

BLACKHAWK HILLS



Resource Conservation and Development
Jo Daviess ● Stephenson ● Carroll ● Ogle ● Whiteside ● Lee

**COUNCIL MEETING
Monday, July 27, 2009
Lanark Heritage Center
106 South Broad Street
Lanark, IL**

MINUTES

Attendance

Edie Block, Carroll County Board
Ed Juracek, Carroll County SWCD
Cathy Brunner, Carroll County Area Rep.
William Tonne, Jo Daviess County SWCD
Isaac Mercer, Lee County Board
Ron Colson, Ogle County Board
Lynne Kilker, Ogle County SWCD

Samuel Newton, Stephenson County Board
Della Moen, Stephenson County Area Rep.
Charles Moen, Stephenson County SWCD
Tim Keller, Whiteside County SWCD
Dave Dornbusch, RC&D Coordinator
Theresa Wittenauer, Economic Dev. Professional
Julie Jacobs, RC&D Program Assistant

Call to Order

William Tonne, RC&D President, called the meeting to order at 6:09 PM.

Introductions

There were no introductions needed.

Minutes

Minutes to the May 18, 2009 Council Meeting were handed out. William Tonne asked that the following change be made to the minutes: under the Broadband Taskforce heading the statement "The money is in Governor Quinn's hands" be changed to read "Application notice should be given to Governor Quinn". Chuck Moen made a motion to approve the minutes as corrected. Cathy Brunner seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Finances

The financial report was handed out. Julie Jacobs stated that there was a correction to the financial report that was provided at the May meeting. Check number 1766 was recorded as \$12.86 and it should have been \$124.86. She caught the error when doing the reconciliation of the bank statement. A corrected report was provided. The County Boards' donations to the Economic Development District are coming in. Carroll County's donation was received in today's mail. Julie has not invoiced the SWCD Boards yet but plans to do so this week. Dave Dornbusch stated that there was an error with Julie Jacobs' fringe benefit amount on her payroll that took affective January 18, 2009. Julie's additional fringe benefit amount was taken out twice. Julie has been underpaid \$420.00. Cathy Brunner made a motion to pay Julie Jacobs the funds due her. Ron Colson seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Bill Tonne had asked about the \$30,000 that we had used to show as contingency, where does it show up now on the financial reports. The funds were moved into Certificates of Deposit and is not included in the operating budget but does show up on the financial report. Two Certificates of Deposit (CDs) that we have with Freedom Bank will mature in September. Chuck Moen made motion to give the staff the ability to do what they have to to stagger the CDs maturity dates and to shop around for the best rates. Cathy Brunner seconded the motion. Motion carried.

Della Moen made a motion to place the Financial Report on file. Isaac Mercer seconded the motion. Motion carried. The Financial Report will be placed on file.

Unfinished Business

Coordinator's Report – Dave Dornbusch's report was shared with the Council Members prior to the meeting. Dave added to his report that there was an Alert in the Council Members' folders from Donna Hunter from the National Association of RC&Ds Office concerning the Senate language for the RC&D program. The Senate language wants RC&D to be in the Conservation Operations Budget rather than be a stand alone program. The Congress language includes \$50.6 million for the RC&D. Cathy Brunner added that the Senate language would allow the Secretary of Ag to decide which RC&D Councils to fund. Cathy recommended that Council Members contact the Legislators and ask to speak to the agricultural aide. We need to get the Legislators to support the Congressional language.

Economic Development Professional Report – Theresa Wittenauer's report was shared with the Council Members prior to the meeting. Theresa reported that the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Five Year Report is completed and turned into the Economic Development Administration (EDA). We received approval from EDA for our FY 2010 Planning Grant plus an additional \$10,000, for a total grant of \$61,628. Final Progress report to EDA was submitted. Milledgeville also has received funding approval from EDA, \$400,000. The Capital Improvement Planning Workshop will be held August 5th. The extra \$10,000 from EDA will be used for a special project. The EDD Budget will need to be amended to include the additional \$10,000.

