

ELKHART COUNTY SWCD BOARD MEETING MINUTES

September 16, 2024

Present: Supervisors: *Alex Wait, Darrell Shover, Dale Leer, Keith Miller, Dean Rink*; Associates: *Tom Perry*; Staff: *Jim Hess, Lora Atkins, Todd Clark, Jenna Wait, Dennis Badke, Eric Brookins*, NRCS: *Acting District Conservationist, Deb Knepp*.

Absent: Associates: David Bontrager, Gary Kauffman; Elkhart County Surveyor: Phil Barker; ISDA Support Specialist: Heath Hurst; District Support Specialist: Sandra Hoffarth.

The board meeting was called to order by Alex Wait at 5:30 pm.

The August 13, 2024, board meeting minutes was approved on a motion by *Leer/Miller*

Agency Reports:

NRCS:

Environmental Quality Incentive Program:

*Process 2 payments – Invasive Species Control; Water Well, Watering facility, Pumping Plant, Livestock Pipeline, Prescribed Grazing
Certify firebreak seed mix and planting
Developed Non-compliance modification paperwork for off-schedule contract
Field check Critical Area Seeding over 2 closed Animal Waste Pit
Complete modification – 1 (remove 2 conservation practices that were not needed)
Start processing new applications (22), contacting tech team and foresters for their portions*

Conservation Reserve program:

Met with 2 clients to get signatures on contracts to deliver to the Farm Service Agency

Conservation Stewardship program:

*Met with 2 clients to get signatures on modifications and sent for approval
In the process of certifying 2024 completed practices (gathering bills, documentation) – 8
Contracts*

Met with 3 clients to discuss programs

Attended Pay Dirt Field Day

Completed 2 wetland determinations

ISDA:

Not in attendance

County Surveyor:

Not in attendance

Extension:

Not in attendance

District Business:

*Pay Dirt IN-Field: Grass Roots Newsletter there will be a recap in the upcoming issue coming out on 9/19, we talked about what went well and what went not so well!

*Annual Meeting Dates: We chose Feb 4th at the Southgate Crossing/Harvest Hall for our Annual meeting; they will have a buffet for \$12.99/per person. *Shover/Leer*

*Conservation Farmer of the Year: We have chosen Brett Whitehead to receive the award this year. *Miller/Rink*

*Native Plant Sale: The native plant sale went well and everything was picked up.

*Budget Hearing Discussion: Everything went well!

*Summer Summit Highlight: Jim went to Winamac for the meeting, he talked to Gene Schmidt, Jennifer Thum was there, it was well attended.

*CWI Update and Deadlines: Things are going well with the grant; our next deadline is the 1st Friday of October.

*INterra Credit Union Office Visit: Sept 19th at 11:30 am they will be coming for a visit to our office to see who we are, they have been a vendor at quite a few of our events.

*District Showcase Award: We will be receiving the District Showcase Award at the IASWCD Annual Conference in January.

*SWAMP Projects: We have sent in one, and Jim met with two others this morning.

*General Permit Updates: Plans have slowed down, and we will begin to send out Renewals soon. The Elkhart County Solar Project started 3 weeks ago.

*Education Updates: Jenna finished her 1st Ivy Tech class and has now started her 2nd class, she partnered with Elkhart County Parks for BirdFest on 9/14 and she will be going to Goshen Jr High with them on their field trip to Shanklin Park. Jenna played a video she created from what she learned in her class at Ivy Tech.

*Indiana Woodland Steward: The board agreed to support them and to give them \$250. *Shover/Miller*

Financial Business:

The vehicle log was signed.

The Gateway Reports have been uploaded and reviewed by the Board.

The monthly financial reports were approved on a motion by *Rink/Leer*

Claims for the following were signed: The Goshen Brew: (\$440.00-Drinks for Event); Elkhart County Fairgrounds: (\$330.00 – Signs); Hensler Nursery, Inc. (\$1,487.35 – Tree Sale Deposit); Jenna Wait (\$15.73 – Poster Board); INterra Credit Union/County (\$1,716.53-Postage/Office Supplies/Conference/Sustenance); INterra Credit Union/District (\$1,623.55-IMN Supplies/FB Pay Dirt/Tree Sale Paper/Pay Dirt Supplies); Rulli's Pizza (\$800.00-Pay dirt); New Paris Tent Rentals (2,158.19- tents/tables/chairs/mileage);Jim Hess (\$72.41-bolt); Cripe's Septic (\$1,235.00-Portable toilet service); Stantec (\$1,320.00-Native Plants).

The board meeting adjourned at 6:30 PM *Leer/Miller*

Local Work Group Meeting commenced at 6:30 pm. SWCD district and NRCS along with other local producers in the area were present. New Resource Concern priority rankings were selected for the year. Priority Concerns reflect a change in EQIP application numbers and interest that is beginning farmers with woods as the predominant application type for the upcoming year.

The Local Working Group meeting adjourned at 7:15 PM *Rink/Leer*

Next Board Meeting: October 21, 2024 - 5:30 pm
SWCD Office
59358 County Road 7 Elkhart, IN 46517

SWCD Board Chairman
Alex Wait

SWCD Board Vice Chairman
Darrell Shover

SWCD Board Member
Dale Leer

SWCD Board Member
Keith Miller

SWCD Board Member
Dean Rink

Recording Secretary
Lora L Atkins