

Ross Soil & Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting
Tuesday November 8, 2022
Ross County Service Center District Office

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The board of supervisors met at the Ross County Service Center in the SWCD office. The meeting was called to order at 8:31 a.m. by presiding officer and board chairman, Brice Acton.

District Supervisors present in person:

Brice Acton, Mike Anderson, Philip Gray, Greg Ramsey, Pam Snyder

District Staff present:

Tabby Arnold, Engineering Tech

JT Flowers, Engineering Tech

Ben Givens, Engineering Tech

Bob Neal, District Administrator

Greg Rouse, GIS Coordinator

Professional Staff present:

Landry Roe, NRCS DC; Cody Hacker, ODA Specialist

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

Supervisors reviewed the previous meeting minutes. Pam Snyder moved to approve the October meeting minutes as presented. Mike Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS

TREASURER'S REPORT

The administrator presented details of the November treasurer's report listing bills paid and bills to be paid. The current financial obligation is \$80,377.61. Philip Gray moved to approve the treasurer's report and pay bills in the amount of exactly \$40,644.03. Greg Ramsey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

There were no Education or Policy committee reports.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

The administrator presented his monthly report and noted the district received a check for the FY23 Wildlife Specialist grant to be deposited at the Treasurer's office following the meeting.

DC REPORT

District Conservationist Landry Roe had no report other than to introduce new NRCS staff member Kelton Collins.

FSA REPORT

Ross County Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director (CED) Kate Sowards had no report.

ODA REPORT - Specialist Cody Hacker presented the monthly ODA update and punctuated upcoming Scioto CREP training. Cody also suggested a November 25th deadline for the Area 5 Winter meeting.

WATERSHED REPORT

Region 4 Watershed Manager Chris Pancake did not attend the meeting and had no report.

STAFF AND SUPERVISOR COMMENTS

There were no comments.

OLD BUSINESS

SPECIAL ELECTION

The administrator reported filing the necessary documentation to proceed with a special election to fill a vacant 2023 board seat. Mike Anderson will be the lone candidate in the election commencing on December 1st. Brice Acton thanked Mike and asked Cody Hacker about procedures for making board appointments following a resignation. Cody responded an appointment requires a unanimous vote by the remaining board members.

NEW BUSINESS

AREA 5 WINTER MEETING

Brice Acton moved to approve staff and supervisor travel and attendance at the OFSWCD Area 5 Winter meeting scheduled for December 7th at the Emmett Chapel in Circleville. Mike Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

WINTER NEWSLETTER

The administrator updated supervisors on plans for the 2023 Tree Sale and participation in the Athens SWCD buying group. To advertise the tree sale, Brice Acton moved to authorize a December Newsletter at a cost of approximately \$800. Greg Ramsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

ASSOCIATION DUES

The administrator presented invoices for 2023 OFSWCD dues in the amount of \$2,995; 2023 OFSWCD Area 5 dues in the amount of \$200; and a request for an annual conservation investment to the NACD. The administrator reminded supervisors that OSWCC rules require membership in these organizations. Pam Snyder moved to authorize OFSWCD state and area dues and a \$100 donation to the NACD totaling \$3,295. Brice Acton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

PARK DISTRICT LETTER

The administrator reported receiving a request for a letter of support from the Ross County Park District. That district is applying for a Clean Ohio grant to support improvements at the Herron Downs Fen. There was careful discussion about that project with supervisors expressing issues ranging from a lack of knowledge and reach of the project (Philip Gray) to the benefits of invasive species removal (Greg Ramsey). Greg Ramsey provided a quick summary of a recent Gazette article. Pam Snyder remarked the project and request seemed limited in scope. During the discussion Brice Acton updated supervisors on the status of another matter, previous discussions with Park District Director Joe Letsche concerning the Kinnikinnick Fen. That project would have involved a property purchase by Ross SWCD and negotiations dissolved with Ross SWCD remaining open to the possibility of educational partnerships at the Fen locations. Pam Snyder moved to authorize the administrator to sign and send the requested letter of support on behalf of the board for the RCPD Clean Ohio grant for the Herron Downs Fen. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, no; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, yes. The motion passed.

ANNUAL INVENTORY

The administrator presented the most recent inventory list which added the 2022 purchase of the RTK drone and its iPad controller while retiring three HP Z-Book computers purchased in 2016. Brice Acton moved to approve the annual inventory. Philip Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

TIMBER HARVEST PLANS

The district received three Timber Harvest Plans in October from Harrison, Franklin, and Jefferson Townships. JT Flowers inspected all three sites and recommended approval. Brice Acton moved to accept staff recommendation to approve the three plans. Greg Ramsey seconded. Passed unanimously.

EMPLOYEE EVALUATIONS

Supervisors reviewed employee evaluations conducted by the administrator and the administrator's self-evaluation form. Supervisors expressed satisfaction with the evaluations. Greg Ramsey remarked everyone is doing a fantastic job. Brice Acton remarked the staff makes our job (as supervisors) easy, the office and governance (Bob) seems to be running efficiently and field work (JT) is handled "as smooth as silk." Brice singled out Ben Givens for handling ag construction mostly by himself for most of the year before new employee Tabby Arnold hit the ground running. Brice remarked hearing praise from the commissioners for Greg Rouse who interacts substantially with other county departments. Philip Gray moved to accept all evaluations as written. Brice Acton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Brice Acton moved to invite the administrator and enter executive session to discuss the compensation of employees. Pam Snyder seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, yes. Supervisors entered executive session at 9:22 a.m. and re-convened in regular session at 10:39 a.m.

2023 EMPLOYEE SALARIES

Supervisors made statements citing the importance of employee retention and followed the current pay policy formula. Philip Gray moved to approve changes to compensation with each staff member receiving an 8.2% cost of living increase and the county recommended 2.5% increase, resulting in the personal services schedule total of \$310,419.20. Pam Snyder seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

2023 BUDGET APPROVAL

Supervisors discussed line items on the proposed 2023 budget request to present to commissioners. The budget request includes the first significant request for an increase in funding since 2014. The district will request a 20% increase in the county grant from \$250,000 to \$300,000. Brice Acton moved to approve the 2023 budget as presented. Philip Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously. The administrator and available supervisors will present the request to commissioners on November 14th.

CORRESPONDENCE

The district received no correspondence in October other than the Park District request approved earlier in new business.

ANNOUNCEMENTS • CALENDAR

- 11/11 Veteran's Day - Office Closed
- 11/14 Commissioners Budget Presentation
- 11/15 Scioto CREP Training
- 11/24 Thanksgiving - Office Closed
- 11/25 First SWCD Committee Meeting in 1946
- 12/7 Area 5 Winter Meeting - Emmett Chapel Circleville
- 12/13 December Board Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Hearing no other business, the chair moved to approve by unanimous consent to adjourn at 10:43 a.m.

Pam Snyder, Secretary

Brice Acton, Chair

Robert Neal, Administrator

Date