

IASWCD Board Meeting Minutes

September 17, 2021



Attendance

Board: Troy Hattery, Mark Kingma, Stan Moore, Jeff Baker, Cathy Becker, Kerry Ames, Kim Peterson, Roger Wenning, Sarah Delbecq, Marc Roberts, Sherry Whetstone, Bobby Hettmansperger, and Andy Ambriole

Staff: Joe Schmees and Amy Work

Partners: as listed with updates below

Call to Order/Welcome

The meeting was called to order at 10:06 am.

Consent Agenda

Motion to accept the Consent Agenda was made by Sherry Whetstone and seconded by Troy Hattery; vote: all in favor

Treasurer's Report

Sarah mentioned that financial documents were sent previously via email as attachments.

Joe highlighted under "agreements" that another invoicing cycle will happen at the end of September. The CCSI agreement is ending in September and will be wrapping up over the following 90 days as needed – then final invoicing will happen for this agreement. Treasurer's report – accept subject to audit

Partner Updates

Angie Brown, IDEM – staffing changes in the TMDL section and wider monitoring branch; TMDL: two previous staff were promoted; Jamie Hosier – has moved on and will be filling position; currently working to staff Hoosier Riverwatch leader; Key positions open at this time. Mariah Creek TMDL was approved; Black Creek TMDL public meeting held and three SWCD staff attended. Nonpoint source –

grant applications received; currently in review mode; applicants will know by end of October. Received notice from EPA – looking for projects to add to their consulting hours. Agricultural nonpoint source projects - If want to partner with IDEM and take idea to EPA, let Angie know.

Stan Moore asked about blue-green algae and update on that situation particularly in NE Indiana lakes. Angie state that the sampling season is over regarding Blue-Green algae. If you have specific questions for a specific lake, let Angie know and she will put you in contact with the right person.

Walt Sell, Purdue Extension – college of agriculture went through strategic process recently: 2021 through 2026 and it is now posted online; mission and vision statement, action steps, etc.

https://ag.purdue.edu/strategic_plan/Pages/setting_the_stage.aspx

Carbon markets for row crops webinar is now available online; Carbon Market Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NkqazQr6EeY>

Carbon Market Paper:

<https://ag.purdue.edu/commercialag/home/resource/2021/06/opportunities-and-challenges-associated-with-carbon-farming-for-u-s-row-crop-producers/>

Lori Jordan, IDEA – 159 members currently; 80 counties represented in membership; 12 non-participating counties;

fall conference Oct 5-7, Muncie Indiana; Mary Lou Watson and Brandi Frazier planning the fall conference;

Staff Empowerment and Support Program – IDEA directors working on this new program for a roll out in 2023; updates regarding the program will be forthcoming;

Having silent auction in January at the annual SWCD conference; funds from this auction offset cost of IDEA conference scholarships and other programs

Lisa Holscher, CCSI – request for proposals are closing out; approving 24 of them; \$40,700 total to partners; received some very interesting applications; some very small grants (less than \$1,000);

Working with Beth Mason, NACD on The Root Project as it's taking on a life of its own. Requests from other states for posters – working with Beth to possibly make these posters available in the NACD store.

July report sent to board and posted on CCSI website – there is an attachment for ag data project; recommend that you read the FAQs, specifically regarding crop insurance claims

Elli Blaine, Urban Soil Health – busy with tours, workshops with staff; looping in district staff, ICP staff and better feel for what urban farmers are dealing with; getting staff comfortable with visits and equipment; yesterday had an urban and small farm virtual training urban 101 – 70 attendees;

Oat seed packages have been distributed, 300 + 100; Kevin Allison put together tech sheets on how to use that cover crop;

We have 3 cover crop demos going in Lake, Tippecanoe and Hendricks county. Establishing working groups in a few counties – need to work towards formalizing those; loose formation right now;

NW have had individual connections with 60% of districts; SE – 50%; NE – working with a few regional organizations

Had presence at state fair through soil health trailer.

Having monthly calls.

Upcoming, we will be attending the following: NE Indiana food forum; Work on Water festival field day; 2 cover crop field days; IDEA fall conference.

