

Ross Soil & Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting
Tuesday March 8, 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 8:29 a.m. by Chairman, Brice Acton.

Supervisors present:

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

Staff present:

JT Flowers, Engineering Tech
Ben Givens, Engineering Tech
Bob Neal, District Administrator
Greg Rouse, GIS Coordinator
Landry Roe, District Conservationist
Cody Hacker, ODA Specialist
Chris Pancake, ODA Watershed Manager

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no public comments.

PREVIOUS MEETING MINUTES

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

REPORTS

TREASURER'S REPORT

The administrator presented details of the March treasurer's report listing bills paid and bills to be paid. The current financial obligation is \$69,844.02. Philip Gray moved to approve the treasurer's report and pay bills in the amount of exactly \$30,269.84. Greg Ramsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES

Education - Envirothon - Hosting

JT has been working with test-writers about writing questions and study guides. JT has also been working with Tar Hollow personnel on details about locations for testing stations at the park.

Education - Envirothon - Recruiting

The administrator sent emails to contacts on our school list and later sent a paper brochure in the mail. Pam Snyder inquired about study guides available at www.area5envirothon.org/.

Policy - Employee Search

Brice Acton reported meeting with Greg Wells at the Area 5 NRCS office. The NRCS can provide engineers (CET's) to pick up some slack. Greg recommended examining Highland county's Waterways.

ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

The administrator expanded on his written report remarking the recent heavy rains have increased calls to the district. Bob reported the newsletter arrived March 1st and almost half of the trees are already sold. The fish sale is proceeding. Bob met with garden clubs in advance of the Pump House Earth Day

festival and presented at the OFSWCD conference. Bob reported the District's SAM registration was renewed on February 14, 2022, maintaining eligibility for any federal funds. The 2022 board meeting schedule was published in the Chillicothe Gazette on February 9, 2022. The schedule was submitted to the newspaper and two other media outlets according to Ohio Sunshine Law. On February 4, 2022, the administrator requested the Ross County Prosecutor review pay scale policy and job descriptions. On November 30, 2021, the administrator requested the Ross County Prosecutor review policy continuing to accept credit cards. There has been no response to either request.

DC REPORT

District Conservationist Landry Roe reported EQIP is still the focus facing an April 26th ranking deadline. There are several older practices coming up on an anniversaries requiring action. There were no new CSP sign-ups but there were some renewals. FSA predicts another busy summer with new CRP offers for waterways and re-enrolls. USDA staff completed 3 days of contract management meetings. Pheasants Forever's Caleb Worley's last day is March 16th with a bon voyage at 11:45 that day. The FSA County Board interviewed 2 candidates for the county director position.

ODA UPDATE

State Specialist Cody Hacker reported the ODA is currently reviewing the SWCD administrative handbook. Cody sent forms for the internal review and for the Form 11 state budget request. The APW and Form 11 need approved no later than the May meeting. Local funding has already been transferred in accordance with state match guidelines.

Region 4 Watershed Manager Chris Pancake reported his colleagues have identified stakeholder groups including SWCD's, technical advisor groups, and other entities and citizens. Chris presented an outline of what their water quality report will look like.

STAFF AND SUPERVISOR COMMENTS

There were no staff or supervisor comments.

OLD BUSINESS

ANNUAL MEETING PLANNING

Philip Gray reported securing the fairgrounds multipurpose building at no charge and circulated a thank you card for the commissioners. This allows us to create large displays and demonstrations. Philip will contact antique tractor owners who might display. Bob sent candidate information to Nancy Ames who had stopped by the office at Philip's encouragement. Ben will approach Paul Brown as a potential cooperater of the year. The board discussed the importance of establishing an educator of the year award program.

RTK DRONE PURCHASE

The administrator and GIS Coordinator Greg Rouse presented quotes for an RTK drone:

Drone Nerds - \$5,890.00
Linked All Aerial - \$6,260.00
Precision Capture - \$6,470.00

The staff recommended the lowest price, which is from an established vendor, Drone Nerds. The acquisition would also include replacing the iPad Pro from GovConnection at a quote of \$1,157.69.

