

Ross Soil & Water Conservation District  
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting  
Tuesday April 12, 2022  
Ross County Service Center Conference Room D  
Video Conference

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

With the Ross SWCD office continuing limited operations, the board of supervisors met at the Ross County Service Center in Conference Room D and by video conference under provisions of ORC 940.39. The meeting was called to order at 8:30 a.m. by Chairman, Brice Acton.

District Supervisors present:

Brice Acton (in-person)  
Mike Anderson (in-person)  
Philip Gray (in-person)  
Greg Ramsey (in-person)  
Pam Snyder (video)

District Staff present:

JT Flowers, Engineering Tech  
Ben Givens, Engineering Tech  
Bob Neal, District Administrator  
Greg Rouse, GIS Coordinator

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**

Mike Anderson asked about phrasing in the policy committee report that was then changed from "...Highland county's Waterways." to "... Highland county's Waterway **programs.**". The chair moved to approve by unanimous consent approval of the March meeting minutes as corrected.

**REPORTS**

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The administrator presented details of the April treasurer's report listing bills paid and bills to be paid. The current financial obligation is \$70,703.01. Pam Snyder moved to approve the treasurer's report and pay bills in the amount of exactly \$37,866.86. Greg Ramsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**Education - Envirothon - Hosting**

The administrator requested supervisors consider a resolution to allow the district to collect funds from other districts and allow district funds to be used for administrative functions to host the Area 5

Envirothon, including a large T-shirt order and possible minimal incidental expenses. Mike Anderson moved to adopt Resolution # 2022-03. Philip Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Education - Envirothon - Recruiting**

The administrator reported recruiting 10 teams from 4 schools.

#### **Policy - Employee Search - Job Description**

Supervisors reviewed the proposed job description for Ag Construction Engineering Technician with Urban Specialist Responsibilities. The job description needs approved as part of the hiring process to fill the open position. Staff reported hearing of possible prospects. Brice Acton moved to approve the job description and proceed with the hiring process. Greg Ramsey seconded. Motion passed unanimously.

#### **ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

The administrator noted news and notes from his written report that were not included on the agenda.

#### **DC REPORT**

District Conservationist Landry Roe reported he is currently ranking EQIP applications ahead of an April 26th deadline. Staff have been conducting I&E site visits. Landry reported several recent payments indicating cooperators are finishing open projects. Landry reported new CRP offers for grassed waterways are "rolling in." Landry introduced the FSA County Executive Director, Kate Sowards.

#### **ODA UPDATE**

State Specialist Cody Hacker advised the ODA website now has updated versions of all documents required for conducting the election. Cody reviewed requirements and deadlines for filing the Form 11 request for state matching funds. The administrator noted the funding transfer was completed and documented in January. Supervisors will be asked to approve the APW at the May board meeting.

Region 4 Watershed Manager Chris pancake updated supervisors on activities and meetings as his office is building a framework for a regional watershed plan.

#### **STAFF AND SUPERVISOR COMMENTS**

Ben Givens inquired about salary for the new hire, which was addressed later in the meeting. Mike Anderson inquired if there were enough contractors to meet demand for grassed waterways. Landry stated reduced payments created a shortage of contractors and the market should respond.

#### **OLD BUSINESS**

##### **ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING**

The administrator noted a June 19th deadline for the nominating committee to meet minimal recruiting efforts. Ben Givens reported Paul Brown has accepted the Cooperator of the Year Award and will participate in the annual meeting.

##### **ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK**

Supervisors and staff reviewed the most recent version of the Annual Plan of Work. The administrator noted figures predicted for 2022 are not that far off from actual 2021 numbers. The plan has been updated to address increased solar farm projects and projects related to the new RTK drone. Pending any changes, supervisors will be asked to approve this APW with the Form 11 at the May board meeting.

##### **CRISIS MANAGEMENT**

With pandemic restrictions easing and public access restored, Brice Acton moved to declare an end to the crisis declared at the emergency meeting on March 19, 2020. Philip Gray seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, abstained (disconnected). Motion passed.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

As chairman Brice Acton recused himself from any discussion concerning the LAEPP process, Vice-Chairman Philip Gray assumed the role of presiding officer at 9:05 a.m.

