**Executive Committee**

**Meeting Minutes: September Quarterly Board**

**September 6, 2017 at 8:30 am**

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| **Present:** | **Absent:** | **Guests:** |
| Jerry Snodgrass  David McCormick  Kenny Hawthorne  Steve Fulling  Steve Stierwalt  Tom Beyers  Van Bitner  Dan Duval  Spring Duffey  Terina Coffey  Kelly Thompson  Christina Branham  Sheryl Phillips  Alan Howard | Jeff O’Connor  Lee Bunting  Dale Schumaker | Myron Kirby  Steve Chard  Becky Doyle  Mike Hoffman |

President Steve Stierwalt called the meeting to order at 8:30 am. Secretary Van Bitner took roll call.

**Approve Agenda:** Committee was asked by Steve Stierwalt if there was a call to change anything on the agenda, request reclined..

**Approve June 2017 Minutes:** 1st Tom Beyers 2nd Myron Kirby Motion Carried

**Old Business:**

**SWCD Dues Update**: No Update.

**Financial Update:** Alan Howard reported that he has been building the QuickBooks software, has sent out the May-June 2017 CRP. Will be meeting with Dan Duval to see what and how to improve.

**Grant Updates:** 604B grant: Kelly Thompson reported that the steering committee will be taking over the administrative portion of the grant agreement for the IUM process. Any questions or concerns can be referred to Rick McKanless, Megan Andrews, or Ashley Curran.

**NRCS Agreement:** SherylPhillips reported that as of this time the NRCS Contribution Agreement story is continued with delays. With Government restructuring, downsizing , and hiring freezes the NRCS national grans and agreements team in Washington Dc have a backlog of contracts awaiting approval; ours amongst them. Our agreement will not be awarded this month, the best guess we have is “in the First Quarter of Fiscal Year 2017-2018” meaning October, November, or December. This delay is out of our hands and out of the hands of Ivan and others at NRCS.

What does this mean to districts? Even though we are unfunded, I strongly urge districts to continue being good partners as they are able, and assist the NRCS with Administrative Assistance tasks during these “gap months”. Your district staff are the skilled workforce for these EQIP and CSP tasks and the NRCS rely upon us. If possible we should wait to complete new CRP jobs until our Agreement is signed.

Current Contribution Agreement:

For administrative assistance, we are done. Districts were paid. For this one year administrative assistance agreement, districts have been paid $717,125.00 for their work from 7/1/16 - 6/30/2017. To compare, our new agreement amount is $1.4 million for a 12- month period.

For CRP technical work, I have 29 districts who still have almost $166,000.00 allocated funds outstanding. Some as little as $750.00 with $21,000.00 being the highest. These funds must be spent by the end of this month, otherwise they will be reallocated to other Districts. We must spend all funds to zero by the end of our contract (September 30th 2017)

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| **Richland** | **Wabash** | **St. Clair** | **Clay** |
| **Kendall** | **Stark** | **Hamilton** | **Menard** |
| **Perry** | **Grundy** | **White** | **Cass** |
| **Randolph** | **Gallatin** | **Marion** | **Crawford** |
| **Woodford** | **Bond** | **Livingston** | **Knox** |
| **Jackson** | **Piatt** | **Winnebago** | **Edwards** |
| **Massac** | **Vermillion** | **Clinton** | **Morgan** |
| **Sangamon** |  |  |  |

Thus far, Districts have received over $1.6 million for their CRP work from August 2016 – August 2017.

**Strategic Plan:** Becky Doyle reported Values, Goals and Recommendations. She suggested to set priorities for the foundation including employee training. Define who will be responsible for priority goals/recommendations/actions. As well as Define/agree to time frames for priorities.

**Values**:

* Statewide, watershed-based, locally driven soil conservation and water quality protection.
* Best possible service to their ultimate clients – the citizens and the resources of Illinois
* Consistent quality of program delivery throughout Illinois
* Relevance through use of cutting edge technologies and communication methods.

**Goals**:

* Fully utilize and capitalize on unique asset: local knowledge, presence and influence
* Enhance relevance and reputation for achieving Illinois’ conservation goals
* Increase funding for conservation programs and effective implementation
* Improve partnerships for efficient program delivery, funding opportunities and best results.
* Provide valuable services for partners and stakeholders to help achieve conservation goals.