Small Business Development Center (SBDC) Update – Dave Dornbusch gave an update on the SBDC which has run into a snag. We are about \$500 shy of the amount we needed to raise to match the EDA special funds. This would allow us to operate the SBDC for another six month. The State would allow us to administer the SBDC funds as of next week. Brian Borger took another job because of funding not being secured for his position. Michele Miller is going to work with Tri-County Economic Development Alliance as of August 10th. We are looking for an employee for this program. Michelle spoke to a lady that she thought might be interested in the position but the lady declined due to unstable funding. Cathy Brunner stated that she may have someone for the position. Dave added that whoever fills the position should have expertise in working with small business plan. We are still working on this since there is such a need in our area. Ogle County Board has donated \$1,000 and the Greater Rochelle Economic Development Corp is going to donate too. Dave asked Council Members to let him know if they know of any one that could fill the SBDC position. The colleges are still willing to work with us on office space and the City of Rock Falls may have an office for us to use too. Dave said that the Executive Committee may have to meet in the next two or three weeks to make some decisions on this.

Office Space Update – Dave Dornbusch reported that the office will be moving this Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday if any volunteers want to help they should just show up at the office. A moving company will come in to move the big stuff. NRCS is buying us a new phone system which will have voicemail. Lou Pignatelli is putting in Broadband into the office building but NRCS will not pay for us to use that service. Our phone and fax numbers will stay the same. The phone lines might be down from Friday to Monday. Cathy Brunner asked if we would still be considered Suite 2. Dave thought so. Dave said an Open House will be held. The main entrance is on the north side of the building. Dave has not seen a lease yet for the Council's share. Square footage wise we will have less space but we will have a conference room.

Broadband Taskforce – Bill Tonne reported that a lot of progress has been made on our broadband grant application about 75% is completed. We are applying to the Department of Ag-Rural category or the Department of Commerce-metro category. The grant application is due August 14th. The Staff is working with Northern Illinois University (NIU). NIU is doing a lot of the work. Maps are being drawn. Bill would like to see the Council enter into an agreement with NIU. There was much discussion. Cathy Brunner suggested that in the future bullet points be provided in advance for Council Members to review prior to the meeting. Chuck Moen made a motion that Blackhawk Hills RC&D Council would work with Northern Illinois University as a working partner throughout the grant application. It is also recognized that Northern Illinois University would manage the construction phase. It is also to be recognized that this project will generate a strong management commitment, perhaps through a Third Party. Cathy Brunner seconded the motion. Della Moen called for the question, Sam Newton seconded. Motion carried. Bill also stated that the grant application requires us to have a legal opinion that we are a true not for profit 501(c)3. Bill had contacted Lou Pignatelli to see if he would provide us a legal opinion. Mr. Pignatelli law firm is in the same building as the RC&D Office and he is the landlord. Bill just left a message for him. Cathy Brunner made a motion to gain an attorney to certify us as required by the grant application. Sam Newton seconded the motion. Motion carried.

New Business

Committee Selections – Bill Tonne reported that the Committee appointments were handed out in the Council Members folders. Chuck Moen asked that he be listed as the Alternate for the Yellow Creek Watershed Committee.

Committee Reports

Employee Committee – Lynne Kilker made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss the employee evaluations. Isaac Mercer seconded the motion. The Council Members went into Executive Session at 7:24 PM. The Council Members came out of Executive Session at 7:40 PM. Lynne Kilker had reported that the Employee Committee had met on June 17, 2009 to discuss staff evaluations. The Committee followed the 2008 protocol which was agreeable to the committee as well as to the employees. Each employee did a self-evaluation and presented it individually to the committee. Then the committee met independently to further discuss the process. Input was requested of Dave Dornbusch also. Lynne Kilker made a motion to give Theresa Wittenauer a \$500 Performance Bonus for work accomplished during the fiscal year. Isaac Mercer seconded the motion. Motion carried. Lynne Kilker made motion to give Julie Jacobs a \$500 Performance Bonus for work accomplished during the fiscal year. Edie Block seconded the motion. Motion carried. Lynne Kilker made a motion that Theresa Wittenauer receives a 2% salary increase for this fiscal year. Cathy Brunner seconded the motion. Motion carried. Lynne Kilker made a motion that Julie Jacobs receive a 2% salary increase for this fiscal year. Cathy Brunner seconded the motion. Motion carried. Chuck Moen made a statement that it goes on record that the Council appreciates the staffs' service. Sam Newton seconded the statement. All agreed and a round of applause was given to the staff. Bill Tonne added that we have a good board and excellent staff that goes above and beyond.

