



INDIANA ASSOCIATION OF
soil and water conservation
DISTRICTS

IASWCD Board of Directors Meeting

May 19, 2023
9:00 am to 11:00 am Eastern
Zoom

MINUTES

Meeting began 9:04 am via Zoom

Present: Amy Work, Liz Rice, Sarah Delbecq, John Kruse, Kim Peterson, Les Zimmerman, Marc Roberts, Mark Kingma, PJ Chumley, Sherry Baird, Ray Chattin, and Ethan Truax

Call to Order/Welcome

- Consent Agenda (*review minutes*)
- *correction to minutes: add Sherry B to "present"*
- *John approved and Sherry seconded the motion to approve minutes*

IASWCD Business

- **Standing Committee Updates**
 - **Finance**
 - Liz working on moving accounts from credit union to Bank of America
 - Marc R: are we doing an outside audit this year? Liz: yes an external audit will be completed this fall.
 - Regarding Lake City Bank - Troy gave an update on the CD's there. Troy will continue conversation with Bobby regarding these CDs.
 - **Governance**
 - Marc R: reviewing guidebook and bylaws after the June 20 strategic planning meeting
 - **Legislative**
 - Indiana Legislative Session Summary, Results:

Les: reminder that Ray and SICIM provided stimulus and challenge to undertake this process of an increase in funding at the statehouse; at June meeting Les became chair of this committee on behalf of IASWCD; thanks to Sarah, Marc R, Mark K and Kim for their help and support; his takeaway: the association needs to adopt an ongoing process whereby we remain engaged with legislators and continue our message; refine and enhance sales and marketing process; remember that this is a two year deal right now; I challenge everyone to make this an ongoing process; personal contacts are key; Ray and I spent hundreds of hours and drove thousands of miles; need

to understand when you make this commitment going forward you will need to pay someone to do this; it's not cheap; we need to make that investment

Ray: congrats on success; SSCB budget is \$8 million+; each district will now receive \$20K over the past \$10K; hoping for a substantial increase for state association dues; need to ramp up your (IASWCD) capacity; someone to manage grants, admin, and day-to-day work so that Liz can use the skills she brings to the table; also agree with Les regarding legislation position; SSCB did approve match for the \$4 Million IRA funds that NRCS put on the table; going to put 12 additional technical people in the field;

Mark Kingma: like the idea, thinking supervisors and those attending annual meetings;

Liz reiterated that the June 20 strategic meeting centers around "what should the association be doing for its member districts?"

Ray: cannot find soil health specialist in Knox Co; perhaps association could help in this manner with finding staff;

Les: learned a lot through this process; received help from Cress Hizer and he opened some doors for us; we need someone to coordinate and manage this process; a consultant or parttime person - don't assume someone will pick this up; don't assume Amy or Liz can do this as that's not fair to them; legislators are mostly urban people and don't know what we do in farming; legislative position should mesh nicely with sales and marketing; this appropriation is from the general fund and a process that we have to go through every other year; we have a small piece of the cigarette tax; there are several legislators that are interested in helping with a dedicated funding stream; would need to have a component of clean water; there is interest at the state house for this;

Ray: if your legislative committee would allow outsiders in, I would be interested in participating to keep SICIM and IASWCD as strong as possible going forward;

Liz: can further discuss capacity and details of this if it is the direction we want to go; encourage you touch base together regarding this and come to June 20 strategy meeting with ideas, thoughts, pros/cons

Les: regarding legislative breakfast, is it an effective use of our funds? pushback on continuing this event; perhaps we could have a CWI day at the statehouse in lieu of the breakfast; perhaps a lunch at the statehouse - slake test, soil health trailer, SICIM demonstrations;

o NACD Fly-In Report

Ethan: great learning opportunity; little disappointed that we only met with 2 congresspeople; met with other staff; takeaway was that local offices are where we will need to focus our efforts;

Liz: wish we would have been more prepared with more Indiana talking points and requests; we specified keep conservation in the farm bill; updated legislators about our statehouse happenings; valuable experience to show some presence, however, it might make sense to focus more on intentional meetings with intentional goals and outcomes;

Ethan: good next step forward - getting the congress people at annual meetings and farms to see what is going on at the local level;

Liz: maybe flip our focus to getting them out to farms as opposed to spending funds for the NACD visit;

Marc: Did they have a reception with ag committee folks? these are usually beneficial.

Ethan: Yes, I think that is what it was, but it was in a very small room and extremely crowded

Liz: very crowded and hard to talk to anyone; was more for NACD mingling; didn't have many legislators there; had a breakfast where 1-2 legislators spoke; very crowded and hard to talk to anyone as a speaker was presenting; maybe we consider shifting to bringing legislators out to us

- **Natural Resource Policy**

- Stan is committee lead and not present; no others present for updates

- **Ad Hoc Committee Updates**

- **Inflation Reduction Act Funding Opportunity**

- Sarah, Mark and Marc on committee; recommendations have been sent to the board

- Mark K.: we agreed to go after money and be mindful of taxpayer money

- Liz: \$4.16 million available to IN via NRCS via the IRA; also called climate change bill; focus on climate change mitigation; NRCS encouraged us to leverage those funds and hire TA staff to help with capacity needs in districts around the state; the funds are spread out over 5 years; hiring 12 staff; double staffing levels for association; meet or exceed value of grants; huge opportunity - once in a generation funding; committee determined this was a good idea, should we take this money? and what should we do with it?; committee looked at different scenarios; decided to pursue with goal of securing 25% match (\$1.08 million); this past Tuesday, SSCB approved the 25% match; so now on the ground, we will have 12 TA staff (association employees) plus a director; working with districts to help districts with capacity staffing needs;

- Marc R: did we make a motion to go forward with this or should we do that now?

