

# Montgomery County SWCD Board Meeting Minutes

## Monday, July 15th, 2024, 2:00 pm

### USDA Service Center Conference Room

In attendance: Raoul Moore, Daniel Bullerdick, Marc Roberts, Jordan Gillenwater, Dave Stanley, Kristen Latzke, Sam Lovold, Kenny Cain, Michael Hill, Sheila Schroeder (CCSI)

Jordan opened the meeting at 2:08 pm.

#### Partnership reports

Kenny- SSCB will be able to score CWI grants with one of their members having placement on the CWI grant selection board. Likely 2.25 million dollars available to distribute this year. \$20,000 will be sent out to districts soon. Plan of work for the SSCB has been set for the following year. Kenny also expresses his thanks for Kristen's service to the district.

Sheila- NW Coordinator for CCSI, Conservation Cropping Systems Initiative. Offer ag specific courses throughout the spring into the summer. Ag 101 specific to commodity crops is the next upcoming course, it filled nearly immediately showing more of a need for training for new staff. Will be working in conjunction with NWF for a training to engage producers sometime in the fall. Root Banners are available to borrow for events inside for soil health demonstrations. CCSI is here to assist any soil health district programs.

Dave- Dave is still acting in Fountain County. A team of NRCS employees has been working on Re-ups for CRP in both Fountain and Montgomery. They've whittled down a bit of their workload and are still working. A new EQIP application has been funded in the county. Working on CRP is the biggest priority for Dave right now. Dave and NRCS are very thankful for the work Kristen has done in partnership with NRCS with the contribution agreement and beyond. FSA is finishing up crop certification and reorganizing CRP contracts that have changed hands or names.

Kristen- Submitted check to 4H for the Soil and Water award at the fair. On Thursday Kristen and Kenny will be hosting a small farm tour of TNC employees from Belize to see some conservation practices here in Indiana. RITA update- Resilient Indiana Technical Assistance Program employee Hanna Garriot is our technician, she was unable to attend today but is at a scheduled training today. RITA technicians have a region of districts that they are attached to that they are able to assist with in programs or events. Hanna will be at our Garden Walk event this Saturday. Hanna has attended our float trip and been on a site visit with us already since starting about a month ago.

Sam- Field Days planning has been going smoothly. Sam has only a few outstanding tasks to be fully prepared. There will be a CISMA meeting this week on Thursday the 18<sup>th</sup> from 4-5pm. The Garden Walk put on by Community Growers of Montgomery County will be held this Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> at 10am at the Crawfordsville Community Garden located on 47 South just outside of town.

**Consent agenda:** Daniel moved to approve; Raoul 2<sup>nd</sup> to approve consent agenda as presented.

## **Old Business**

Wabash RCPP and Upper Sugar 319 Updates- Seth Submitted Wabash RCPP application. The application asks for \$15,750,000, total match of \$2,054,494. 5-year project from 2025-2030, could be extended at the end of the project. Focus on edge of field practices to improve wildlife habitat, secondary practices would still be offered through the grant program. If it is funded, it will be a very similar process to EQIP projects as far the application process goes. Another key difference will be that producers within the project area will be drawing from a separate pot than the entirety of NRCS programs, which will reduce the competition for selection to have practices implemented.

The Upper Sugar Creek 319 grant application was presented as it is currently, still pending letters of support from partners. The application is due September 2<sup>nd</sup>. Jordan suggested that the board split pending responsibilities for the application ahead of its submission after Kristen leaves. Raoul motioned to approve our letter of support of the grant, Daniel 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion, motion approved.

SBOA Audit- Invoice for our audit has been returned. Audit went well, and the rate has been fixed back to the SWCD rate as opposed to the rate we were initially charged. IASWCD is still working towards untangling why these rates were applied in the first place. Remittance is due within 30 days, we received the bill for the audit last week. Raoul moved to pay the audit bill, Daniel 2<sup>nd</sup>. Motion approved.

County Compensation Study- Results are in for the study. Many surrounding counties were used to compare the county salaries, donut counties are not necessarily similar to us since each county is different. Sam's position will be in the non-exempt category and able to choose to accrue comp time or collect overtime. Whether or not the Conservation Director position will remain exempt and be eligible for the higher base pay is unknown and up to the County Council. Kristen went over the analysis of our positions as compared to other counties and pointed out the internal base salary for the various types of county positions as well as the external midpoint hourly rates of other counties. The board will have to go to the county council at the budget hearings to argue our case for salaries for the district employees. Raoul motioned to submit for the external midpoint of \$46,821.45 for the Program Coordinator position and \$58,656 (minimum required for exempt status starting in 2025) for the Conservation Director position. Marc 2<sup>nd</sup> motion carried. Raoul will lead the board committee in prep for the budget hearings.

## **New Business**

Hiring Process & Committee for Director position- Jordan requested to form a committee of board members to begin the hiring process for the Conservation Director position. Kristen has prepared a District Director's Handbook with directions for the new director, bills to pay, calendar of basically everything they will need. Discussion was next had as to how to build out the hiring process, advertising, length of time open, etc. Applications will be sent directly to Jordan and he will then share applications with the rest of the board. Kristen will be pulled off TrustIN account by her last day- there's a form for Jordan to sign. HHSB requires signed

meeting minutes to remove Kristen so that will wait until minutes are approved then a copy of minutes will be taken into HHSB. Kristen will be taken off the HHSB account, signed minutes will be taken into the bank and signed off on by Jordan and Raoul to complete this process. Kristen will get the job posting up as soon as she can. Application will close August 2<sup>nd</sup>. Next board meeting moved to August 6<sup>th</sup>.

NRCS Civil Rights form review- Dave reviewed with the board the annual NRCS Civil Rights review form and Jordan signed for this year.

Jordan adjourned the meeting at 4:28 pm.

Minutes approved August 6, 2024

J Mullins \_\_\_\_\_  
Daniel Bullock \_\_\_\_\_  
J Rhodes \_\_\_\_\_

Submitted by Lea Hickle \_\_\_\_\_