IASWCD Business

FY 21 year-end and FY 22 budget discussions and vote:

Joe went over IASWCD Budget Worksheet

Annual Conference – big difference from 2021 to 2022; virtual vs. in-person conference; moving back to in-person;

Board of Directors – 2021 actual is low due to no in-person events

NACD participation – for board and travel;

Memberships dues and sponsorships – SICIM and IANA support ends in 2022 (five years); not committed past 2022; “North Central” is NACD NC region dues;

Insurance – SWCD Liability insurance policy does fluctuate slightly each year;

Cathy asked if the finance committee had already approved the budget and going over this is just a courtesy or is there room for change? Joe stated there is room for change and will be voted on after going over it. Joe going to discuss where things have changed over the years.

D&O Insurance – Stan wanted to know who is the carrier of this insurance. He stated that Arrow Head Country RC&D gets their insurance through BeeHive and it's very reasonable in price if Joe wants to compare.

Audit this year – federal single audit if the association expends more than \$750K in federal dollars. The association is close to possibly needing this again, but not sure yet. One consideration: if we do not need an audit this year and we need one next year we may have to pay more for them to do the past two years audit.

Rent – increases 2-3% each year; still a good price for downtown real estate;

Supplies – went over budget a little; don't expect supplies to go over next year

Telephone/internet/cell – negotiated lower rates in 2021

Bank Service Fees – Joe will check on this amount as these fees seem high

Project Expenses – low this year due to no in person meetings

INCOME

Joe went over past conference income and any changes

Dues – Joe will provide a list of districts who have not paid dues yet on Monday morning (9/20) to the board.

NRCS Cooperative Agreement – pays some of Amy's salary; current agreement ends at the end of May 2022; Joe is communicating with Kris and will set up a meeting with Kris and Jill regarding this agreement;

Project Income – primarily money in and money out; low due to no in-person meetings

Joe went over the Grant list chart

Lunch

Mike Aylesworth – Discussion of Watershed Development

Commissions Bill

Mike – introduced himself; lives in Southern Porter County; farmed for 33 years and active in public affairs; now in closing chapter in career as a representative – in 8th year; on environmental commission and ag committee; His focus is on seeing things work properly; to make life better for Hoosiers;

Proposed bill and draft – watershed development commissions (two); he explained the details of the commissions; served on a drainage board for 12 years; let's give another tool – local option (not mandated) to give a group of counties that want to develop a commission – to have a funding source; it passed out of the house natural resources committee last year; now going to have a study committee; met with IFB and chamber and several other organizations and it was positive; more county groups looking at watershed as opposed to just a single county;

Stan Moore stated that he is concerned that this whole watershed commission is geared towards moving water downstream with little regard to parties that live downstream.

Mike responded that that is not the intent; not about flooding and getting rid of water; encouraging holding areas; buffer strips and wetlands, so that we can maintain as much as possible where it falls; focus is on management, not about just getting rid of water.

Joe asked how will this work with some of the river basin commissions that already exist?

Mike stated that he had talked to other representatives and they would like to do like the Kankakee; roll the old commission into a new commission.

Joe stated that it does mention in the proposed bill about having representation; having IASWCD regional director; we like that concept; but would like the option to be IASWCD director or designee to be able to choose the best representation for the commission.

Mike responded that he liked that idea and will talk to the writer of the bill to implement this into the bill

Jeff Baker stated that he is in full support of this bill and how it could help in Pigeon Creek

Joe asked How do you see this working in areas with municipal entities?

Mike responded that enough flexibility with DNR and their oversight to work with stormwater organizations and communities to come up with a solution; I believe this will work with people who want it to work.

Kim encouraged everyone to read and be educated on this topic.

Joe asked do you have a date yet for study committee?

Mike – yes - October 13 at 10 am; in senate finance room #431

Bobby asked what can we do?

Mike stated to have discussion about it; and give Joe resolutions and points that he can make to study committee; you/SWCD boards are held in high regard and your input is valued

Mark Kingma stated thank you for what you are doing Mike; this is working out very well in the Kankakee; plus we have two representatives and other partners; and two from Illinois with non-voting seats; we appreciate the support as there is a lot of need for this in the state

Joe stated there is interest in partnering on this. Appreciate your including us and our input. And appreciate you joining us today.

Mike stated that he looks forward to making this a law next year

Joe mentioned that he will be on the Wetlands Task Force committee

Mike met with INCA this past week and they talked about Wetlands Task Force group.

Mike left meeting around 12:25 pm.

Cress Hizer had joined meeting with Mike.

