

Ross Soil & Water Conservation District  
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting  
Tuesday July 12, 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, Chairman, Brice Acton.

District Supervisors present in person:

Brice Acton  
Mike Anderson  
Philip Gray  
Greg Ramsey

District Supervisors not present:

Pam Snyder

District Staff present:

Tabby Arnold, Engineering Tech  
JT Flowers, Engineering Tech  
Bob Neal, District Administrator  
Greg Rouse, GIS Coordinator

Professional Staff present:

Chris Pancake, ODA Watershed Manager  
Landry Roe, NRCS DC  
Kate Sowards, FSA CED

**PUBLIC COMMENTS**

There were no public comments.

**PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES**

Hearing no corrections, the chair moved to approve by unanimous consent approval of the June meeting minutes as presented.

**REPORTS**

**TREASURER'S REPORT**

The administrator presented details of the July treasurer's report listing bills paid and bills to be paid. These included significant repairs to the Crew Cab truck. The current financial obligation is \$74,128.50. The administrator also noted the district collected \$511.58 in sales tax in the first half of 2022. Philip Gray moved to approve the treasurer's report and pay bills in the amount of exactly \$28,943.47. Greg Ramsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**REPORTS OF COMMITTEES**

**Education - General**

The administrator reported staff are scheduled to participate in 4-H Judging on July 13th.

**Education - Farm Bureau & FFA Ag Day September 13th**

There is an Education Committee meeting at 10:00 a.m. on July 18th.

## **ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

### District News

- The NRCS has announced masking requirements are back in effect (but not at FSA yet)
- Two LAEPP applications were approved
  - Kelvin Putnam was approved for 1 of 2 applications and accepted
  - Brice Acton was approved but is “inactive” until rollback funding amounts are known this fall
- Welcome Tabby Arnold who started on July 5th as the Ag Construction Engineering Tech
- Wildlife Annual Plan of Work - JT Updating for FY23
- Confirmed space at Ross County Engineer tent for Ross County Fair
- Audit Underway - files picked up on June 29th
- Shelby Reeves Gazette Article ran June 20th
- New mileage rate coming for Q3-Q4 = 62.5 cents per mile, up 4 cents

### For the Record

- The administrator delivered memos to the Auditor and Commissioners about the new hire and mid-year COLA increases on June 24th.

## **DC REPORT**

District Conservationist Landry Roe reported EQIP remained the NRCS focus in June with 10 new contracts being funded. There were several payments on older contracts that are being finished. There are 5 to 7 cooperators facing EQIP one-year progress deadlines. CRP will dominate the engineering workload this summer with grassed waterway designs along with re-enrolls and new CREP contracts. The NRCS Area Office is assisting with mapping. There will probably not be a drive-thru conservation plan signing event on July 20th but drive-thru's remain scheduled at the fairgrounds for 8/17 and 9/14.

## **FSA REPORT**

Ross County Farm Service Agency (FSA) County Executive Director (CED) Kate Sowards reported a heavy workload with appointments scheduled all day every day ahead of crop certification due July 15th. There are 167 CRP offers for October 1st. Kate announced some refinements to the process designed to filter out projects that are likely to be finished versus those that may be more aspirational. Improvements to the waterways process are continuing this summer. Kate is collecting fair display material. And Ross County is hosting an FSA district meeting in August. The state executive director is expected to attend.

## **ODA REPORT**

State Specialist Cody Hacker was unable to attend the meeting but issued the ODA monthly update. Brice Acton noted the update included a note how SWCD's may continue to hold remote meetings.

## **WATERSHED REPORT**

Region 4 Watershed Manager Chris Pancake reported his group is in the final stages of plan development, currently collecting input from the technical assistance team, and writing characterizations. The final Region 4 Watershed Plan will be submitted to the ODA for review. Chris is meeting with elected officials and working with FSA collecting watershed data.

