

**Iowa Lakes RC&D
Board Meeting Minutes
August 4, 2011
1:00 PM
(712) 262-2083**

PRESENT

Dan Heissel – Clay County
Linda Swanson – Clay County
Tammy McKeever – Clay County
Jerry Crew – Clay County
Dale Arends – Buena Vista County
Bob Anderson – Buena Vista County
Keith Wirtz – Palo Alto County

Kathy Luedke – O’Brien County
Dr. Mark Schulz – O’Brien County
Bob Ness – Emmet County
Bill Imhoff – Osceola County
Sheriffa Jones – Executive Director
Sara Sickelka – Summer Intern

Meeting called to order by Dan Heissel, chair at 1:00 PM

AGENDA:

MOTION by Bill Imhoff to approve the agenda; SECONDED by Dale Arends; MCU.

MINUTES:

Dan asked for any corrections or additions to minutes of previous meeting.

MOTION by Tammy McKeever to approve minutes; SECONDED by Keith Wirtz; MCU.

TREASURER’S REPORT:

Mark reviewed the treasurer’s report with the board. There was discussion of the actual net income so far this year being (-\$14,368) vs budgeted income of \$1,366; Sheriffa informed the board that there are still monies to be collected from the Byways and Watershed projects as well as from Iowa Lakes Corridor of Opportunity and the Grand Avenue Improvement project for Sara’s wages. Another reason for the discrepancy could be that no Energy Grants were written this year as opposed to 10 or more last year. Turn-around time on the energy grants was only 6 weeks this year, which discouraged a lot of businesses from applying. In other business, insurance rates increased slightly, but were budgeted for, and the internal audit has not yet been completed. Rent did decrease from \$1200 to \$800/month, and there has been no response from IDALS as to the question of whether they would be able to pay something in the way of rent for the space Bob Waters uses.

MOTION to approve the treasurer’s report as presented by Mark was made by Jerry Crew; SECONDED by Bob Anderson; MCU

NEXT MEETING DATE:

Next meeting will be October 6, 2011 at 1:00 p.m.

AGENDA ITEMS:

1. Iowa Lakes RC&D Update & Discussion:

- a. Connie & Sheriffa went to NRCS office in Spirit Lake to look at furniture – still in need of desks. Connie called County Auditor M. Pitts about getting one (or more) from Clay County, but has not heard back; will keep eye on house sales for desks and chairs – need 16-18 chairs for conference room and offices. Spirit Lake office may just swap conference tables with us, since ours will be going to them, and they have two smaller tables they will

need to get rid of. Board suggested keeping eye on household sales or even businesses, such as banks, which are in the process of updating furniture.

- b. Camera has been purchased.
- c. Copy/scanner/printer has been leased from Office Systems in Spencer for 2 year contract.
- d. Fax machine was purchased from Staples.
- e. The mailbox formerly belonging to Heartland Communications is now our own; the Post Office box was originally paid through USDA credit card so not worth getting refund back to USDA. We no longer have a post office box!

2. Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation

Sheriffa was recently at a Byways meeting where they were encouraged to look at their bylaws and articles on an annual basis to keep current, and especially needed now that Jeff is gone.

Sheriffa will look at the bylaws and articles when she returns from maternity leave on September 6, and contact board members who would be interested in going over them with her.

3. Approve Sheriffa's Job Description as Executive Director & Employee Manual:

It was approved that Sheriffa Jones is Executive Director now as opposed to having an RC&D Coordinator, the position held by Jeff. Scenic Byway information will be removed from manual. MOTION by Bill Imhoff to approve job description; SECONDED by Dale Arends; MCU.

Another item for discussion was a clarification of comp time and carry-over. Current accumulation of carry-over time is 18 days combined personal time/sick leave/vacation; if carried over to the following year, RC&D could be responsible for paying out as much as \$5,000 should Sheriffa leave the organization. The board is worried about having that much liability, so a motion was made that any carry-over time at the end of the fiscal year should be approved, via written request, to the Executive Board with the caveat that the time must be used for purposes other than monetary reimbursement (i.e. extended vacation hours).

MOTION made by Bill Imhoff; SECONDED by Dale Arends; MCU.

4. Project Updates from Sheriffa, Connie, and Sara

- a. Payment from Lakes Community Land Trust: \$5,000 received
- b. Local Foods Project: Sheriffa & Jeff will meet to discuss the details of the RCDI (Rural Community Development Initiative) grant. Originally written to include a \$15,000 cash match for three years (for a total of \$45,000), it was approved for a total of \$36,000 over a two year period. Dennis McDonald (Leopold Center Grant and Specialty Crop Block Grant) will be doing the grant work, and it is anticipated that the cash match will come from the organizations the RC&D works with, NOT the RC&D itself. An updated letter of commitment was sent in August to the RCDI.
- c. Scenic Byway Update: Glacial Trail will now be the last to receive the new signs. A ribbon cutting in Peterson will be planned, DOT travel maps have scenic byways marked and a travel guide will be coming out later this year. Discussed Trek the Trail, which had a lower than expected turn-out due in some part to threatening weather the day of the event and competing community events. A big thanks to Charlene & Sara for pulling it all together! The event was also a kick-off for geocaching to be headed up by Charlene in July, August and September. A byways conference will be held in Minneapolis in 2 weeks, but Sheriffa has made a decision not to attend. Once Sheriffa is back full-time she will be looking into making the byways project self-sustaining.
- d. Storm Lake Watershed Management Plan update: two different forms are being used to do the phone call surveys; additional survey that DNR is suggesting that would be done by ISU as a mailed survey would cost \$5000, with the mailing followed by a phone call. ISU

survey seems to duplicate phone call survey – will only be good if in Spanish and targets Hispanic population. The board has agreed to the following points:

- i. If the former coordinator of the RC&D and a Supervisor of B.V. County do not think the ISU survey would be of value, it is probably not our best use of our grant funds; and
- ii. The project has been going on for quite some time, and a survey of this nature may do more harm than good, in that stakeholders want to see outcomes, not be asked for more input; and
- iii. The response is not likely to be good, given the fluid nature of the Hispanic population in B.V. County; therefore:

After extensive discussion of the pros and cons of having ISU conduct a survey mailing vs. the phone survey already being conducted, a MOTION was made by Mark Schulz; SECONDED by Keith Wirtz; that the Board recommends the ISU survey not be conducted, but Adam is invited to go to the board to give his opinion and proposal.

- e. Grand Avenue Research Update: Sara is completing her research work for the project, but states there is still much to be done; this project could be continued, with the help of another grant, for one more summer. Sara's time was divided between the Grand Avenue project (30 hours per week) and the RC&D (10 hours per week), with a portion of her salary paid for by a grant from the Iowa Lakes Corridor of Opportunity. \$5000 has also been budgeted for Sheriffa to do some work as well when it comes to submitting the documents to register the downtown as a historical district.

5. Board Member Potential Projects:

None brought to the board at this time; but mention was made during the meeting that the board should be looking for non-grant funded projects that can provide income for the RC&D in the future.

Meeting adjourned at 2:20 pm

Secretary Signature: _____ Mark Schulz