



211 N. Appleton Road

Belvidere, IL 6108

815-544-3465 ext. 3

### **Boone County SWCD Board**

#### **Present**

Bill Hall.....Chairman

Jack Ratcliffe.....Secretary/Treasurer

Mike Frank.....Vice-Chairman

Aaron Brahmstedt.....Director

#### **Absent**

Todd Aves.....Director

#### **Attendees**

Heather VanTilburg.....SWCD

Ashley Barry.....IDOA

Josh Franks.....NRCS

Luke Trexler.....NRCS

Griffin Smith.....NRCS

Madison Koopman.....Avalon

### **SWCD Meeting 01/08/2025**

Bill Hall called the meeting to order at 8:00 A.M.

#### **Minutes**

The December meeting minutes were approved by Jack Ratcliffe and seconded by Aaron Brahmstedt.

#### **Public Comment**

No public comment given.

#### **Finance Report**

Heather VanTilburg gave the finance report. Current funds are \$238,989.06 in Midland checking account and \$15,106.80 in Midland savings. The Illinois Funds account is at \$253,954.52. Ms. VanTilburg made comments about an error in dividend processing with the Illinois Funds; there was a clerical error and so shares were reduced early December to correct the issue. There was a motion made by Mike Frank, seconded by Aaron Brahmstedt to approve the finance report. The motion passed unanimously.

#### **Timesheets**

Jack Ratcliffe approved the timesheets and mileage report.

## **Reports**

Josh Franks gave the NRCS report. Mr. Franks reported that the Farm Bill was extended to September 30th, 2025. He went over work done in December; CSP Renewals were wrapped up, Boone had about a third for Area 1, with 19 obligated contracts. Mr. Franks stated that January CSP payment processing will start. Mr. Franks went over the new application periods for EQIP, CSP, and RCPP. Josh said that IDNR has been sending a lot of forestry applications over due to the RCPP funding available for the region, so this has allowed NRCS to work with some new nontraditional clients. Mr. Franks noted that there has been a significant interest in pollinators and organic production in Boone County. Mr. Franks then gave an update on the wetland backlog for determinations, it has come down and is at about 9 months now (from 12), hopefully down to 6 months by summer. This would help people be able to get their projects started sooner if they're waiting on wetland notifications. Mr. Franks also noted that there will be no new CRP until a new farm bill can be negotiated, existing CRP will stay. Mr. Franks concluded by mentioning that Stephenson County has a backlog of establishment reviews for CRP, and that Boone NRCS/IDOA staff might be called on to help get through them.

Heather VanTilburg gave the SWCD report. Ms. VanTilburg noted that she will be busy with administrative tasks both for the SWCD and NRCS in the coming month. She reported that quarterly reports have been filed for January, and she will be finishing up W-2's and annual reporting for IDOA and AISWCD. Ms. VanTilburg went over that she will be working on getting the spring newsletter together, where she will post a flyer for open PFC sign up and the tree and fish sales.

Ms. VanTilburg mentioned that there will be a training hosted by the AISWCD on the 16<sup>th</sup> that will give more information about the IRA funded agreement between SWCDs and NRCS to address local work groups, watershed planning, and climate smart agriculture outreach and education.

Ms. VanTilburg went over Envirothon, reporting that the study materials have been submitted and teachers notified that their student groups may begin preparing for the competition, the next meeting will be in February to discuss final details of the event. Ms. VanTilburg also mentioned that there has been a subcommittee formed to plan and coordinate a public event involving awareness and education surrounding the 3-D Geologic mapping to take place in early March. She stated that the venue has changed from being hosted at a Boone County school to the Poplar Grove airport if all goes well.

Ms. VanTilburg reported her work on the NRCS administrative agreement; she sent out the EQIP deferral letters for FY24 applications, there was one new conservation application to enter, and she will begin sending out annual practice reminders to CSP contract holders this month. She noted that the work done on the CSP Renewals allowed her to bill for December, 19 contracts totaling \$2137.50 but they are still waiting on payment for November's invoice including active contracts.

## **Local Work Group Participation**

Ms. VanTilburg opened some discussion on participating in the IRA agreement with NRCS, specifically concerning the reinvigoration of the local work group meetings. She explained that this time there is funding available to support the efforts, and there was some discussion between Boone and Winnebago counties about doing joint meetings. Ms. VanTilburg outlined that there will be \$10,000 a year available for districts who participate and fulfill the reporting requirements, and that it would be a good way to

get people involved in discussing possible projects to push forward for their respective county. It was brought up that Winnebago and Boone would do well collaborating since they share the same Farm Bureau and are regionally paired economically. Mr. Franks mentioned that in the past these meetings were successful when the information gathered was taken and used to collaborate on projects, but there hadn't necessarily been much movement in previous years. Mr. Franks did also mention that this might be a better opportunity to try the meetings again since there are new leaders in the county since these have been done and there are funds available this time around for planning. Ms. VanTilburg explained that these meetings are mainly to help NRCS gather data on where and how to allocate federal cost share dollars, but that the information gathered from the meetings could be used for local efforts as well and is encouraged. Ms. VanTilburg posed an inquiry to the board to get thoughts on whether to participate, there was a consensus that if Winnebago and Boone County SWCD's were of the mind to do the meetings it would overall be beneficial.

### **MCCA Rent**

Bill Hall raised discussion about the 2025 crop year cash rent price for T11568 being farmed. There was a motion to keep the rent the same made by Mike Frank, seconded by Aaron Brahmstedt. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Adjournment**

There was a motion to adjourn made by Aaron Brahmstedt, seconded by Mike Frank.