

Ross Soil & Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting
Tuesday May 10, 2022
Ross County Service Center Conference Room D

MINUTES

CALL TO ORDER

The board of supervisors met at the Ross County Service Center in Conference Room D. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by presiding officer, Vice-Chairman, Philip Gray.

District Supervisors present in person:

Mike Anderson

Philip Gray

Pam Snyder

District Supervisors not present:

Brice Acton

Greg Ramsey

District Staff present:

Ben Givens, Engineering Tech

Bob Neal, District Administrator

Greg Rouse, GIS Coordinator

Professional Staff present:

Cody Hacker, ODA DSWC Specialist

Chris Pancake, ODA Watershed Manager

Landry Roe, NRCS DC

Kate Sowards, FSA CED

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

The administrator noted the April minutes had been updated to reflect Pam Snyder was disconnected during the April meeting and could not participate in certain votes. Mike Anderson moved to approve the April minutes as corrected and presented. Pam Snyder seconded. Passed unanimously.

REPORTS

TREASURER'S REPORT

The administrator presented details of the May treasurer's report listing bills paid and bills to be paid. The current financial obligation is \$70,998.95. Pam Snyder moved to approve the treasurer's report and pay bills in the amount of exactly \$45,542.74. Mike Anderson seconded. Passed unanimously.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Education - Envirothon

The administrator reported a successful Envirothon event with good reviews and publicity. There were 36 Area Teams, 178 students, 17 schools, and 9 counties altogether. Ross County sent 40 local students from Adena (3 teams), Huntington, Southeastern, and Zane Trace (3 teams). Pam Snyder cited good reviews and remarked the increased educational outreach is a good public face for commissioners.

The administrator briefed supervisors on financial housekeeping related to Envirothon. The district is in receipt of an invoice due to the Area 5 Envirothon in the amount of \$240 for registering 8 teams. The administrator is requesting transportation invoices for future payment. The district will be reimbursed \$1,313 for area t-shirts and the district received \$110.50 from other district's staff who purchased t-shirts. The district spent a net \$338 on t-shirts. The administrator thanked the Colerain Township Volunteer Fire Department who had 2 members staffing an EMS squad standing by at the event. Mike Anderson moved to authorize Envirothon payments, \$240 to the Area 5 Envirothon for Ross County team registrations, and \$200 to the Colerain Township Volunteer Fire Department for providing EMS stand-by service at the event. Pam Snyder seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Education - Farm Bureau & FFA Ag Day September 13th

The organizers of the event have requested a drone demonstration and a soil pit.

Education - OSU Extension Woodlands Workshop September 10th

The district has pledged to participate as a fall workshop.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

The administrator distributed final reports from the tree and fish sales and shared notes from his written report that were not included on the agenda:

- LAEPP - 3 Applications Submitted
- Replacing Water Test Pump
- Pumphouse Earth Day - Huge Crowd
- The district had contact with the park District's Joe Letsche who asked about Kinnikinnick Fen
- Training this summer may be a good opportunity to upgrade Quick Books software (\$25/month)

DC REPORT

District Conservationist Landry Roe reported 8 new EQIP contracts have been funded, mostly forestry. There are 55 current EQIP producers with contract maintenance to review. At a meeting among all partners to gauge the summer CRP workload, staff determined there are 170 expiring CRP contracts due to renew this fall. There are 30 new CREP offers and 40 waterway applications with more expected.

FSA REPORT

Ross County Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director (CED) Kate Sowards distributed and discussed a waterway summary report and thanked Ben Givens for recent surveying. Kate updated supervisors on various outreach documents and distributed examples.

ODA REPORT

State Specialist Cody Hacker reminded staff and supervisors about upcoming training for agricultural pollution abatement, announced the next state soil and water commission meeting, and reported progress on the supervisor online training and resources toolbox.

WATERSHED REPORT

Region 4 Watershed Manager Chris Pancake updated supervisors on progress developing a picture of the state of the watershed and announced plans for a watershed wide meeting in June.

STAFF AND SUPERVISOR COMMENTS

Greg Rouse opened a discussion about the Ross County Fair display, advocating moving out of the engineer's tent. Supervisors and staff deliberated pros and cons of such display collaborations. This discussion included long range building plans that would ideally include a year-round space at the fairgrounds that is also in a good location for high foot traffic during fair week.

OLD BUSINESS

ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING

Supervisors discussed securing a local caterer for the annual meeting and the summer newsletter to publicize the election. Nominating chairman Philip Gray reviewed the committee checklist and asked staff for input.

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK/FORM 11

Having been reviewed at the previous two meetings, the administrator recommended approving the annual plan of work (APW). The district has met all criteria to file the Form 11 to request state funding. Mike Anderson moved to approve the Annual Plan of Work and authorize the district to file the Form 11 state funding request. Pam Snyder seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

PRELIMINARY BUDGET

The administrator provided an assessment of current spending which appears to be mostly in line with the budget. Even gasoline spending has been within budget for the first 4 months but continued increases are expected. The strategy for the preliminary budget is to keep most spending flat (except gasoline) for 2023 and request a \$25,000 (10%) increase in funding to cover increased payroll. The amount for salaries was determined by figuring an 8.5% COLA increase in June and a 5.5% increase in salaries for 2023. Mike Anderson moved to approve the 2023 preliminary budget and authorize the district to file with the Ross County Commissioners. Pam Snyder seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

EMPLOYEE SEARCH

Supervisors discussed the timeline for the hiring process:

- Announcement Period - Thursday May 12th through Friday May 27th
- Review Resumes
- Interviews - Wednesday June 1st through Friday June 3rd
- Recommendation - Tuesday June 14th Board Meeting

The announcement will be advertised on the district website, Facebook, OFSWCD, Ohio State, Hocking College, and Wilmington College. Pam and Philip expressed an interest in participating in interviews.

NEW BUSINESS

GIS CONFERENCE TRAVEL

The commercial UAV expo is in Las Vegas this September. Registration, flight, hotel and meals should cost around \$2,000 from the GIS budget. The Ohio GIS Conference is in Columbus this September. The county engineer pays for conference registration with the district paying hotel, meals, and mileage. Pam Snyder moved to authorize 2023 GIS conference travel and expenses. Mike Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

While discussing GIS, Greg Rouse reported receiving inquiries to use the drone out of the county, including NRCS. Policy does not address using the drone or any other equipment outside of Ross County. Supervisors agreed the subject should be addressed in policy. Consensus gelled around these points:

- allow out of county use of equipment
- prioritize Ross County producers
- do not compete with other districts
- develop “in-county rates” and “out-of-county rates”

TIMBER HARVEST PLAN

Supervisors reviewed one Timber Harvest Plan submitted by the ODNR for a timber harvest on state land in Harrison Township. JT Flowers reported inspecting the site and recommended approval. Pam Snyder moved to approve the plan. Mike Anderson seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Supervisors reviewed a public notice from AEP for a project on Bier’s Run Road.

ANNOUNCEMENTS • CALENDAR

- 5/23 Plug Sale Pick-up Day
- 5/30 Memorial Day - Office Closed
- 6/14 June Board Meeting

ADJOURNMENT

Mike Anderson moved to adjourn. Pam Snyder seconded. Motion passed unanimously. Meeting adjourned at 9:40 a.m.

Pam Snyder, Secretary

Brice Acton, Chair

Robert Neal, Administrator

Date