

**Branch County Conservation District
Special Board Meeting Minutes from April 30, 2019**

Board Members present: Bing Johnson, Diana Lutz, Duane Clover, and Insa Raymond
Staff present: Kathy Worst, Lyndsay Morrison, Marcus Reynolds, and Jordan Beehler
Guests: Becky Mitchell, Stephen Mitchell, Lydia (Mitchell) Littleton, Jack Knorek

The meeting was called to order by acting chair Diana Lutz at 7:00 p.m.

Diana made an opening statement regarding John Mitchell, with high praise for his life's achievements.

New Business:

Introduce CTAI: Welcome Jordan Beehler! Jordan was previously with the Elkhart County Conservation District in Indiana, where she worked in education and outreach. She has received her BS from Oklahoma State, and her Masters from MSU.

Restructuring Board Positions: due to the sad circumstances of the passing of John Mitchell, the District Board needs new chair. This is a requirement. Bing Johnson moved to table the restructuring, while we take our time and carefully this decision. Insa Raymond seconded the motion; the motion passed.

John Mitchell Memorial Fund: \$1,670 were contributed to the District in memory of John Mitchell. John always has been very passionate about the Environthon. The Mitchell family expressed they would like to see \$500 to go in support of the MI Environthon, the remainder of the contributions should go towards a fund for scholarships for students to attend the Environthon or other possible items to be decided upon at a later time. An endowment was discussed a possibility. Additional funds will need to be raised to establish an endowment fund or to continue any long-term future program. Various fundraising options were discussed. Diana Lutz suggested to coordinate a 'Beer Tent' with and at the American Legion as a bash towards the John Steven Mitchell Memorial Fund. John had been a strong supporter and had been actively involved with the American Legion for many years. Bing Johnson moved to set up the John S. Mitchel Fund and to give the state Envirothon \$500 of the current funds, Insa Raymond seconded the motion; the motion passed.

New Director Search: the Board tabled this until later. Jack encouraged us to look for someone we need and who fits the position, and not to simply look for someone who we know. Possibly go through Indeed.

Program Continuations

- a) **Prescribed Burns:** Blue Heron, Nate Simons, might provide a Burn Boss and as many people as we may need to help. We would do the burn and get the money. We'll need to contact Blue Heron for details.
- b) **No-Till Drill Movement:** Keith Raymond, Duane and Denny (on weekends) will be moving the drill from site to site. Diana charged the Board to raise money for a District Pick-up truck. The suggestion was made to contact the Branch County Road Commission to see if they have an old pick-up truck for us to move. Bing Johnson will contact Gary Malcolm from the Road Commission, to see if they have a pick-up truck for us to use.
- c) **Outdoor Education:** all sessions are covered. Jordan will do the soil session; Melanie will lead a session on aquatic invertebrates. We will only do Lakeland School, not Quincy.
- d) **Smith Property Management Issues:** Frank, who cuts firewood for Ron Smith, is using the hay of the property without paying for it. John Mitchell was going to talk to him about this. Insa Raymond moved that Kathy will draft a cease and desist letter for the whole property with the help of Jordan, and send it to Frank. The letter will be cc-ed to Ron Smith. Before we send the letter, a staff member Kathy will talk to Ron Smith regarding this issue. The motion was seconded by Duane Clover, motion passed. The suggestion was

made to invite Ron Smith to a Board Meeting. Another suggestion was made to talk to John Shilling to see if he will give us an easement along his property line for us to get to the field. Marcus will speak with John about this.

Approve Landowner Cost Share for Fuel Pad \$500 and Water Test at \$40.00. moved to approve by Duane Clover, seconded by Insa Raymond, motion passed.

Approve Credit Card Payment \$415.54 Books – tree sale and MAEAP supplies (QB software). Moved to approve by Insa Raymond, seconded by Duane Clover.

Directors' and Staff Reports

Directors: Diana discussed that we need to move forward with the millage. She charged the Board members to each bring one name / contact for the 'Friends of the District' committee to the next meeting. She also suggested that staff and board members visit Service Clubs and give presentations asking for donations towards the Memorial Fund and to inspire interest in joining the Friends of the District committee. Jack and Kathy will draft a white paper for this purpose.

NRCS District Conservationist: Marcus Reynolds – finished up EQIP

CTAI Specialist: Jordan Beehler began as our CTAI on April 22nd.

MWSP / MAEAP Technician: Mike Censke – absent

Farm Bill Biologist: Lyndsay Morrison – reported that those who signed up for CRP in August are now ordering seeds. Marcus added that Lyndsay is doing an awesome job in her work.

Conservation District Administration: Kathy Worst - present

Public Comments: none

Adjourn: the meeting was adjourned at 9:20 p.m.

Meeting minutes respectfully submitted by Insa Raymond, secretary.

Insa Raymond

Signature

6-11-19

Date