## **STAFF AND SUPERVISOR COMMENTS**

There were no comments.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

### **ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING**

#### **Farm Transition Planning**

##### ***“Celebrating our Past and Protecting our Future”***

The administrator reported the district is waiting for any petition candidates to file ahead of the nominating committee deadline to submit the EL-3 form by July 15th. The district has recruited candidates **Nancy Ames** and **Tyler Whitten**. Despite numerous contacts by nominating chair, Philip Gray, and other documented recruiting efforts, the district will fall short of nominating three candidates. The ODA has signaled the OSWCC is expected to approve an uncontested election. Supervisors discussed recruiting difficulties. Other organizations are facing the same predicament. Among the nearly two dozen people Philip Gray approached, Philip “found interest but no time.” Board meetings that are scheduled during normal business hours makes it hard for people to get off work, so supervisors discussed possibly moving the meeting time and what affects a time change would have on comp time and district operations. Banquet planning continues. The administrator has made contacts regarding catering and a speaker for the program theme “Farm Transition Planning.”

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **OUT OF COUNTY EQUIPMENT AND RENTAL POLICIES**

The administrator presented copies of three policy documents with revisions designed to allow and set rates for providing rental services outside of district boundaries. Supervisors supported the main idea behind developing an out-of-county rate by simply adding mileage charges. There was discussion to limit drill rental only to Ross and adjoining counties. There was discussion to sub-prioritize out of county renters who are in a Farm Bill program. Brice Acton widened the discussion to include increasing the drill rental rate, citing increased fuel, personnel, and maintenance costs. The rate of \$11/acre was suggested and OSU Extension should be able to provide assistance calculating a more precise, competitive rate. The Equipment Rental Procedures & Storage Policy and the Drill Rental Agreement form will require additional revisions. However, supervisors reviewed the Aerial Services policy which had relatively fewer and minor changes. Brice Acton moved to approve changes and adopt Policy #35-2022 Aerial Services Policy. Philip Gray seconded. Since the policy adoption waiting period is still suspended, the changes would be effective immediately. The motion passed unanimously.

*The GIS PDF Software discussion was moved to the end of new business.*

### **ATHENS TREE SALE CONSORTIUM**

The administrator reported contacting Athens SWCD who have welcomed our district to join their tree sale buying group. The administrator presented this as a solution to the supplier problems we have faced since Clements Nursery closed and would offer district residents more varieties to choose from. Supervisors discussed the 2022 April 8th pick up day and if that was too late to plant. Getting product in mid-March would be ideal but consensus seemed that is not a critical enough factor to justify finding our own suppliers. Brice Acton moved to authorize the District to join the Athens SWCD Tree Sale buying group. Philip Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **TIMBER HARVEST PLAN**

Supervisors reviewed one Timber Harvest Plan submitted by Glen and Beth Higginbotham for a timber harvest in Concord Township. JT Flowers reported inspecting the site and recommended approval. Brice Acton moved to approve the plan. Greg Ramsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**GIS PDF SOFTWARE**

GIS Coordinator Greg Rouse demonstrated software intended to provide a better map for Tile-Finder and Tile-Mapper customers. Described as superior to a “dumb map” with just a few labels, the Terrago software displays GPS coordinates as the mouse hovers over the map. Greg also stated there are options for displaying different layers and tools to take measurements. Brice Acton remarked the district should investigate grant funding for these types of projects. Brice Acton moved to authorize the purchase of a one-year subscription in the amount of \$1500 for Terrago software. Greg Ramsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

**CORRESPONDENCE**

Supervisors reviewed 2 EPA Biosolids public notices for sites in Concord and Union Townships.

**ANNOUNCEMENTS • CALENDAR**

- 7/13 4-H Judging
- 7/13 QuickBooks Training
- 7/14 LAEPP Training
- 8/8 Fair Week
- 8/9 August Board Meeting - with Fairgrounds Zoom option
- 8/18 Annual Meeting

**EXECUTIVE SESSION**

Brice Acton moved to enter executive session for the purpose of discussing the employment of an employee. Mike Anderson seconded. Roll call vote: Acton, yes; Anderson, yes; Gray, yes; Ramsey, yes; Snyder, absent. The motion passed unanimously.

The board entered executive session at 9:48 a.m. The board left executive session at 9:57 a.m.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Hearing no other business, the chair moved to approve by unanimous consent meeting adjourned at 9:57 a.m.

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Pam Snyder, Secretary

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Brice Acton, Chair

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Robert Neal, Administrator

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Date