## **LAEPP**

Staff reported there are 3 applications from 2 property owners on track to apply to the Local Agricultural Easement Purchase Program. These applications require resolutions of support from the district.

Resolution # 2022-01 supports the applications from Kelvin Putnam. Resolution # 2022-02 supports the application from Brice Acton.

Mike Anderson moved to adopt Resolution # 2022-01. Greg Ramsey seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, abstained; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, abstained (disconnected). The motion passed.

Mike Anderson moved to adopt Resolution # 2022-02. Greg Ramsey seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, abstained; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, abstained (disconnected). The motion passed.

With the LAEPP discussion concluded, Philip Gray relinquished the role of presiding officer to Brice Acton at 9:10 a.m.

## **PRELIMINARY BUDGET**

With the preliminary budget due on June 1st and due to be passed at the May meeting, Supervisors reviewed Employment Policy # E-3-A-2022, since this policy will determine budget figures for the personal services schedule (employee salaries). The administrator presented the most recent version of the policy which had been revised to include use of the GS scale as well as factoring in inflation, the commissioners' recommendation for an annual increase, and conditions affecting the job market. Brice Acton moved to adopt Employment Policy # E-3-A-2022. Philip Gray seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, abstained (disconnected). The motion passed.

As the budget discussion continued, Brice pointed out the need to establish a starting salary for the job posting. Philip Gray stated the advertised salary should be a range. There was discussion about how the hiring process should proceed. Philip recommended a range of \$36,000 to \$41,000. Brice noted, given today's job environment, it is important to include benefits including a flexible work schedule to attract potential employees. There was discussion about how the hiring process should proceed. Brice Acton moved to set the salary range for the new hire at \$36,000 to \$41,000 with applicants applying through a process developed with consultation from the ODA by the district administrator who will make a recommendation before the board makes the final determination. Philip Gray seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, abstained (disconnected). Motion passed.

## **INTERNAL PROGRAM REVIEW**

The administrator encouraged supervisors to review the Internal Program Review, a self-audit to ensure the district has policies in compliance with the Ohio Revised Code, the Ohio Administrative Code, and other governance requirements. The self-review is due to be submitted to the ODA in May.

## **TREE PACKING DONATION**

The administrator reported a successful tree sale that included the services of Adena FFA students who packed tree stock into bundles distributed to customers. Brice Acton moved to donate \$200 to the Adena FFA program as an expression of appreciation to the students and advisor, Josh Bluck. Greg Ramsey seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, abstained (disconnected). The motion passed.

**TIMBER HARVEST PLAN**

Supervisors reviewed one Timber Harvest Plan submitted by the ODNR for a timber harvest on state land in Franklin Township. JT Flowers reported inspecting the site and recommended approval. Philip Gray moved to approve the plan. Greg Ramsey seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, abstained (disconnected). The motion passed.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Supervisors reviewed correspondence from the Veteran’s Service Office located in the service center about signage on Western Avenue. Supervisors reviewed correspondence from Pixelle about an EPA permit renewal. The notice was not concerning the recent news of a planned sale of Pixelle.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS • CALENDAR**

- 4/12 PNC Appointment for Signature Card (Brice/Mike/Greg Rouse/Bob)
- 4/17 Easter
- 4/23 Pump House Earth Day
- 4/26 Envirothon
- 5/3 Fish Sale Pick-up Day
- 5/8 Mother’s Day
- 5/10 May Board Meeting
- 5/23 Plug Sale Pick-up Day
- 5/23 Bob Vacation thru 5/27
- 5/30 Memorial Day - Office Closed

**ADJOURNMENT**

After reviewing the above calendar and announcements and hearing no other business, the chair moved to approve by unanimous consent meeting adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

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Pam Snyder, Secretary

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Brice Acton, Chair

\_\_\_\_\_  
Robert Neal, Administrator

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date