



211 N. Appleton Road

Belvidere, IL 6108

815-544-3465 ext. 3

Boone County SWCD Board

Present

Bill Hall.....Chairman

Aaron Brahmstedt.....Director

Mike Frank.....Vice-Chairman

Todd Aves.....Director

Absent

Jack Ratcliffe.....Secretary/Treasurer

Attendees

Heather VanTilburg.....SWCD

Jennifer Becker.....NRCS

Josh Franks.....NRCS

Luke Trexler.....NRCS

Alexa Skirmont.....PCM

SWCD Meeting 07/08/2026

Bill Hall called the meeting to order at 8:06 A.M.

Minutes

The June meeting minutes were approved by Mike Frank and seconded by Aaron Brahmstedt.

Public Comment

Alexa mentioned a new program through PCM called Farmer's for Soil Health, involving cover crops that would start this coming fall. She said this program cannot be stacked with other USDA programs, and that there is a 2,000 acre cap per producer. Anyone interested in signing up can work with her to submit an application.

Finance Report

Heather VanTilburg gave the finance report. Current funds are \$248,299.84 in Midland checking account and \$15,065.58 in Midland savings. The Illinois Funds account is \$270,255.26. There was a motion made by Todd Aves, seconded by Aaron Brahmstedt to approve the finance report. The motion passed unanimously.

Timesheets

Mr. Ratcliffe was absent from the meeting so timesheets and mileage logs will be signed at a later date.

District Maternity/Paternity Policy Updates

Ms. VanTilburg brought forth discussion to the board about updating the district's current maternity/paternity leave policy and gave a printed example of DeKalb SWCD's policy to view. She explained that currently, Boone SWCD has either unpaid leave through FMLA or the employee may use any saved PTO they have accumulated. After speaking with several surrounding districts, most have moved to implementing 6 weeks of paid maternity/paternity leave (or 30 working days). After reviewing the example policy provided, Todd Aves made a motion to update the district's policy to include 6 weeks of paid maternity/paternity leave to employees (and use DeKalb's written policy as the template for Boone). Mike Frank seconded and the motion carried.

Fair Ad

There was discussion about the district's usual fair ad on the video wall at the Boone County Fair. Todd Aves made a motion to submit an ad, not to exceed \$150 and Mike Frank seconded. The motion passed.

Reports

Josh Franks gave the NRCS report. He reported on some reorganization in USDA but mostly at the national level. NRCS received extra funds for EQIP and CSP this year, allowing Boone to pick up 5 additional EQIP and 1 CSP applications. The district group has also been working on CRP, a total of 9 for Boone, about half are re-enrolls and the other half are new contracts. Mr. Franks also reported that he spoke recently at the LICA meeting in Freeport at their edge of field/drainage workshop about some of the NRCS practices that are offered. He mentioned that DCs will be going to the AISWCD summer conference this year as well as some of the regional staff members from NRCS. Mr. Franks concluded with a note about a new invasive species commonly in woodlands called stiltgrass, which has mostly been prevalent in southern IL but is quite aggressive and making its way up north and also from the east. He will report more from the training later this month at the next meeting.

Heather VanTilburg gave the SWCD report. She went over a few administrative items pertaining to the FY26 grant and the closing out of FY25 funds; as well as the workman's comp audit and AFR. Ms. VanTilburg said she is also working on the draft budget and APO for next month's meeting. For committees, she attended the Farm Breakfast last month and ran the enviroscape model at the groundwater booth with Winnebago County. She also gave a brief report on PFC/cost share programs and projects, stating that I-Cover planning is in progress and there were also slight acre adjustments to a couple of the CPRG contracts due to alfalfa being planted. Both of the waterway projects are set to go this year; one should get done very soon after the wheat is harvested and the other will be after soybeans. Ms. VanTilburg requested some assistance from NRCS on pre-construction meetings and

checkout after installation. She reported on the NRCS agreement stating that they're all paid on Q1 and Q2 invoices and that Q3 would be signed and submitted today. She has been assisting with recent EQIP and CSP obligations. Ms. VanTilburg concluded with NRIs and erosion and sediment checks, she has completed several letters for small zoning requests and has 1 full report to review today. Regular SESC checks were completed for June.

NRI 1826

Ms. VanTilburg presented NRI 1826, a request for rezoning and subdivision of parcels in section 5 and 6 of Spring Township, range 4E. The rezoning consists of the parcels going from RH (Rural Holding/Ag district) to Commercial/Business and Planned Industrial. The LE score was 85.2. Staff made comments about drummer soil being on the survey in central areas around the planned industrial and may present building limitations in those areas as well as a tributary that flows to Coon Creek and several areas of wetlands to the north of U.S. 20 that could experience water quality impacts from the industrial use. No specific industrial use was determined at this time. Ms. VanTilburg said that she had sent preliminary comment to the city after receiving notification outlining the consideration for hydric/sensitive soils and the use of additional water quality BMPs other than the detention pond to help filter pollutants before entering the basin--and would include similar comments in the comment section of the NRI. Todd Aves made a motion to vote unfavorably for board opinion on the basis that the LE score was above 69 and for the displacement of prime agricultural land, as well as potential water quality impacts to the tributary that could be carried to Coon Creek and surrounding wetlands. Aaron Brahmstedt seconded and the motion passed.

Adjournment

Aaron Brahmstedt made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Todd Aves. The motion carried.