



Missouri Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

MASWCD MINUTES Regular Meeting Missouri Farm Bureau Jefferson City, Missouri March 28, 2022

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Present

Ron Willis, President
Ryan Britt, Past President
Jim Carlson, Area I
David Morris Area II Alternate
Beverly Dometorch, Area IV
Gary Bonacker, Area V
Harold Lampe, Area VI
David Hutsell, Area VII
Kenny Spooler, Area VIII
Henry Heinze, Treasurer
Sandy Burd, Executive Director

Kurt Boeckmann, DNR Soil & Water Program
Scott Edwards, NRCS
Melissa White, MSWCDEA
Ethan Miller, Boone County SWCD

Not Present

Scot Shively, Area III

President Ron Willis welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. with a quorum established by roll call. After review of the agenda, Beverly Dometorch made the motion to approve the agenda with the additional of adding the MASWCD website under Other Business. It was seconded by David Morris. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

With Mike Haeffner no longer on the board, the 2nd Vice President position needs to be filled. The floor was opened for nominations. Harold Lampe made the motion to move David Hutsell up to 2nd Vice President. It was seconded by Gary Bonacker. Motion carried with David Hutsell abstaining (7-0). David Hutsell made the motion for Harold Lampe to be 3rd Vice-President. It was seconded by Jim Carlson. Motion carried with Harold Lampe abstaining (7-0).

The minutes from the November 28, 2021 meeting were presented for approval. Harold Lampe made the motion to approve the minutes. It was seconded by Jim Carlson. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

A financial report was given by Henry Heinze. He said there was about \$98,000 in the bank account and that he has with two Certificates of Deposit that are around \$86,000. He handed out the list of districts that have paid dues. Sandy Burd reviewed the balances of all the bank accounts through the end of the year for the

association which included the MDC Incentive fund accounts. Further discussion was held on the MDC funding and the funds received from administering the funds. She also gave the current balances of the accounts. The bank accounts are all up-to-date and ready to be audited when the board decides to do it. Jim Carlson made the motion to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented and it was seconded by Kenny Spooler. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

Scott Edwards with NRCS visited with the board and announced that the doors to the county offices are unlocked and back up to 75% staffing. All offices are mask free except for a few in the northwest part of the state. Customers can now come into the office without an appointment. After two years of having virtual training, he would like to get back to face-to-face training. He has been working with Kurt Boeckmann on planning for regional meetings with NRCS and district staff possibly in May and June. There would also be information that could be for board members and that could be done during the Area Meetings.

Kurt Boeckmann with the Soil & Water Conservation Program announced that Jim Boschert retired on March 1st. The interviews for his position are done and it is planned to announce his replacement this week. Steve Walker retired January 1st and the interviews for his position will be in the next couple weeks. There is a new Archaeologist position to be filled and will be 50:50 funded with NRCS. This position was previously housed with State Parks and this person will cover the entire state to work with the districts. Kurt reviewed the plans for the RCPP projects. A meeting was held with the Planning and Operations committee that Jim Boschert previously headed. With the state employees getting a 5½% raise on March 1st, the progression line and the budget were looked at to see where funds were. On January 1st, district employees received an increase in pay. On April 1st, all district employees will be receiving the 7½% increase that the state employees received based on their salary before January 1st. District Specialist I did not get another increase as they already received an increase of almost 10% with a salary of \$15.00 per hour. This increase will put the budget over but he explained that this would not be a factor as all district positions are not filled at this time and would only come into an issue if all districts were fully staffed for the entire year. There are 270 district positions with 25 vacancies at this time. The districts will automatically receive their funds but the boards will still need to approve the pay increases. The sales tax revenues are going up and revenues from internet sales started January 1.

The next Commission meeting will be April 13th. The recent board elections will be discussed as there were some districts that did the wrong areas, some that had no votes and some that had no candidates. Training was discussed for new employees. A couple of the district coordinators have developed training for not only new employees but any employee that wants to attend. They have trained the other coordinators who are now giving the full day training around the state. It was asked if the mileage rate would increase and it was explained that the state rate is what is used for the districts. It was announced that if districts wanted to hire an intern, the new rate that they can be paid is \$12.00 per hour. The current fund status for cost-share is \$40 million obligated and should end the year around \$32-\$33 million claimed which is similar to last year. The rates for cost-share components were discussed and it will be on the agenda at the April Commission meeting. Another item on the agenda is increasing the DWC-1 maximum limit from \$15,000 to \$20,000.