Marketing Committee – Cathy Brunner reported that the Marketing Committee met on June 20th with M45. The committee and staff answered some questions and we are waiting for feedback from M45.

Chicago/Rockford International Airport – Lynne Kilker stated that Marcia Heuer was attending the UCCI Meeting and was unable to attend tonight's meeting. The Airport cargo numbers are down. Bob O'Brien will find other avenue to bring in revenues.

Illinois Association of RC&Ds (IARCD) – Cathy Brunner reminded everyone to contact our Congressmen and Senators to support the House language for the RC&D program. Blackhawk Hills RC&D has been asked to host the IARCD Annual Meeting. The meeting will be held sometime in mid to end of September. John Huggins, Blackhawk Hills VISTA volunteer, will be revising the IARCD website. Julie Jacobs is developing a directory for the Association. Jim Elliott, IARCD President, has called and thanked Julie for making IL look good with the North Central Association of RC&Ds.

Regional CEDS Committee – Theresa Wittenauer reported that the next meeting is scheduled for August 21, 2009 at 9:30 AM. At the last meeting it was discussed if the members liked meeting on Fridays. It was decided to keep the meetings on Friday and will only be held quarterly instead of every other month. Theresa is thinking about having Betty Stienert to speak at the next meeting to give an update on some State Bills. Della Moen appreciated the wording of healthy environment in the CEDS document. Bill Tonne asked who chairs the Regional CEDS Committee. Blackhawk Hills RC&D Vice President (Ron Colson) chairs the Regional CEDS Committee.

Galena Trail & Coach Road Society – Tim Keller reported that the Society's June 13th Meeting in Mineral Point got cancelled. He is not sure as to why it got cancelled. Tim asked how many saw the steam train come through the area a couple of weeks ago. A lot of people came out to view it. Ron Colson added that there had been 200 people at the Oregon overpass on Route 2 to see the train. Cathy Brunner announced that Governor Quinn signed today a Memorandum of Understanding to coordinator application for the Chicago Hub High Speed Rail Corridor to the Federal Railroad Administration for American Recovery Reinvestment Act stimulus funding. Tim attended the dedication of Horse Shoe Mound and Mark Miller, Illinois Department of Natural Resources Director was there. IDNR is getting the Conservation Congress up and running again.

US Route 20 – There was nothing new to report.

Highway 30 – There was nothing new to report.

Driftless Area Initiative (DAI) – Della Moen reported that the DAI Board serves as the personal committee and they are resolving some minor issues. Dave Wilson is the Coordinator/Director for the DAI. He is paid \$40,000 a year and he works with 6 RC&Ds. Five million is needed to keep the organization moving forward. DAI needs the RC&D Councils to look at projects that would fit into the Driftless area and the economy and feed those ideas into the DAI effort. If anybody knows of a project that would fit, please let Della know. Lynne Kilker asked would a Geothermal Solar Panel project fit into the DAI mission. Lynne will contact to Della to discuss this further. Julie Jacobs asked if the SWCDs been contacted about possible projects. Della replied that the SWCDs were asked but they are keyed to marketing the Farm Programs. Trout Unlimited has developed a packet. Chuck Moen added that the Earth Day celebration is being planned for April 23, 2010 at Chestnut Mountain. A Stephenson County SWCD film maybe used at the event. Hoping to have a lot of dignitary at the event.

Next Council Meeting – the next Council Meeting will be held Monday, September 28, 2009 at 6:00 PM at the Lanark Heritage Center.

Round Table Discussion

Ed Juracek reported that legislation approved the Upper Mississippi International Port District (Jo Daviess and Carroll Counties). Ed asked if Blackhawk Hills RC&D would participate in the port district. If anything, we may be asked to provide a letter of support.

Ron Colson stated that the freight service at the Rockford Airport is down. The passenger service out east to the Baltimore area was postponed. Allegiant is doing well. The AirFest will be held August 22 and 23. Chuck Moen added that the F22A will perform at the AirFest.

Della Moen reported that there was an article in the Journal Standard quoting Theresa Wittenauer. A federal program had approved to restore a 400 acres wetland in Stephenson County but the landowner turned it down because he didn't want to pay the taxes.

Chuck Moen stated the DAI wants to be a line item in the federal budget.

Adjournment

Isaac Mercer made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 8:16 PM. Cathy Brunner seconded the motion. Motion carried.