

# **BUREAU COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## **BOARD MEETING MINUTES**

February 6, 2024

**DIRECTORS PRESENT:** Mike Thacker, Bill Gebeck, Todd Sears, Rod Grunloh

**DIRECTORS ABSENT:** Jim May

**DISTRICT STAFF PRESENT:** Becca Taylor - RC, Ashley Aber - AC

**NRCS PERSONNEL PRESENT:** Erika Luft – DC, James Morgan – SC, Aaron Fishburn – IDOA Planner

**Call to Order:** Mike Thacker called the meeting to order at 8:21 a.m.

**Guests:** Caleb Worley, to discuss Whitver CRP options

**Approval of Minutes:** Rod Grunloh made a motion to approve the January minutes. Bill Gebeck seconded; motion carried.

**Approval of Bills:** Mike Thacker made a motion to approve the open bills. Bill Gebeck seconded; motion carried.

**Approval of Timesheets:** Rod Grunloh made a motion to approve the January timesheets. Mike Thacker seconded; motion carried.

### **COMMITTEE REPORTS**

**Budget & Finance:** No new updates.

**Education & Outreach:** Ashley attended the Princeton Rotary Club Scholarship Fair on January 24<sup>th</sup>. There were about 20 students that came and a handful of them took one of our applications.

**Natural Areas:** Taylor Tree Service won the bid to remove the Witness Tree. They plan to start next week. Staff has come up with a few ideas on how to commemorate the tree, including making public keepsakes. A new tree will be dedicated at the site.

**Personnel:** No updates.

**CORRESPONDENCE:** None.

### **BUSINESS**

**PFC:** Ashley sent out 1099s to the PFC participants.

**SSRP:** Becca is waiting to hear back from SSRP specialist; project deadline is March 30<sup>th</sup>.

**CRP:** Due to no new Farm Bill, USDA will offer CRP signups in batching periods; 1<sup>st</sup> batching period ends March 15<sup>th</sup>.

**CREP:** No updates.

**Seeding Service:** Becca and Aaron will be seeding for Brian Joehl.

**Vegetative Filter Strips:** Becca is working on 1 application.

**Zonings:** Becca presented zoning requests for 5 projects: Steven Wetsel, Arlington 1 LLC, Arlington 2 LLC, Bureau Solar 2 LLC and Bureau Solar 3 LLC. She did not have any major concerns for any of the projects. Mike Thacker made a motion to approve the 5 zoning requests. Todd Sears seconded; motion carried.

**Equipment Purchase:** Yarger's is waiting on harrow for new drill to come in before trading. Becca and Aaron will start doing routine maintenance on both drills. They will be working on the fence at McCune once the weather improves; will need to purchase post driver.

**Whitver Farm:** Caleb discussed CRP options with the board, including Pollinator fields and the possibility of changing field borders over to SAFE. Caleb proposed some options on field 72 including a growing season burn or use of a skid steer to clear woody invasives. Thacker Farms will provide the labor after August 1<sup>st</sup>. The district will pay for the service. A burn is scheduled on the site this year, Caleb has discussed it with James Schoff.

**EXECUTIVE SESSION:** None.

**Director election:** The director election is today. Todd suggested the idea of having an Annual Meeting next year. Staff fully supports this idea.

**Prairie Chickens:** Pheasants have been spotted at Whitver.

**Agenda items for next meeting:** Agenda items for next meeting include: election results, Witness Tree, Whitver CRP

**Next Meeting:** The next meeting will be held at Bonucci Farms on March 5<sup>th</sup> at 8:15a.m.

**Adjournment:** Mike Thacker adjourned the meeting at 9:30a.m.