Brice Acton reported a conversation with Greg Wells at NRCS who is looking for reliable providers to offer RTK surveying services. Supervisors discussed the need to train other staff on conducting flights and using software. Staff noted advantages for monitoring and described surveying with a light

footprint. Brice remarked that this RTK drone is a tool - one of many tools to implement conservation in the district. Greg Ramsey moved to authorize \$6,000.00 and approve the purchase of the Drone Nerds RTK drone package and to authorize \$1,200.00 and approve the purchase of the GovConnection iPad. Brice Acton seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

GEOTEXTILE FABRIC

The administrator reported the price of geotextile fabric has gone up again to \$455/roll. Even with the recent retail price increase, the district will lose at least \$5 per roll. Brice Acton moved to increase the district's retail price to \$1.50 per linear foot. Philip Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

WILDLIFE SPECIALIST AGREEMENT

Brice had electronically signed the Wildlife Specialist Agreement also signed by Michael Reynolds, Executive Administrator, Wildlife, Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The \$17,500.00 in funding has already been received. Philip Gray moved to approve the signed and executed FY22 Wildlife Specialist Agreement. Greg Ramsey seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK

The administrator presented the 2021 Annual Plan of Work (APW) with notations showing actual 2021 figures. After an overview of the plan outline, supervisors discussed offering hunter education classes.

CASH BASIS REPORT

The administrator reported filing the annual financial statement cash basis report ahead of the March 1st deadline. Supervisors reviewed the combined statement page with comments alongside most entries. Brice Acton moved to approve the 2021 report. Philip Gray seconded. Passed unanimously.

CONTRIBUTION AGREEMENT and EMPLOYEES ASSOCIATION

The administrator reported the district received a \$7,041.00 contribution agreement payment for EQIP projects completed in Q4 2021. The administrator requested supervisors renew membership in the Ohio Association of Soil and Water Conservation District Employees (OASWCDE) at a cost of \$15.00. Greg Ramsey moved to accept the contribution agreement payment and approve OASWCDE membership. Philip Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

TIMBER HARVEST PLAN

JT Flowers reported receiving a satisfactory reply from the Pixelle forester about a question concerning a stream crossing at the previously inspected site. Staff recommended approval. Brice Acton moved to approve the plan. Philip Gray seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

PNC BANK SIGNATURES

Former staff member Chris Pancake was an employee authorized to sign district checks. Policy # 7 states the district checking account requires dual signatures. Policy # 5 authorizes board and staff signers. Greg Ramsey made a motion to remove Chris Pancake as an authorized signer and to authorize Greg Rouse as an employee who is authorized to sign district checks and to approve this list of individuals who are authorized to sign district checks:

Chairman Brice Acton
Fiscal Agent Michael Anderson
Administrator Robert Neal
GIS Coordinator Gregory Rouse

Pam Snyder seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

CORRESPONDENCE

Envirothon Don Rehl Fund

The administrator reported the past year’s donations to Envirothon when presenting this funding appeal. The district donated \$100 to the Don Rehl Fund last year, \$500 to the NCF national organization in September and a \$100 Tecumseh package to the state Envirothon at the OFSWCD auction. Examining options on the donation form, and noting our district is in fact encouraging first time participants, Brice Acton moved to donate \$100 to the Reeves Rookies Fund. Pam Snyder seconded. Passed unanimously.

Camp Canopy

The administrator presented information about the Ohio Forestry Association’s Camp Canopy for students, suggesting the district establish scholarships for this camp. The administrator noted his suggestion was part of concerted effort to increase education spending. There was interest among supervisors and the discussion revealed more details need to be thought out before presenting a workable plan the board could vote on.

Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts (COLT)

The Coalition of Ohio Land Trusts sent a membership appeal. The administrator speculated this organization obtained the district’s address as a local sponsor for LAEPP but had no recommendation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS • CALENDAR

- 3/13 Daylight Saving Time Starts
- 3/17 Farmers Share Breakfast
- 4/1 Envirothon Meeting at Tar Hollow
- 4/8 Tree Sale Pick-up Day
- 4/12 April Board Meeting
- 4/23 Pump House Earth Day
- 4/26 Envirothon
- 5/3 Fish Sale Pick-up Day
- 5/23 Plug Sale Pick-up Day

ADJOURNMENT

After reviewing the above calendar and announcements and at the conclusion of business, Greg Ramsey moved to adjourn. Philip Gray seconded. The motion passed unanimously, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:46 a.m.

Pam Snyder, Secretary

Brice Acton, Chair

Robert Neal, Administrator

Date