Cress stated that that was a great contact and that he had been working with Mike on this for awhile. Climate change is on everyone's mind and flooding. Excited about this idea. Wetland Task Force – good to have a seat on this; Politics looking at maps right now. Maps – Ways & Means ,Dr. Tim Brown is retiring; his district will go to Beau Baird. Don Lehe's seat is being combined – not sure what it means yet. Abbott's district also being changed.

SSCB meeting coming up soon. 15% reversion on dedicated account still. Kenny and Ray brought this issue up to the board in May and we still do not have an answer on this issue yet.

Joe mentioned there is funding in our legislative budget in case we get more access to legislators – to get districts in the statehouse again if possible.

Cress mentioned that it is short session coming up this year; 2022 is an election year; it is short and then they get home to do campaigning.

Kim thanked Cress for his work.

Cress left meeting at 12:33 pm

IASWCD Business con'td

Board returned to budget discussions

Joe going back to budget and where items had changed to address some of Cathy's concerns about expenses. He specified what line items increase over the past few years and why.

Stan asked about the \$10K Urban Ag match in budget.

Motion made to approve the budget by Jeff Baker; seconded by Stan; all in favor. Zero opposed. Motion passed.

2020 virtual trainings recap – Amy

Amy showed a PowerPoint slideshow with a list of past year Zoom support given to Districts and ICP. As well as 22 trainings recorded and posted on the IASWCD.org site.

Zoom trainings summary included:

- 52 total Zoom sessions were supported with the IASWCD (14 District board meetings; 17 District Annual meetings; 8 ICP trainings, 13 other)

2022 SWCD annual conference

- Update on sponsors/exhibitors – Amy
 - It was determined that sponsorship levels would return to the amounts they were previously for in-person conferences (i.e. 2019 conference)
 - Joe explained the layout for exhibitors in The Westin
 - Amy will finalize documents and email them to the board; Amy told board to let her know if they would prefer to have these printed and mailed to them and she would be happy to do that as well.

SSCB appointments

- Marc R – updated board on SSCB board appointments and discussion followed, including the resolution that came forward regarding term limits.

IASWCD Business

- Review reserve policy - biennial review
 - Joe stated we review reserve policy every other year and before December meeting Joe will send out to everyone. We have kept the policy the past several years, but finance committee to check for any changes needed, etc.
- 2021 resolutions discussion
 - Joe stated that at this time we have only received one.
- Executive session: staffing update – Joe and Board discussion regarding staff.

- Employee policy: Joe presented suggested changes to the employee policy and board discussed changes.
 - One item discussed was changing mileage reimbursement to state “at the current IRS rate,” to keep from needing changes. Troy made a motion for the change, Marc second. Approved.
 - A motion to approved the updated employee policy was made by Troy, Cathy second. Approved.

Other

- Stan gave an Natural Resource Policy (NRP) update – Wetlands Task Force, Joe serving on this; NRP wanted to provide list to Joe re: items that the task force needs to suggest; wanted to share this list with board for their review and approval.

Joe stated that he attended the NRP meeting and was able to add items. Joe read through the points and said he would send out to board for review and comments.

Joe stated that as the board reviews these points, any idea is welcome. He is also going to reach out to others with expertise in this area for more good input.

- Meeting on Monday with ISDA

Going to talk about what is working well and what is not; communication will be discussed

About 1 ½ hours long on Monday

Joe asked for input on topics for that meeting.

Stan stated to ask about a replacement for Jennifer Thum’s position

Kim stated to make sure they understand what we bring to the table; we do help with new employees;

How do we know when there are new staff and new supervisors?

- Keynote Speaker for 2022 Annual Conference.
 - Amy announced speaker and Joe sent over budget for speaker.
 - Mark Kingma made a motion to approve to pay the deposit for the Keynote Speaker and Sherry seconded the motion.
- Joe went over the Vaccine mandate for federal staff policy. We had a meeting about it with original plan of vaccine and mask and testing. Now it is a requirement to be vaccinated as an employee or contractor. Regarding SWCD staff – they do not know how they will be affected or required yet. At this point, do not know how it is going to impact USDA service centers.
- Roger - NACD summer meeting update: Roger is now north central region rep on president's association; highlight was a trip to Racine with several other leaders and saw what they are doing in Racine; next meeting is February in Orlando and next summer in Puerto Rico. Joe asked about NACD health insurance. Roger stated there was no discussion about health insurance at this meeting.

Adjourn

Jeff Baker made motion to adjourn; Roger seconded. All in favor. No one opposed.

Meeting adjourned at 3:42 pm.