

Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District Business Meeting

Tuesday, February 2, 2021 beginning @ 7:30 AM

In consideration of the COVID-19 national emergency the meeting was conducted via Microsoft Teams

Purpose: *The Soil and Water Conservation District is responsible for the leadership in conserving and protecting soil and water related resources within Clinton County. The SWCD provides information about soil, water and related natural resource conservation: identifies and prioritizes local soil and water resource concerns; and connects land users to sources of education, technical and financial assistance to implement conservation practices and technologies.*

Mission statement: *The Mission of the Clinton County Soil and Water Conservation District is to create an environment through leadership, cooperation, and education, in which citizens wisely use and enhance natural resources.*

Supervisors present

Clint Orr
Jerry Batts
Dustin Johnson
Matt Kelley

Associates present

Richard Moore

Staff Present

Austin Green
Leah Harden

Absent

David Beard
Harold Marshall

Others

Adam Shanks, Purdue
Katie Fagan, USDA, NRCS
Geneva Tyler, ISDA

No additional public requests to access the Teams meeting were received per the public access announcement. The Microsoft Teams video conference business meeting was called to order at 7:39 AM by Chairman Orr.

Minutes

A motion to approve the recorded minutes of the January 19, 2021 meeting was made by Matt. Seconded by Dustin. Motion carried.

Financial Report

The financial claims were submitted for review. A motion was made to approve the financial claims for the period covering January 19, 2021 through February 1, 2021. Dustin/Jerry. Motion carried.

New Business

The Board revisited how the legal requirements of the SWCD annual meeting will be carried out while also taking into consideration COVID concerns and the health and welfare of those who might potentially attend. The annual meeting will be planned and held via a virtual format. Will use Purdue Extension's Zoom license to host the meeting. The meeting will be publicly promoted via legal notice, media outlets, social media and website to meet legal requirements. Attendance will be tracked using an online registration process via Eventbrite. The nominating committee will oversee the election process and ask for nominations from the floor during the meeting. Voting will be done by a show of hands through the chat feature. Voter eligibility will be monitored. The meeting and election will be recorded with a link posted later for public viewing. The annual report will be made available upon request and will be posted to the Districts website.

Employee Evaluations are tentatively scheduled for an undetermined date in February/March. Dustin and Clint will conduct the staff evaluations.

Old Business

A request to extend the S. Fork Wildcat Implementation Grant for a one-year period was submitted to the Indiana Department of Environmental Management. The request was approved by IDEM and has been sent to contracting for drafting of a new agreement. The draft agreement was sent for review and comment. It was noted that the agreement will be a 10-month extension of tasks with the exception of no additional field days or workshops will be required. Once the final agreement has been prepared it will require a digital signature. The Board authorized the District Administrator to digitally sign the S. Fork Wildcat Stewardship Initiative extension on behalf of the Board. Matt/Jerry. Motion carried.

The Board previously reviewed the scope of the Clean Water Indiana grant agreement and made a recommendation to submit a request to extend the scope of soil testing to the State Soil Conservation Board. The District Administrator submitted the modification request via the Grants Management System online portal. Geneva reported that the modification had been approved. She further explained that after review by the state grants coordinator it was deemed

unnecessary to change the scope the current language already allows for soil testing and doesn't differentiate on size of field.

Geneva also explained that the State Soil Conservation Board may allow Clean Water Indiana grant extensions if the Board determines necessary due to an inability to efficiently administer the grant due to COVID-19 circumstances. The request should be submitted soon – no later than the end of March (or sooner rather than later).

IDEM Section 319 Grant – S. Fork Wildcat Creek – See Austin's written report for additional updates.

Unallocated balance: \$13,290.00. Two applicants previously approved were unable to plant cover crops within the recommended guidelines (USDA, NRCS EFOTG). When this happens the field verification/stand evaluation is conducted in the spring of the of the following year. Once verified a request for reimbursement can be submitted to IDEM. Request to extend has been approved (see old business for details). The eleventh quarterly report will be submitted soon. The twelve quarter began January 4th.

IDEM Section 319 Grant Solicitation – Browns Wonder-Sugar Creek – See Austin's written report for additional updates.

Unallocated balance: \$160,620.30 Boone County staff have indicated that practice implementation is being verified, invoices are being secured so that reimbursement can be requested for four Boone County applicants.

IDNR-Lake and River Enhancement – *Unallocated balance: \$4,047.50* Purchase order will remain open and active until funds have been fully allocated per LARE staff guidance.

Clean Water Indiana –

Unallocated balance - \$29,800.00 Waiting on receipts and field verification for one applicant. Semi-annual report submitted. Practices submitted to conservation tracking portal. Modifications approved (see old business).

Staff Report/Conservation Partner Report

FSA, CED – Brittany Shepherd – no report

ISDA, DSC – Geneva Tyler/George Reger – Geneva provided highlights of the District Support Specialist monthly report. Supervisor/staff trainings are currently being planned and details will be announced soon.

Purdue Extension, AgNR Educator – Adam Shanks – verbal report

Adam reported that he and Austin will be featuring the INfield Indiana program through podcasts, commercials, etc. Discussion followed. Also planning a joint rain garden video/podcast. Provided a reminder of upcoming Purdue Extension programs.

NRCS, District Conservationist – Katlyn Fagan (see written report)

Katie provided programmatic updates on the Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) and the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP). Also noted other Initiatives going on in other areas of the state (Big Pine). Also noted the new urban initiatives that they are beginning to roll out.

USDA, NRCS will not be participating in Transects this Spring.

USDA Service Center remains at Phase 0 until further notice. New guidelines under the new administration are being written.

Resource Conservation Specialist – Austin Green (see written report)

Austin reported that the INfield Advantage Program will host virtual producer meetings for those currently enrolled or those interested in enrolling in the INFA Program for the current growing year. The meetings will be held on 1/19 and 1/21 via Zoom. New enrollment guidelines have been announced for 2021 and promise to include a more streamlined enrollment experience.

The Fall/Winter transect is being planned for late March. Purdue staff will assist with completing the transect. Will have to comply with COVID precautions.

Rule 5 updates – see written report

District Administrator – Leah Harden (verbal report)

Other Business

Richard Moore noted that he attended a virtual pasture management field day. More than 200 people attended. He reported it to be an excellent event. Also discussed the completion of his brush mgmt. practice/EQIP.

The regular business meeting adjourned at 8:21 AM. Jerry/Matt. Motion carried. The next regularly scheduled business meeting will be the annual meeting Tuesday, March 2nd beginning at 6:30 PM via Zoom.

Respectfully submitted by Leah Harden.

Minutes Approval

Clint Orr, **Chairman**

David Beard, **Vice Chairman**

Jerry Batts, **Member**

Dustin Johnson, **Member**

Matt Kelley, **Member**