

**BUREAU COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

December 13, 2016

DIRECTORS PRESENT: Mark Miller, Rod Grunloh, Gaile Arnold, Mike Thacker

DIRECTORS ABSENT: Mike Nelson

DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Bennett, ARC

DISTRICT STAFF ABSENT: Marianne Grey, CA

NRCS PERSONNEL PRESENT: Erika Turner, DC

Call to Order: At 8:23 a.m. Chairman Mark Miller called the meeting to order.

Guests: None

Approval of Minutes: Gaile made a motion to approve the minutes of the November 1, 2016 meeting. Mike T. seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Bills: Rod made a motion to approve the bills. Mike T. seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Approval of Timesheets: Mike T. made a motion to approve the timesheets. Rod seconded the motion. Motion carried.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Budget & Finance: Mark reported that each SWCD will receive \$22,680 in operations funding from the State and possibly some cost share dollars. Another \$104,000 will be distributed to each of the Land Use Councils. The LUC must then determine how those funds will be divided among the Districts in their respective council. At a meeting of the Chairmen of Council 2 on 11-18-16, it was decided that each district in Council 2 will receive \$12,000 of base funding. The remaining funds will then be distributed to districts based on number of full-time employees per District. With this formula, Bureau County would receive an additional \$5,395. We are still waiting on said funds to be distributed to the Districts.

Natural Areas: Kevin reported that he and Eric were able to successfully burn the prairies at both Warnecke Woods and Indian Boundary Line. Mike T. asked why we burn in the fall as opposed to the spring. Kevin explained that it depends on what the management goals are for the site as spring burns tend to encourage grasses to dominate, while fall burns allow for more forbs to flourish.

Education: The LUC 2 Envirothon will be held on March 16th at Black Hawk College East. The Ag Fair will be held on March 23rd at the Bureau County Fairgrounds.

Personnel: Kevin reported that Eric is done for the season. He would like to bring him back on come spring if finances allow.

CORRESPONDENCE: Emails from Department of Ag regarding GATA update, grant agreement, and CARS registration.

BUSINESS

CPP: Per the grant agreement with the Department of Ag, Bureau County is to receive \$27,500 in cost share funding since half the county falls within a NLRS priority watershed (Lower Illinois Senachwine Lake). No dollars have been released as of yet.

Zonings: No NRI requests this month as the Zoning Office doesn't hold hearings in December.

Whitver Farm: The GeoBoy contractor will begin work as soon as he gets his trailer repaired. Will likely be after the first of the year.

Funds for Well at Warnecke: Kevin reported that while he was completing some year-end accounting work in QuickBooks he determined that funds to pay for the well installation at Warnecke Woods were never transferred from Whitver Savings to District Checking. The Board agreed that was what they had previously approved and authorized Kevin to make the transfer.

Prescribed Fire Services: Kevin reported that he has not been able to dedicate much time to this yet. He will continue working on this concept, specifically with regards to any liability issues.

Tax Levy for 2017: Kevin presented our tax levy request to the County for 2017. Gaile made a motion to increase our request to \$11,179. Rod seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Letter to Henry County SWCD: After discussions about Henry County's proposal to share an employee to assist them with their surveying and design work, it was agreed that it would not be feasible. Rod made a motion that we should send a letter to their Chairman notifying him of such. Gaile seconded the motion. Motion carried.

EXECUTIVE SESSION: None

NEW BUSINESS

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Other Business: Rod asked about repairs made to the Truax drill. Kevin reported that a bearing in one of the coulters was repaired by Holland & Sons. Any others that need attention will be addressed come spring before it goes out for rental.

Mark asked Kevin to give the board an overview of what trainings he had recently attended. Kevin reported on the topics covered in Conservation Application I and Construction Inspection. Gaile asked if these trainings will bring Kevin closer to being able to perform survey and design work. He explained that these trainings contain a lot of information in a short amount of time and are designed to be an introductory overview. He would benefit the most from real, in-the-field work with experienced NRCS staff. He hopes to do more of this in the coming year and will work with Erika to see that that happens.

Public Comments: None

Agenda items for next meeting:

Next Meeting: The next meeting will be held at 8:15 a.m. on Tuesday, January 3, 2017 at the USDA Service Center.

Adjournment: At 9:60 a.m. Mike T. made a motion to adjourn. Rod seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Submitted by: Kevin Bennett and Marianne Grey