

Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)

Board Meeting minutes

March 13, 2020

Present: Jamie Scott, Roger Wenning, Bobby Hettmansperger, Cathy Becker, Brad Smith, Mark Lawson, Kim Peterson, Mark Kingma, Ken Cornwell, Stan Moore, Troy Hattery, Amy Work, Joe Schmees, Sarah Delbecq, Jeff Healy, Katie Nelson (ISDA), Jason Kirchner (FSA), Stephanie Alexander (FSA), Jordan Seger, Michael Cox (NRCS), Lisa Holscher and Walt Sell

Call to Order Meeting

Meeting was called to order at 10:02 am

- **Consent agenda**
 - Stan mentioned incomplete items in CCSI report. Lisa Holscher addressed “research” issue and working with NRCS on long-term funding and staff positions. Joe mentioned there is an agenda item that will further discuss CCSI in meeting today.
 - Stan moved and Troy seconded to accepting Consent Agenda. Approved by board.

- **Treasurer’s Report (Joe Schmees for Marc Roberts, Treasurer)**
 - Joe briefed board on report and upcoming invoicing.
 - Stan mentioned concern about interest rate being low on account. Joe and Jamie and Troy responded with reasoning to keep account as is and the research done in past years looking into moving the account to another vendor. Stan brought information to the meeting from Beacon Credit Union and gave it to Joe to view. Some discussion regarding “reserves” and possibly moving it for better interest rate.

Introductions were made around the table.

Partner Updates

- **Mike Cox, NRCS**
 - Jerry Raynor will be acting chief of staff for Chief Matt Lohr for 60 days. Albert Jones from Michigan starting March 23 for 60 days as Acting Indiana State Conservationist.
 - Handed out a copy of the NRCS Annual Report and briefly highlighted a few items.
 - March 27 EQIP deadline
 - Working with local partners and districts on CRP and entering agreements with local districts
 - NRCS has new vision statement and information will be going out about this soon

- **Jordan Seger (ISDA)**
 - Thanks to IASWCD; meeting with ISDA and SSCB – good meeting; agreed to meet quarterly.
 - INField Advantage – revamped program this year; USDA grant awarded, Corn/Soybean match. Partnership with Land O’Lakes – software tool that focuses on sustainability and economics on farms. Mentioned MyFarms – software tool; food chain sustainability focus.
 - New Grants committee: Amy Burris, Kenny Cain, and Bob Eddleman
 - March 17 SSCB meeting – CWI guidance discussed here
 - Automating Grants management system – Salesforce – trainings and webinars happening and upcoming
 - Federal vehicle use by districts
 - COVID-19 – USDA sent guidance out; solidifying telework policies; annual meetings with districts – governor sent out release yesterday re: meetings; we will work with governor’s team and council to see if we can waive that requirement. Jordan recommended canceling meeting and waiting on waiver from state.
 - New Supervisor training – request from DSS; one on one training available.
 - May 12 – conservation webinar
 - May 14 – all employee meeting
 - **Katie Nelson** spoke – session ended this week; briefed attendees on bills and session

- **Walt Sell (Purdue)**
 - Passed out Purdue Extension Annual Report and touched on a few items.
 - PE has a website: Indiana Prepared – emergency planning website that includes COVID-19 information; includes a home emergency kit suggestion. Passed out information regarding this site and the emergency kit list.

- **Stephanie Alexander (FSA)**
 - Continuous CRP sign-up is ongoing; General CRP sign up is now closed.
 - Had 1,298 contracts submitted for general CRP this year
 - PLC and election deadline is Monday (3/16)
 - Briefly discussed the WHIP+ program

- **Joe spoke on behalf of IDEM**
 - Finalizing applications now
 - 2 team TMDLs have been revised
 - Watershed seminar in northern Indiana in late summer (Kim’s area)

- **Lisa Holscher (CCSI)**
 - Highlighted items from the Dec 19-March 12, 2020 report
 - Looking into webex and meetings via teleconferencing
 - Jamie Scott – reminded everyone that he is on the steering committee and will answer any questions at any time re: CCSI (as well as Joe)

