

MINUTES

STATE SOIL CONSERVATION BOARD MEETING

May 16, 2023

Indiana Soybean Alliance
8425 Keystone Crossing, Indianapolis, IN 46240
MS Teams

Present

Ray Chattin (board chair)
Gene Schmidt (board member)
Amy Burris (board member)
Kenny Cain (board member)
Brad Dawson (board member)
Larry Clemens (board member)
Jane Hardisty (board member)
Les Zimmerman
Nathan Stoelting
Andrea Gogel
Jared Chew
Mike Johnson
Jennifer Thum
Geneva Tyler
Trevor Laureys
Kylie Wheeler
Liz Rice
Megan Malott
Sandra Hoffarth
Katie Nelson
Kristin Latzke
Lori Jordan
Kelly Kent
Julie Harrold
Laura Fribley
Tara Wesseler-Henry

Virtual Attendance

Sheryl Vaughn
Amanda Robbins
Julie Morris
Kim Peterson
Janel Meyer
Melissa Heichelbech
Melinda Miller
Jenna Nicholson
Hannah Martin
Stacy White
Emily Finch
Shalyn Sargeant
Lindsey Bluhm
Breegan Anderson
Megan Espinda
Megan Frederick
Lois Mann
Amy Work
Eric Shideler
Angela Jackson
Tracey Johnson
Chris Nettles
Marc Roberts
Jennifer Creager
Chris Gardner
Greg Lake
Jodie Overmyer

Hannah Martin
Martha Miller
Mark Kingma
Lisa Holscher
Lindsey Bluhm
Sheila Schroeder
Ethan Truax
Scott Sanders
Troy Hinkle
Chris Havens
Jenny Rowland
Joshua Brandle
Kevin Allison
Eliana Blaine
Cole Flatt
Matt Williams
Jennifer Brown
Nellie Peffley
Ava Springstun
Cameron Straw
Michelle Elgin
Stacey McGinnis
Cora Brown
Julie Knudson
Don Ryan
Sarah Longenecker
Sarah Campfield
Angela Courtney

I. 9:00am: Call to Order

- Ray called the meeting to order at 9 AM
- Ray welcomed Jane Hardisty as the new SSCB member.
- Geneva recorded the meeting.
- Ray discussed the additional \$6M that the CWI received.
- Les spoke stated they have arrived at a watershed movement, a long overdue increase to CWI. It's a good start and represent an opportunity. No promises made to the legislature but made a set of expectations. This is a two-year budget, no guarantee that we will get the money again or an increase. We need metrics to demonstrate the investment has been a good one and has paid off and should be maintained an increased in time.

II. Approve Minutes of May 2023

- **No corrections or comments.**

- **Kenny moved that they approved, and Brad seconded, no further discussion.**
- **All in favor.**

III. Clean Water Indiana

a. Clean Water Indiana Grants- Geneva Tyler

- Grants Committee met on April 19th.
- Working with Leah to put together tracking for \$2,000 capacity and could further relate to another tracking tool for CWI funds, it would come out March 31st. They should align with AFR's. They included Montgomery SWCD 2020 grant, and used funds to hire a staff person who did several projects.

b. Clean Water Indiana Grants Committee report- Brad Dawson

- Met virtually on the April 19th and most of it was to discuss the 2024 grants, existing funds, the current funds. They moved the deadline to noon, so any questions would allow them to be answered by staff. They did not allow equipment modifications. Recycling programs will not be eligible as the recycling districts have taxing authority and they can tax for the items that they need.
- Cost-share payments must be made by December 31st of the calendar year.
- We will have meetings coming up that would go over the project and applications are due Sept 1 8th. Committee will be October 16th for discussion and approval.
- ***** Discussion after break.** The state does not recommend having one district be a lead to more than two. If they are late on reports, then that should be something to consider as well.
- **Motion to approve the grants committee recommendation.**
 - **Brad moved that they recommendations from Grant Committee with changes be accepted and kick off the 2024 grant cycle. The recommendations would be to strike the 66% from page 2 under "eligible applicants" the language and that a SWCD could lead two grants.**
 - **Amy seconded the motion.**
 - **All in favor.**
- Staffing- CWI shall not be used to pay for employee benefits, some get by with a stipend or lump sum. With the \$10,000, the benefit stipulation is not attached to those funds.
- Ray opened the discussion. Ray wants to recommend the board that we change process and provided two opportunities a year of submittal a grant, September and have a second opportunity in March.
- Trevor – There has been discussion on two grant cycles for administrative burden. Thank you to Tara for laying the timeframes. To work second round, it would be difficult and tight timeframe. The money is non reverting.
- Larry –It's important trying to be flexible and knowing that we are in two-year period.
- Brad – We heard rumors but worked with what we had ahead of time.
- Ray – He's concerned about accountability and districts that have large reserves. The second is back to the idea of underserved districts. If Ray would give SWCD fuel, he wants to see energy and a plan and spend the money where they know results would occur; this is a competitive process and not an entitlement.
- We will receive the money July 1st.
- Trevor – presentation – and set guidelines and overview of CWI.
 - Trevor covered the CWI Code, feedback survey and listening session, CREP expansion.
 - Larry –We have traditionally allocated to SWCD support through staff or programming.
 - Jane –We might need to do a strategic plan, and we might need to make adjustments. We need to support SWCDs, and be clear where we are going with the money. We are the leaders in the State and would propose to review the plan and ideas.
 - Ray – Agrees, but we need to meet as a group per open-door law.
 - Brad – Agrees with Jane, if things are misrepresented in the media, it could impact the future CWI funding. We need guidelines that the districts understand.
 - There was further discussion regarding a special meeting to focus on strategic planning, as well as grant cycle timelines with Tara and the SSCB and current guidelines.

