach out to other SWCD offices who are currently hosting a PMC employee, find out whether the district or PMC employs the individual, and find out if employee benefits are included in the 10% of salary given to the district and report back to the Board. She will also check with Jason Hessman regarding approval to move forward.

McManus reported that the 2021 grant agreement is in progress, 185,000 acres were sent into application for cover crop insurance, and there are virtual conservation cropping seminars scheduled for January 20th, January 28th, and February 4th.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION N/A

5. NEW BUSINESS

1. Report from Nominating Committee/Election Update **Informational**

Ferguson reported that Jim Mueller and Jaren Rudsell accepted positions on the nominating committee. Julie Voelker, Chris Nordick, and Nathan Oak accepted their nominations. Ferguson also spoke to an associate director prospect, Dale Killan, who is enthusiastic toward serving on the board, and will join the next meeting, however he is out of the area in the winter. Oak has another prospect, Jason Fleckenger, who may also join in next meeting. He is a farmer in the area and will likely attend a future meeting. Temple was also offered a suggestion of an associate director by Becky Buckrop and let her know to get in touch with Ferguson.

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

1. Copperas Creek **Informational**

Temple reiterated that which was mentioned in the reports; the quarterly report and second round rankings have been submitted to IEPA. The third-round sign-up letters will be sent out at the end of January. The stakeholder meeting with the Copperas Creek Watershed committee and engineers later this week to discuss applying for another grant cycle, to set goals, attain new committee members, and to narrow focus to a few resource concerns.

2. Mill Creek **ACTION**

A motion was made by Nordick and seconded by Voelker to have Blanchard sign the approval documents if provided before the next meeting. Roll call. Blanchard – Yes. Nordick – Yes. Voelker – Yes. Oak – Yes. **MOTION PASSED.**

3. PFC **Informational**

Topic covered under staff and partner reports. See also BLWR report.

4. Financial Review **Informational**

Temple reported that she used the auditor's past work as a template to complete the in-house audit and reports. She still needs to create a financial review packet and reports to provide to the Board at a future date.

5. Resource Conservationist Apprentice Position **ACTION**

Ferguson pointed out that we were running out of time due to Nordick needing to attend another meeting so asked if the Board wanted to reconvene on another zoom account to discuss this topic. Blanchard suggested to table for next meeting. Ferguson cited the need for a special open meeting with a closed session to discuss mid-year progress of personnel, and suggested the Resource Conservationist II position be added to the agenda for the open meeting. Everyone agreed this was a good solution. Stewart and Temple provided a proposed job scenario for the

Board to review. The open meeting with agenda items for the resource conservationist position and closed session will be on Tuesday 1/26. Ferguson referenced the December meeting, where she discussed the need for the District to have a virtual meeting service that supports open meetings act compliance with closed session. She will send out a link and agenda.

7. Next Board Meeting Scheduled March 2nd, 2020 @ 5 pm

8. Adjournment *ACTION*

A motion was made by Oak and seconded by Voelker to adjourn at 5:58 pm.

MOTION CARRIED.

Respectfully Submitted,

Nathan Oak, Secretary/Treasurer