IASWCD Business

- **Indiana Land Resources Council**
 - Jeff Healy spoke briefly regarding what the ILRC is about
 - Katie Nelson, Executive Director of ILRC spoke:
 - Katie – Community Planning for Ag and Natural Resources: A Guide for Local Government – document online and want to get word out about this document.
 - Katie - 9 appointments on the ILRC
 - Katie – opened discussion with board on solar and wind energy;
 - Katie opened up discussion on conservation easements
 - Troy mentioned CAFO issues in his county
 - Share web address for online guide
 - Solar friendly pollinator habitat – Purdue working on; ILRC may become involved in this;
 - Better to be proactive rather than reactive
- Joe briefed the board on the issue re: insurance and districts and driving Federal vehicles. Our recommendation is to check with county and what is covered for them. Otherwise the districts will need to make sure you have coverage for vehicle damage. Make sure you have coverage re: coverage of the vehicle. Joe will follow up with Roger on putting a statement of information out.
 - MOU – all districts signed a year ago.
 - MOA – this holds things of value; NRCS has a template of this right now and will send them out to districts. There is a worksheet that goes with this that itemizes office space, vehicle usage– to report at the end of the year. Joe asked NRCS to communicate that the “personnel” line does not have to be populated. This will come from NRCS

Lunch and Committee Meetings

- Lunch break was one hour and Legislative Committee and Natural Resources Policy Committees met

IASWCD Business (cont'd)

- **Annual Conference discussion**
 - Joe went over annual conference profit and loss statement
 - Amy went through Sponsor and Exhibitor information for the next conference
 - Need two supervisors for the conference planning meeting on April 15
- **DC Fly-In, March 12-14**
 - Cancelled fly-in due to COVID-19
 - Joe discussed cancellation policies, etc. on flights and AirBnB that was reserved for this
 - Joe briefed board on meetings that were set up, and are now cancelled, with legislators and follow-up at this point
- **June Offsite Meeting**
 - Joe suggested Wolfie’s Restaurant Bar & Grill on Morse Reservoir near Cicero/Noblesville area.
- **Conflict of Interest Forms**
 - Joe collected these at meeting

- **Updates on agreements**
 - Joe briefed board on agreements. We have two right now.
 - Last two years we had an agreement with TNC. Now entering a continuation of this agreement with TNC and working with Certified Crop Advisors and districts in southern part of the state. Association gets \$1000 up front and an additional \$1000 later for admin.
 - Upper White River outreach – outreach to elected officials. Working with them the last 1 ½ year; \$25K grant; ends in April; end of March and April – Joe talking to several local mayors as part of this agreement. Developing soil health materials to use in Upper White.
 - PSS agreement – ended in December; talking to NRCS next week with Whitney; CRP being discussed between Districts and NRCS; hoping by June to have these details worked out.
 - CCSI – currently we do have agreement with NRCS; soil sampling; Program Manager and Communications agreement ends April 30. Program Managers – NRCS agreement goes through 2020. This is going to be extended through 2021. CWI grant – for Agronomist position goes through September.
Salary for Lisa ends April.
NRCS values CCSI as a program and they utilize the program.
 - Pathway to Water Quality – Joe briefed board on partners supporting PWQ Coordinator in a 5-year agreement; we are starting second year now; Sara Peel is coordinator and has a one year contract.

- **Reimbursement of expenses of Tom Crowe’s NACD expenses**
 - Jamie made a motion and Kim seconded that the association pays for Tom Crowe’s expenses up to \$1500 for his representation of Indiana and the forestry committee at the NACD conference. Tom is very committed to this cause. All in favor.

- **Summary of SSCB/ISDA Meeting – Roger, Jamie and Joe**
 - Future Communication was the topic at meeting
 - Agreed to meet quarterly as a group
 - Brad Dawson, Amy Burris, Jordan Seger, Geneva Tyler, Laura Fribley and Roger, Jamie and Joe
 - Discussed supervisor training and how we can work together to make this better.
 - How to help a district that is struggling?
 - DSSs looking at what other states are doing for training for supervisors

Adjorn

Kim Peterson made a motion to close the meeting and Cathy seconded. **Meeting was adjourned at 3:37 pm.**