



Indiana Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (IASWCD)

Board Meeting minutes

November 20, 2020

Present: Joe Schmees, Troy Hattery, Roger Wenning, Jeff Meinders, Jamie Scott, Lisa Holscher, Laura Fribley, Angie Brown, Ray Chattin, Bobby Hettmansperger, Sherry Whetstone, Christina Gates, Sarah Delbecq, Stan Moore, Amy Work, Walt Sell, and Mark Kingma

Meeting Call to Order

Meeting was called to order at 8:40 a.m.

- **Consent agenda**
 - Troy moved and Sherry seconded to accept the Consent Agenda. Approved by board.
- **Treasurer's Report (Joe Schmees for Marc Roberts, Treasurer)**
 - Joe briefed board on report and stated that the asset balance is a little ahead of last year on balance sheet. He stated that he had previously emailed the final budget to board.
 - Joe also sent out profit/loss statement

Partner Updates

- **Laura Fribley (ISDA)**
 - Jordan at 4R event today and provided a report to Joe for the board
 - Laura highlighted a few items:
 - Clean Water Indiana – budget around \$1 million; \$145K cut out due to COVID-related mandates; 29 applications representing 41 districts & organizations; 13 were funded; map has been provided as to where projects were funded and project information; applications moving through contract process now
 - \$30K training reimbursement program reinstated
 - CWI \$10K match available again
 - State Board of Accounts (SBOA) training for districts will be on December 1
 - Luke Britt, Public Access Counselor, discussed annual meetings with districts in recorded workshop, now posted on Conservation Link (ISDA site)
 - Next SSCB meeting will be in January around IASWCD Annual Conference time
 - January 14 at 7 pm EST a virtual session for new staff and new supervisor training
- **Angie Brown (IDEM)**

- Grant decisions regarding SWCDs: 6 were funded with 319 dollars for implementation (see handout provided)
 - 11 of 16 applications funded
 - 3 additional SWCDs were funded for Planning
 - All counties have been notified
 - At this time 319 grant program will continue into 2021
 - TMDL moving forward
- **Ray Chattin (SSCB)**
 - November 12 SSCB had a Zoom meeting with DSSs. They worked on Business Plan and brainstormed ideas of how to build district capacity; plan not finalized yet but one highlights here:
 - Leadership Institute – getting participation and ways to possibly use CWI money to move this forward
- **Lisa Holscher (CCSI)**
 - Applied to EPA for farmer to farmer grant; 3 year project; 2/3 of the funding would be for farmer/mentor payments
 - CCSI report was previously sent out to board members
 - Last few weeks/months CCSI has been providing support to partners and hosting virtual meeting/retreats/ICP staff training/Advanced Cover Crop training/Women4theLand/SWCS fall training/Edge of Field monitoring
 - CCSI providing video storage, tech tests at each meeting location, agenda/script support
 - Joe Rorick, along with Stephanie McClain currently doing some recording for conferences
 - David Brandt – 50 years of history story on CCSI website
 - Planning to record with additional farmers on economics
 - Root Project spreading far and wide
 - Sharing teleconference lines with districts
 - Helped support a few districts in their board meetings
- **Walt Sell (Purdue Extension)**
 - Walt was asked to take on different role the past few months; working in LaPorte County right now and still some state level effort responsibilities; PE has extended an offer someone for the LaPorte County position, so hoping to be back after first of the year on the state level.
 - Have learned lessons during this time: audience wants in-person; audience susceptible to COVID; percentage of folks like the virtual setting; some like programs available on their time schedule
 - Moving forward will be doing things a little differently because of what they've learned during this virtual time
 - Lots of stresses going on in agriculture community; doing a program to address this – Communicating with Farmers Under Stress - how to recognize signs as well as techniques for approaching people under stress and ways to cope; free program on December 18 from 8:30-12:30 EST; have to register at: <https://purdue-edu.zoom.us/meeting/register/tJAVcumvrTksHdTpAjENgqVoDECpoez2Gg0w>

IASWCD Business

- **Update on FY20 year end (Joe)**
 - Joe sent out finalized budget to all board members
 - On this budget – IASWCD is in the black after invoicing
 - Roger thanked Joe and Amy on bringing in and administering grants

- **2021 SWCD Annual Conference**
 - **Virtual Format Update (Amy and Joe)**
 - Great speakers lined up
 - Registration open; early bird discount now through Dec 11
 - Conference recording available for six months after conference
 - District membership received discount through Dec 11
 - Emails sent to potential exhibitors and sponsors; need board members to follow up and make personal contacts to acquire these
 - Supervisor Scholarship information sent out to district earlier this week
 - Amy shared registration site and briefed on conference agenda

 - **Resolutions (Joe)**
 - 2 received this year and sent out to districts
 - Both deal with change of code so sent to ISDA for review
 - Joe working with ISDA re: passage of these resolutions
 - Followed up with Noble County – they still want to move forward with having options with annual meetings i.e. virtual format
 - Per Diem resolution – Joe talked with Katie at ISDA regarding this one
 - Working on logistics of voting process for business meeting and attending meeting outside of attending conference

- **IASWCD Business**
 - **2021 Officer slate (Jamie Scott)**
 - Slate will be put together by committee that needs approval by Dec 1 to send out to districts

 - **HRA renewal, employee benefit tracking (Joe Schmees)**
 - Health Reimbursement Arrangement – covers IASWCD staff and CCSI staff and will be the available for new staff under the Urban Agreement; costs for fringe benefits for the additional staff comes out of the agreement monies;
 - \$3,500/year total for each employee; currently is voted on for approval of dates: Oct. 29-Oct 29 each year;
 - Joe wants to work on changing the benefit dates to the calendar year; this year he wants to add 2 months to HRA renewal so it runs Oct 29, 2020 through Dec 31, 2021.
 - Needs to be approved by board annually