**Recommendations:**

* Strengthen Districts by ensuring best use of limited funds and staff
* Challenge Districts to rise to state and watershed challenges through District-specific plans and funding requests
* Reignite interest and engagement of district directors
* Provide continuing education and/or training for district employees
* Provide districts with access they need to technologies that will provide valued services and relevant messages to their targeted delivery partners, audiences and stakeholders.
* Sharpen focus on and prioritize water quality protection.
* Build statewide expertise in conservation sciences, technologies and program delivery
* Provide local implementation of the Nutrient Loss Reduction Strategy to meet state’s reduction goals; lead efforts where needed
* Ensure districts have the tools and resources they need to deploy programs that achieve state’s goals for soil and water conservation and watershed protection.
* Identify emerging needs and create programs and practices to meet those needs.
* Invigorate and use the Districts Foundation
* Prove and illustrate the return on investment that district programs provide Illinois general revenue investment, to gain greater support and increase funding.
* Work with partners to identify options for funding NLRS implementation
* Aggressively pursue other funding options to diversify funding sources.
* Work with system partners to achieve mutually - supportive partnerships: clarify roles, eliminate duplication, improve conservation program cooperation
* Lead an annual Conservation Implementation RoundTable to network, monitor programs, build effective working relationships, and propose both long term and short term water quality goals.
* Form coalitions to develop watershed-based and other multi-district projects and to write grant proposals.
* Prioritize development of products and services that achieve water protection and soil health goals
* Work with partners to fully understand what they need and what would add value to their work.
* Provide consistent policies and program delivery for those partners who work in multiple districts

**Partner Planning Forum Update:**

Steve Chard reported that there will be guidance this week with the LUC’s to meet and decide how to divide the money as well as what resources are needed to encourage SWCD resource plans and make them successful. He mentioned employee and director training as well as leadership training for district directors. The FY17 funding, check balance and encourage districts to submit projects.

**FY18 Funding for Districts:**

Mike Hoffmann reported that legislatures and lobbyist are not sure what the current chain of command is. Prospecting to determine who the governor is working with. Steve Stierwalt asked what the time frame was that we were looking at, how long will it take Mike Hoffmann to put this together? He replied with it can take a long time. He doesn’t want to approach until we have a plan as to how we allocate that money. The end goal is mid-October.

**Farm Progress Show:**

Steve Stierwalt reported that during the funding discussion of conservation compliance he didn’t feel supported to make a remark. The question was asked “what do we need?” Jerry Snodgrass mentioned not many other states favor the farm bill. Steve wanted to confirm with the executive board as to whether or not we support the farm bill. All in agreement, yes to support the farm bill, no one opposed to conservation compliance.

**New Business:**

**FY18 SWCD/IDOA Grant Agreements**

Steve Chard reported the FY18 grant agreement was sent out last week. It should be signed by 9/15/2017. The faster it’s signed the faster it can be released!

CPP funds, cost shared, operations to the districts.

**Executive Director Position:**

Discussion of the release of the job description was brought up. It was proposed and agreed upon that not only is this position available internally but will be posted online as well to seek outside resources. The option of having someone who doesn’t necessarily work in the Springfield office full time, rather from another location was also mentioned. At this time the option is being kept open.

**2018 Summer Conference Location:**

3 bids were discussed between locations varying from East Peoria to two Springfield locations. It was agreed upon to maintain the Springfield location and the decision was then between the Northfield Inn where conference has been held for many years now, or the Wyndham hotel in downtown Springfield. After a brief discussion, it came down to the fact of the matter that for the year of 2017 we had reached max capacity for meals as well as hotel room stay. The Wyndham hotel can accommodate for all of the appropriate needs as well as matching prices with room stay that was at the Northfield Inn.

Motion to hold the 2018 Annual Summer Conference at the Springfield Wyndham hotel

1st Van Bitner 2nd Tom Beyers Motion carried

**Online Meetings via Zoom.us calls**

Moving ahead with technology is a great advantage to communicate with each other for meetings. This option can operate from any smart phone, tablet, computer or laptop that has a camera access. There are features that allow the host to share documents with whoever is involved in the meeting/conference chat. It was agreed upon to create a general email and password so that it wasn’t something that had to be generalized only for Executive board meetings, but could be used by other members of the association as well!

**Exit Audit:**

Waiting for the auditor’s office to contact Christina Branham or Alan Howard to continue this process as Kelly Thompson has already started this process.

**Meeting Adjourned at 1:00 PM**

1st Steve Stierwalt 2nd Dan Duval Motion Carried

*Minutes By: Christina Branham, AISWCD Administrative Coordinator*