Melissa White with the Employees Association began her report with discussion on the Wage Analysis & Employee Survey that was completed. She introduced Ethan Miller and he is Chairman of the Recruitment & Retention Committee. A handout was given to everyone on the results of the survey they done with the employees and the results of the study that was completed. She stated that she would also like to have some discussion on cost-share components. A handout was given out with the revenue from the parks, soils and water sales tax.

Ethan Miller began his presentation with background on himself and the other members of the committee. The committee was formed due to the large number of SWCD employees leaving their

Districts for other employment and widespread low morale. The purpose of the Committee is to undertake activities which result in substantial improvements in Districts' abilities to recruit new employees and retain their current, highly skilled and knowledgeable staff. The primary subject of the presentation was focused on wages and retention of skilled employees. Insurance costs and options were also discussed.

Melissa White handed out examples of cost-share practices for review and discussion for the Grazing Program. It was determined that this matter would be discussed at another time as it did not relate to the Employees Association issues. The meeting took a break for lunch at 12:03 p.m.

The meeting reopened at 12:42 p.m. with committee reports. Ryan Britt and Kenny Spooler were not in attendance when the meeting resumed.

Budget Committee – It was decided to do an audit of the books when the board has their next meeting in June. Normally this is done during the Training Conference but it was not able to be completed at that time. Members of the Budget Committee are Kenny Spooler and Beverly Dometrorch. One more committee member is needed.

By Laws Committee – No meeting has been held. The committee needs to look at what needs to be done to change the percentage needed to have a quorum at the Annual Meeting. The options could be call in, email or mail in votes or giving someone a proxy to vote if a board member from a district could not attend.

Strategic Planning Committee – The past members of the committee were Sandy Burd, Andrea McKeown, Tiffani Scott and Ryan Britt. Ron Willis said that he could join it and Rayanna Hopper from Randolph who replaced Andrea would be asked. This committee mainly met to discuss the Training Conference and have not yet met this year.

The results of the straw vote for the resolutions from the 2021 Training Conference were discussed. As there was not a quorum for the meeting no official vote could be taken. Harold Lampe made the motion to refer the resolutions that had a majority of the Yes votes to the Practices Committee. It was seconded by David Morris. Ron Willis noted that this is referring to Resolutions 2021-001, 2021-002 and 2021-005. Motion carried (6-0) with Ryan Britt and Kenny Spooler absent.

Sandy Burd reported to the board on the results of the evaluations from the conference. In addition to the ones received at the conference, she emailed all the employees asking them to complete the form even if they did not attend. One thing that stood out was the lack of the quorum for the annual MASWCD meeting. Discussion was held on a one day registration for board members only and move the meeting to right before or right after lunch and include lunch. The strategic planning committee will be meeting and this option will be discussed. Kurt Boeckmann offered Program Office staff to be included in on the planning meeting.

Ryan Britt and Kenny Spooler rejoined the meeting.

Ryan Britt gave a report on the NACD National Meeting in Orlando and stated that Ron Willis also attended. He said that he spent a lot of his time finishing up the Next Generation Leadership Institute program. The class have been given additional duties and put into some leadership roles. Ryan has been put on the Farm Bill task force and they are meeting every other week until the Farm Bill is passed. He announced that the next NACD meeting will be Puerto Rico this summer. Micheal Crowder is the present NACD President and Kim LeFleur is the President-Elect. The 2023 NACD Annual Meeting will be in New Orleans Louisiana. He noted that he has also been asked by the North Central board to run for the Executive Board. The board expressed their support of him moving forward to be on the Executive Board. David Hutsell made the motion for Ryan Britt and Ron Willis to attend the meeting in Puerto Rico. It was seconded by Gary Bonacker. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The S.T.A.R. Program and grant funding opportunities were discussed. A pamphlet and an information sheet was handed out. There are two proposals being discussed, one that is regional and one that will just be for Missouri. If approved, there will be funds for employment to assist with the Executive Director salary and to promote S.T.A.R. The deadline for the proposals to be submitted to USDA is in May.

Ron Willis received an email from NACD advising that Soil Health House Bill 2833 had been filed by Representative Emily Weber, District 24 from Kansas City. This is revising an existing bill and adding "healthy soils" in it. It was introduced and read the first time February 28th and read a second time on March 1st. There has been no activity since that time. The concern in this bill is that it wants to add storm water mitigation and flood control in addition to other non-agriculture items. At this time the board felt that it needs to be watched but no immediate action needs to be taken. If board members want to talk to their representatives about their concerns, each individual will need to do so.