Liz: nothing has been finalized at this point; this is a good time for comment and discussion on this

Marc: CWI made this possible; Les and Ray helped make this happen with that increase;

Les: there is a parallel of this and CCSI program; this is the associations effort to provide resources across the state for every district; the opportunity is being provided, it is up to districts to access this;

Les makes motion to move forward with this process; Kim seconded

Liz: this is all happening quickly; administratively - want to add a line item in the budget for administration fees (for association); this could provide up to 10% of funds; funds will need to be built in to cover administrative costs for administering this undertaking

Vote was taken; approved by majority; no objections

Ray: I just want to reiterate that collaboration is important here

- o **2025 and Beyond Conference Committee**

contract with Westin is expiring this year (after 2024)

Liz reviewed Summary of Recommendations from the committee

John: evaluation/survey results showed that parking and costs were a concern as well as legislative breakfast. Discussed moving legislative breakfast to the statehouse.

Kim: would like to do what Les suggested regarding a statehouse visit/meal

John: statehouse visit would give us opportunity to show conservation

Liz: Perhaps this committee will continue to focus on conference; or should we shift this subcommittee to something else and leave this to staff or what? for me it makes sense to keep the subcommittee going and serve as support for Amy and I moving forward;

Mark K - agree with Liz;

Kim: 2025 stay at Westin;

Liz: justifying staying downtown and costs will be somewhat determinate on this legislative breakfast

Ray: success will be dependent on districts reaching out, being prepared etc.

Kim: In the past, I have called the state house legislators and I leave a message with each one; this works well and doesn't take much time;

Liz: need a strategy to encourage and do the invites to the legislators via districts;

Marc: I don't think we need a motion if we aren't spending money on this

Troy: need a motion to continue conference 2025 at the Westin;

Troy made the motion for 2025 conference continuing at The Westin; Mark Kingma seconded; all approved; no opposition; motion passed

John: would like to talk more with Les regarding this and Les agreed

Les: how do we make a reservation regarding a statehouse/conference visit?

Liz: reached out to Cress; need to know when we want to do that event;

Les: would love to get soil health trailer there or parts of it in there

Kim: Tuesday is the best day for Leg breakfast;

John: have to coordinate with when they start their session

Liz: need to look at legislative calendar

Ray: slake test would be good to have there as well

- **IASWCD other business**

- **Strategic Planning Meeting**

June 20, at Morgan-Monroe State Forest Training Center (original plan)

Liz and Amy have met with facilitators from Purdue

The day will focus on the vision for IASWCD and steps to achieve that vision

Cons to meeting at Morgan-Monroe: another group meeting there that day, so facility not fully available to us, distance, difficulty of arriving at location, inconvenience for catering lunch. Amy found a space in Carmel that costs \$700 and Liz recommends the space in Carmel, modern conference room; convenient location;

Mark K: agrees to go Carmel

Marc R :would like to switch to Carmel location

Kim: likes idea of Carmel

Liz: can pull funds from another line item to do this

John moves to have meeting in Carmel; Sherry seconded;

all approved; no opposition

Les: who is invited to attend this meeting?

Liz: in past discussion regarding invitees the board decided to keep attendance at board and key staff (Liz, Amy, Elli and Lisa);

Mark: also we had long discussion about this previously; and we added a facilitator

Marc R: Can we get a really good RSVP list and then see where we are at number wise and prioritize?

Liz: keep in mind this meeting may include difficult conversations and/or decisions

Ray: I would like to be there as SICIM has skin in the game

Sarah: agreement with Liz; need more clarity as to how this day will go; and how do we get from point A to point B in this process;

Liz: ultimately this will be an ongoing process; the goal is a "shared vision" for this day

Marc: it would be nice to have something to present to all the districts after this meeting; Liz agreed

Liz will send an RSVP and give 10-14 days to respond and possibly see if there are spaces to invite others

- o **NACD Summer Meeting**

July 15-19, Bismarck, ND

Liz cannot attend;

Marc: we usually send Roger; and I think we should send him and have someone else ready to go if he cannot; sometimes Tom Crowe goes; Ray goes to some of these meetings too;

Marc made a motion that association reimburse expenses for 3 people to attend; Kim seconded

Liz: it was suggested that Marc Roberts, Roger, Amy and/or Tom Crowe attend; Liz will follow up with them

Ray: do not need financial coverage;

Marc's motion was approved; no objections; motion passed

- o **2024 Annual Conference**

- Securing Sponsors and Exhibitors

- \$30K is goal for sponsors
- Amy: exhibitors - goal of 30 possibly
- Amy: hoping to have sponsor and exhibitor information available at June 20 strategic meeting

- **Other Discussion**

- **River Friendly Farmer 2023**

- August 9, at Indiana State Fairgrounds; 1 pm

- **ISDA/IASWCD meeting**

- August 9, 3:15pm, at Indiana State Fairgrounds

- **Ray/SICIM**

Ray: Presently there is an idea of SICIM coming under state association umbrella; have received pushback from many stating the association is an “underachiever”; envirothon is dying; want to form an exploratory committee with Les and Liz and others; Liz wants to know what SICIM brings to the table; the Indiana Invasives Initiative cannot be successful without districts; would appreciate support from IASWCD for exploratory committee;

Liz: would be happy to be on committee, as administratively this is a huge task
Les: happy to be a part of that; worth exploration;

Marc R: I would also like to join this committee

- **Les/Legislative comments**

Les: back to legislative information - please reach out and thank the legislators for their support; and, Sarah D., I appreciate everything you did with Senator Glick;

Liz will mail out IASWCD notecards to board members for thank yous; Kim and Mark Kingma would like some of these.

Meeting Adjourned approximately 11:30 am