- Jane – It’s a new day for Clean Water Indiana, maybe we need to communicate a message about the funding and to promote the success and the SSCB. Take it to the legislatures and build on the momentum. We need to toot our horn and support our districts.
 - Trevor – Continued discussion on CWI funding and the proposed budget- (see accompanying budget proposal). Trevor has done this every year to allocate the funding.
 - Trevor wants to triple the matching funds to districts we make it up to \$30,000 for each district. Additionally, we saw a lot of comments about people and technology, so he doubled the competitive grants, that could be capacity and empower the districts. CREP additional funds, there’s an expansion of that 1:7 leverage funds, we have administrative. districts. Money for ISDA partner agreements, like PWQ, IANA. Our staff are on 2017 computers for staff. That’s a starting point for the SSCB. This should address the target budgets; this is \$5 million to the districts. We have already piloted the additional funds to districts with the AFR increase.
- The board had continued discussion of the past CWI competitive grant cycle.
 - Ray spoke out about other funds like CREP and the IASWCD. Ray does not want to fund every grant that is submitted.
 - Ray – We need to expand expectations and with the districts. Ray wants to have \$12,500 not \$30,000. The additional would go to competitive grants, it goes to the need and not to the piece of the pie for everything. CREP – Ray likes the 7:1 and his question is, will there be a problem of using the funds. Direct match to the competitive side, we can find ways to get those to districts.
 - Larry – We have been talking about doubling the SWCD funds, we need to make sure that we are not going back on our word. If we went with \$20,000 and not \$30,000 and put the rest in the competitive grants, for SWCDs and other groups that are coming to table. The IAWCD has a request of \$1 million.
 - Les – SICIM was part of this process. They could come in the competitive grant. CCSI is a thing because of CWI.
 - Brad – Read some of the comments in the chat.
 - Ray wants merit base distribution over the additional money.
 - Kenny – It was a promise \$20,000 we need to stick to that if that’s what the legislature’s heard the SWCD would get.
 - Ray - \$20,000 to SWCDs. This could be used to leverage.
 - Audience member – what’s hoarding – you don’t know the district financial reporting just for on the AFR forms. It’s hard to understand what hoarding is. You would need to understand and what that money’s for.
- Break – 10:50 AM.
 - Resumed at 11:00 AM
- Ray - It would increase the competitive grants by \$950,000 and any further considerations on CREP.
 - Larry – How long will it take with FSA for the expansion or can we expend it with existing CREP.
 - Trevor- Our goal is to in place by 2023, and we could have the money spent. We would need to set-up the administrative portion too; it would be statewide. We do have two folks to hear from before we pull the trigger.
- c. IDEA proposal- Kristin Latzke, Montgomery Co SWCD & Lorie Jordan, Fountain Co SWCD**
- The SNW region is hosting a conference for district employees. The purpose is mentoring each other and strengthening the districts. They included a budget and things have increased in price. Income for conference is from dues. The income does not cover food for the conference.
 - **Amy moved to their request and Brad seconded their request for \$4,392.00 for audio and IT support for their conference.**
All in favor.
- d. Clean Water Indiana Proposal Liz Rice:**
- IRA funding and NRCS encouraged them to apply for \$4.16 million to support districts through staffing positions. Liz presented to her board and a sub-committee formed to study this. We would

be able to hire 12 staff to support technical staff, for urban and small farms and invasives and agriculture education. . They would be IASWCD employees like CCSI and the urban specialist employees.