- Motion was made by Troy Hattery to approve to add two months and approve annual HRA . Seconded by Stan Moore. No further comments or questions were brought forward. No objections. Motion passed.
- Benefit tracking – Joe working with bookkeeper Dee on tracking PTO time better on suggestion from auditors; trying to automate the system; next step is Joe will look over Employee Policies re: PTO etc. to make sure the terms are defined appropriately
- **NACD Delegates for 2021 (Roger)**
 - Roger willing to stay as Delegate and/or alternate
 - Bobby willing to stay as alternate
 - Jamie moved that we keep same delegate and alternate same as last year; Stan Moore seconded.
 - Roger and Bobby will remain as Delegate and Alternate; no one opposed; motion passed
 - Joe proposed that we take the monies budgeted for NACD delegate travel go to offering board members registration to this conference
 - Joe proposed budgeted monies go to scholarships for District supervisors to attend this conference. Roger proposed tabling this topic to further discuss at December board meeting.
- **Updates**
 - **Urban Soil Health Program (Joe)**
 - “Indiana Urban Soil Health Program” is the official title
 - Agreement signed with NRCS
 - Applied for 3 year grant for CWI funds (maximum funding time is 3 years); did receive \$30K each year for 3 years, totaling \$90K; can ask for 50% up front
 - Five positions to be filled under this agreement
 - Joe talked with Purdue and Purdue Urban Ag program staff – and presented overview of program to them; they’ve agreed to time match in different areas
 - Have 16 districts that have provided match and Joe will be invoicing them
 - Joe starting phone screening and interviews for urban ag positions over the next week and month
 - State level position – Joe proposed this position have a place in the state NRCS office (1/3 time) and IASWCD office (1/3 time); 1/3 time in field; 4 regional positions housed in USDA centers in those regions; all of these locations still being negotiated
 - Sarah brought up that some districts are already working in Urban Conservation and asked how this is being addressed with this new program. Joe responded that Shannon Zezula is the NRCS point person and they are aware that several districts are already doing work in this arena. Joe is currently communicating

with some of these districts to see how each can be supported, etc.

- May possibly be a webinar to roll out information re: this program and other districts working in this area to further explain and communicate this and other programs being offered
- **Pathway to Water Quality (Joe)**
 - PWQ volunteer core of ICP partners has been maintaining this area on the Indiana State Fairgrounds
 - PWQ was given the opportunity to expand the space into the Boy Scout area
 - IASWCD administers finances for this program
 - Pathway committee reached out to Indiana American Water and was able to secure funding to help expand into the new area (old Boy Scout area); hoping to bring soil health trailer/NRCS into this new area with seating; make this area a display and demonstration area; using money from IAW for new signage for the new area across from the bridge; working on seating for the area; LaGrange County SWCD helping make Aldo Leopold benches for this area;
 - State Fairgrounds is working on developing new agricultural area in NE corner of fairgrounds; but PWQ not affected by this in a negative way
- **FY20 Audit (Joe)**
 - Audit firm able to do audit for \$11K/year fee
 - Finished last audit in June for FY19
 - FY20 audit is required to be completed by June; hoping to have this done by Dec. 31
 - Typically our internal audit is in November and we provide a letter in delegate notebook for membership
 - Jeff Baker suggested that we use the outside audit as our official audit of the books; mentioned the outside audit will be more comprehensive than having an internal audit with committee members
 - Troy supported Jeff Baker's suggestion of using outside audit as the auditor of association financials
 - Motion made by Troy Hattery to have the Third party audit from audit firm be sufficient for the audit for this year. Stan Moore seconded this motion. No opposition. Motion passed.
 - Joe confirmed with auditor that it can be completed by December 31 and letter will be provided for the Delegate Notebook.
- **Legislative Update**
 - Joe spoke with OMB (office of management and budget). Talked to them about dedicated funds – dedicated funding from cigarette tax fund. 1/6 of cigarette tax fund is what makes up CWI fund. Confirmed CWI 15% cut was only applied to general

- fund item and not dedicated funds. \$970K with 15% cut applied to it. Basically, \$824,500 will be the new amount in budget.
- This year going to be playing defense to restore \$824,500 back to \$970K or \$1 million.
- Good talking points are the leverage this money affords.
- General public will not have access to statehouse as in the past. No statehouse tours.
- Talking with Cress re: having district and legislator meet ups via Zoom.
- Looking at doing virtual trainings with Cress in December: how to meet virtually, talking with legislators, etc.
- In the past, Stoops had authored a bill dealing with carbon farming and forestry; carbon sequestration; carbon credits; Senator Glick is sponsoring a similar bill and co-authored by JD Ford. Joe asked to be on that committee and look at that bill.
- There will be limited time, bills proposed, etc. in the midst of COVID issues and mandates
- Jamie spoke about targeting and meeting new folks as well as meeting with past legislators; with new folks – meeting, educating them on districts and Indiana conservation very important
- **Other**
 - **Jamie – CCSI Oversight Committee**
 - Normally decide in December about committee members
 - Jamie and Les are currently serving
 - May be a change and selections may need to be made for IASWCD representation on that committee
 - **Travis' Trail (Roger)**
 - Outdoor trail and classroom being dedicated to Roger's late grandson, Travis Wenning
 - **Next IASWCD Board Meeting**
 - Next IASWCD Board meeting is December 18 and will most likely be virtual. Indiana Farm Bureau building, where in-person meetings usually take place, only allowing up to 10 people at this time.

Adjorn

Jeff Meinders made a motion to close the meeting and Troy seconded. **Meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am.**