

December 22, 2017  
SWCD Office

Supervisors Present: Mark Jordan, Mark Kingma, Kyler Laird and Lana Zimmer  
Supervisors Absent: Derek Luchik  
Staff Present: Carolyn Ahler, Dan Perkins and Sheila Schroeder  
Associates Present:  
Partners Present: Kevin Shide  
Citizens Present:

**I. Call to Order**

Chairman Kyler Laird called the meeting to order at 8:00 am CST.

**II. Minutes from Previous Meeting**

The minutes from November were presented for review. Mark K. motioned to approve the minutes and Mark J. seconded. Minutes approved.

**III. Treasurer's Report, Claims**

The treasurer's report and claims in the amount of \$7,509.05 for November were presented for approval. Lana motioned to approve the report and claims and Mark K. seconded. Motion carried. Report will be filed for audit.

**IV. Correspondence**

A thank you postcard was received from the 4-H council for the annual support contribution, and a Christmas card was received from Jess & Ryan with NWF. Dan mentioned that RC&D had sent out a call for proposals that was discussed briefly.

**V. Healthy Soils**

**5.1 Erosion:** Dan announced that we have been awarded a \$10,000 Cover Crop Champions grant from NWF. Evan Click, Evan Stoller, Paul and Jeff Herrold and Gary Cooper have agreed to participate in the program this year. The goal is to reach the middle adopters. Funds should arrive early 2018. Dan will visit places identified as local farmer gathering spots with materials and to generate interest in cover cropping. Mark K. indicated that Steve's Grill and Heather's Diner in DeMotte would be good places to interact with farmers. Kyler mentioned online forums as a good resource, as well as Trail Tree in Rensselaer. Postings could be placed at Smith's True Value, Castongia's and other businesses frequented by farmers. Dan circulated the master list of Cover Crop Champions

Dan attended the National Cover Crop Conference and another meeting in Ft. Wayne with Jamie Scott and Cameron Mills. He distributed a summary of his thoughts on the topics covered at these events.

Dan participates in the Cover Crop Innovators Group and distributed a listing of the “Top 10 Cover Crop Highlights.” Kyler suggested that Dan put all of this valuable information together in a video format and push it out to farmers.

**5.2 Soil Quality Degredation:** The Infield Advantage regional meeting held at The Farmhouse restaurant was discussed. Mark’s crew was there and gave him a positive report about the meeting. Dr. Shalamar’s talk about his research on nitrogen was well received. The regional part was a good format Mark J. thought. The afternoon session left him puzzled about the benefits of the stalk sampling program because there was no good explanation for why some fields had the levels that they had. Dan noted that the goal of the meeting is to ultimately reduce water pollution by building a story with a big data set. Dan distributed survey feedback regarding the meeting.

**5.3 Roller Crimper Policy:** The roller crimper draft policy was discussed. The sentence stating the renter should “immediately contact the district” will be amended to include a telephone number for doing so. The maximum speed needs to be determined and will be lowered from 50 mph. The portion stating the unit should be cleaned and lubricated following use will be changed to say clean, and SWCD staff will be responsible for lubrication. Mark K. made a motion to approve the policy with the noted changes, Mark J. seconded and the motion passed. Send copy to board. SWCD staff will maintain discretion on the prioritization of rental requests.

## **VI. Water Management**

Dan reported that Dan Blaney’s office had sent a history of the Iroquois River and its dredging. He has this document electronically. It was suggested that the document be posted to Facebook, as well as emailed to Supervisors and perhaps others.

## **VII. Land Use and Development**

Dan announced that the Conservation Fund has received a grant and that we will be partner with them. The object of the grant is to purchase Wetland Reserve Easements on the Kankakee for \$4,500/acre for ground that is active crop land or has a cropping history. Landowner retains most of the rights of the land. No hunting restrictions on the land, but no permanent structures may be erected.

Grassland for Gamebirds is another grant that just came through that affects Jasper County. This grant gives the state funds for 3 grassland biologists. Staff will be placed in key areas, of which Jasper County has been identified as one. They will be DNR employees, and will interact with landowners about grassland birds and pollinators.

## **VIII. District Development**

### **8.1 Education Center: Kitchen Sink Drain**

Mark J. will call Carl Ward and ask him to look into it. Discussion was held about whether it is possible to have a key allowing people access to the bathrooms, without having access to the entire building. The locks would need to be changed to accomplish this. Kyler noted that we will be receiving a list of dates being requested for 4-H or other groups to utilize the building for meetings. It was noted that time will be spent cleaning and organizing the building this winter.

## **8.2 Fall Field Day:**

A summary of the day, sponsorships and expenses was discussed. Discussion was also held about whether any significant changes need to be made to make next year more successful and whether there is value in holding a second event, perhaps in the spring, and whether sponsorship could be obtained. It was also noted that the county fair and our building should be a better way to reach people. Staff and Supervisors were tasked with thinking of ways to accomplish this. The idea of planting cover crops in raised pallets was mentioned.

## **8.3 Annual Meeting – March 14:**

The event will be at Embers Venue on March 14, 2018. We will once again invite FFA groups and there will be displays for people to browse during social hour. Social hour will be held from 5:00 – 6:00 p.m. CST, with a cash bar. Dinner will be at 6:00 and speakers will follow. Ceres Solutions will be contacted for sponsorship and to determine what level of sponsorship they may be willing to provide. Sponsors will be recognized in the program as well as verbally at the event.

## **8.4 Office Staff:**

Dan distributed a spreadsheet outlining the Annual Plan of Work and what we accomplished in 2017. 2018 will look very similar. Board meetings for 2018 will remain on the 4<sup>th</sup> Friday of the month at 8:00 a.m. The January meeting will be considerably longer as we discuss the 2018 Annual Plan of Work.

Dan has been asked to attend the Commodity Classic in Anaheim, CA as a paid consultant for the Oregon Rye Grass Commission. Dan would like to utilize unpaid leave for this purpose. He will find out what the county's policy is regarding unpaid leave and then email the Supervisors with that information to obtain permission.

## **8.5 Outreach:**

Dan spoke about the legislative breakfast being held at the Annual Meeting, Tuesday, January 9, 2018 from 7:30 – 8:30 a.m. Issues to be addressed include the continued use of cigarette tax dollars, as well as asking for \$1,000,000 from the general fund because cigarette tax is dwindling. There is a letter we can send to our legislators and ask them to be at that breakfast. It was decided to invite our legislators to the event.

## **8.5 Partnerships:**

Carolyn said she is working on getting a storm drain painting in Rensselaer. She would like to have it placed near Busy Bee where there is a lot of foot traffic. She is getting some hesitation from the City's street department in obtaining approval. Carolyn will contact Main Street Rensselaer to see what their downtown renovation plans look like to determine if something could be done that coordinates nicely with that.

## **IX. Agency/Partner Reports**

### **9.1 NRCS**

Supervisors read Kevin's October/November report and had no questions regarding same.

### **9.2 ISDA**

Dan noted that Jared has been helpful with mapping and other tasks.

**Chairman Kyler Laird adjourned the meeting at 10:15am CST**

Minutes approved

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Respectfully submitted \_\_\_\_\_ Sheila Schroeder