- Liz is asking \$1.08 million over the course of the length of the agreement of 5 yrs.
- Ray is all for this idea, distributing it over five years. Further discussion ensued regarding distribution of funding- over 5 years (with some concern about not having continued funding), or 2 years, etc.
- Liz – The advice given to her is to peg salaries at entry level 5 or 6 to be competitive.
- Jared – IRA this is unprecedented amount of money. July 15th – deadline
- Trevor – concerns, needs something more flushed out.
- Liz - Timeline – one of the anchor staff positions, director who would be first person hired and identify the holes and see where the gaps are. Need director around July 15th. Then hire 12 staff, that would take more time. There would be time to build a plan, if the SSCB feels the July 15th is to quick before they are ready to commit 25% of the funds.
- Trevor – big staff up and capacity. Concern with soft money staff, allocate money all up front. If we must default, we don't want black mark on record. Jared – we want you to have it if you can get it. For the IASWCD – wants it to be well used.
- Kenny moved to support the \$1.08 million the cost-share agreement to the IASWCD. Kenny would divide it up to five years.
- **Kenny moved to support the IASWCD contribution agreement of \$208,000 over five years.**
- **Discussion:**
 - Continued discussion on timeline of support- whether to distribute money over 5 years or the 2 years of the biennium budget.
 - Jared – climate smart, do half soil health specialist and half technicians.
 - No second to first motion – it dies.
 - **Brad moved to submit proposal of \$540,000 per year over the next two years to meet obligation for five years. Seconded by Kenny.**
 - **Motion carried.**

IV. State Soil Conservation Board Business

a. Chairman's report- Ray Chattin

- Due diligence – followed Les around the Statehouse. Pleased with listening session to be a part of this process. It reflects well upon the partnership.

b. Budget- Trevor Laureys

- Trevor went over the budget that he presented earlier in the meeting.
- **Larry moved approve the proposed DSC director's budget reducing district match to \$1,840,000 (\$20,000 per district) (matching) and placing the remaining funds into CWI competitive grants that would be 2.92 million available to competitive grants. \$4,400.00 for IDEA and \$540,000 for IASWCD and \$2,395,600 for competitive grants and the proposed budget with the amendment, \$2,000,000 for CREP, \$100,000 for CREP PEA, \$1.5 million for staff, \$50,000 each for training reimbursements, ISDA Partner Agreement and Equipment, for a total of \$8.51mill. Kenny seconded the motion.**

Approved proposed budget	State Fiscal year 2024
staff	\$ 1,500,000.00
training reimbursements	\$ 50,000.00
district match	\$ 1,840,000.00
CWI grants	\$ 2,375,600.00
CREP	\$ 2,000,000.00
CREP PEA	\$ 100,000.00
ISDA Partner Agreement	\$ 50,000.00
Equipment	\$ 50,000.00

IASWCD Proposal	\$	540,000.00
IDEA Proposal	\$	4,400.00
Total	\$	8,510,000.00

All in favor.

- c. Director's report- Trevor Laureys
- See Director's report.

V. Break

VI. Soil and Water Conservation Districts

- a. Temporary appointments
- Randolph Co- Geneva Tyler
 1. Resignation from board meeting.
 - Switzerland Co- Laura Fribley
 1. Temporary elected position
 - Fountain County – Nathan S
 - Todd Hag replacement – fill the vacant place to the appointment.

Brad moved to accept supervisors as they have been submitted, seconded by Amy.
All in favor.

b. ISDA

- Partnerships- see report
- CREP and Water Quality Initiatives – see report
- Nutrient Stewardship – no report
- Technical Assistance – report is in your packet.
- District Support – report is in your packet. If you have questions.

c. IASWCD – Host a NACD meeting in the next five years.

- d. CCSI – Lisa- Registration open for 3-day soil health tab, June 1st seats are reserved by agency. June 1st is open game and others that might want to attend. Think about target audience. That's a key component in event support. We participated in over 40 events and 3600 individuals. See report -

e. Purdue – no one in attendance

- f. NRCS – the report is in the packet. RCPP deadline – calendar. Will forward note about CWI.

g. FSA – no one in attendance

- h. IDEA – Conference planning, and the employee career development session. That is moving along.

i. Other-

VII. Public Comment

- a. Troy – May 24th midwestern leadership conference.

VIII. 2023 Meeting Dates

- July 18 – ICMC/ISA location
- September 19
- October 24

X. Adjourn

*****PLEASE NOTE*****

This agenda is in DRAFT FORM. Open Door Law does not prohibit the public agency from changing or adding to its agenda during the meeting.