A letter was received from Ashley Fisk, Chair of the Missouri Envirothon Committee. She listed the board members and representatives who serve on the state committee. With the death of Peggy Lemons, she requested a MASWCD representative to replace her and a donation to support the Envirothon. David Hutsell made the motion to give a donation in the same amount as last time. It was seconded by Harold Lampe. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). Harold Lampe made the motion for Beverly Dometorch to serve as the MASWCD representative on the Missouri Envirothon Committee. It was seconded by Jim Carlson. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The 2022 Area Meetings schedule and the the elections for Areas 2, 4, 6 and 8 were discussed. It was suggested to look at the first two weeks of August with the preferred week of August 8th for the meetings. The bylaws will have the rules for how to hold the election. Districts will have to have their dues paid in full to vote.

The 2022 Training Conference is the last one on the current contract with Tan-Tar-A. It will be November 28, 29 and 30th. The room rate was \$84.00 last year and will be \$90.00 this year. This contract replaces the cancelled contract from 2020. The contract is similar to the past ones and it is still required to get 70% of the sleeping rooms booked to get the meeting rooms comped. One option that the board may want to consider is having a BBQ meal instead of the "fancy" meal that was mentioned in the evaluation comments.

Sandy Burd presented the proposed contract with Tan-Tar-A for the Training Conference for the next three years of 2023, 2024 and 2025. The new room rates were noted. The board discussed looking into other cities to host the event. Sandy Burd said that Peggy Lemons had done some research in the past for St. Louis, Kansas City, Branson, and Columbia. The cost of rooms, parking and meeting room space were all issues in other places. Tan-Tar-A is more central and the distance to drive is better for most. It was suggested to check to see if room rates can be reduced on the new contract and to also inquire at the Branson Landing. The Strategic Planning Committee will meet before the next meeting and make suggestions for the board to consider for the next Training Conference.

The discussion on the Executive Director position is being moved to Closed Session.

The Area Reports were given by each of the directors.

Area I – Jim Carlson reported that they have been a little dry but got a little rain which helped. They hope to get a little more this week.

Area II – David Morris reported they have also been dry and have gotten snow and some rain and hope to get a little more. The elections were held recently and there has been some controversy on some.

Area III – Henry Heinze said they have had plenty of rain and mud.

Area IV - Beverly Dometorch said they also have the mud and controversy with the elections. She is happy to report back to her districts about the new salaries.

Area V – Gary Bonacker reported they have been wet and dry. Since he is new to his position, he said that he hasn't had the opportunity to get with the other districts in his area but is planning to do so.

Area VI – Harold Lampe said the weather has been like a yo-yo between cold and hot. Grass is getting greener but not growing much. He is concerned about what fertilizer prices will be.

Area VII – David Hutsell said that he echoes what Harold said on the weather. They are starting to spread a little fertilizer in his area.

Area VIII – Kenny Spooler said they are good weather wise. They did fill their position in Cape County and have an opening now in Scott County. He said that he spent many hours on the phone about the elections.

Henry Heinze added that they are having a hard time getting any one to train their employees which is an issue in most counties in the state not only with districts but with NRCS as well.

Sandy Burd stated that she will be sending out the dues paid notices to the directors.

Several thank you cards were received in regards to the association's support of the FFA and 4-H Grassland Contests. Organizations sending the cards were from West Plain FFA and Howell County 4-H, Aurora FFA and Buffalo FFA. Ron Willis stated that he received a card from Bill Wilson thanking the association for recognizing him at the Training Conference.

In Other Business, Sandy Burd said that she was finally able to login to the MASWCD website. However it has been developed using computer code and she advised that it is not user friendly and she does not have the knowledge needed to revise it. It was agreed for Sandy Burd to talk to Van Beydler and get his input.

The next meeting was set for June 13th at 10:00 a.m. with a location to be determined.

Beverly Dometorch made the motion to go into closed session at 2:20 p.m. It was seconded by David Hutsell. Motion carried unanimously (8-0).

The board of directors came out of closed session at 3:18 p.m. It was decided to meet with Jim Boschert to discuss the Executive Director position with the time and date to be determined.

There being no more business, a motion for adjournment was made by Harold Lampe. It was seconded by David Morris. Motion carried unanimously (8-0). The meeting adjourned at 3:21 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Sandy Burd, Executive Director

Ron Willis, President