



LINN COUNTY, IOWA, CONSERVATION BOARD

MINUTES OF THE MONDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2022, BOARD SPECIAL MEETING

The following is a true copy of the minutes of the meeting of the Linn County, Iowa, Conservation Board held on **February 11, 2022**, at Wickiup Hill Learning Center, 10260 Morris Hills Road, Toddville, IA 52341.

Board Members Present

Hillary Hughes, Steve Emerson, Brent Oleson, and George Kanz

All Board members joined the meeting by conference call.

Board Members Absent

Cindy Burke

Staff Present

Dennis Goemaat, Director; Daniel Gibbins, Deputy Director; Ryan Schlader, Community Outreach Specialist; Randy Burke, Planner; Ted Doscher, Planner

Others Present

None

Call To Order

Board President Hughes called the meeting to order at 12:00 PM

ITEM R1. Discuss and decide regarding bills potentially impacting county conservation boards currently being discussed in the Iowa Legislature.

Goemaat and the Board discussed provisions of SSB 3074, currently under consideration in the Iowa Legislature, including the funding of IWILL and changes to local option sales tax (LOST) funding across the state. Goemaat noted the legislation differs in impact among county conservation boards who may or may not receive LOST funding. Oleson noted the impact of losing LOST overwhelms the benefit of funding a reduced impact IWILL based on the current proposed formula and that state distributed LOST funding would not be reliable. Oleson noted this legislation would end the ability of other county conservation boards to secure LOST in the future and suggested Linn County communication of the benefits of LOST funding might be helpful to encourage more LOST votes across the state to support conservation. Hughes asked how many other groups would lose LOST funding. Goemaat noted over 1,000 other entities in the state currently receive funding through LOST. Oleson noted the state is proposing to scoop all current LOST funding to control distribution. Oleson noted other funding sources transferred to the state for management have been reduced or are slated to be eliminated. Kanz noted his support for a Board letter to be sent out soon. Oleson noted getting the letter to the Linn County lobbyist for his use as needed.

Goemaat also discussed SSB 3134 proposals to cap the price of purchasing land by the IDNR and county conservation boards below a capped number based on an average land evaluation which does not reflect higher valued land around urban areas. Hughes asked who submitted SSB 3134. Goemaat noted we are not certain about the source or rationale for this legislation.. Hughes noted the Board would only be able to pay a reduced percentage of land value even

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for areas like wetlands that have no potential agricultural value. Hughes noted this is specifically directed at county conservation boards and the IDNR reduce public land acquisition. Hughes also noted the lack of purchase at farm auctions by the Board historically. Oleson noted this might be a reaction from farmers complaining about farmland that is out of reach due to high price in some areas. Hughes noted that farmland priced out of reach has nothing to do with conservation board purchases. Goemaat noted hearing an opinion exists by some legislators that conservation land purchases are hurting new farmers. Oleson noted this might be a response to out of state wealthy hunters buying timber for hunting in southern Iowa. Goemaat noted he heard significant input was given to legislators opposing this bill. Consensus by the Board was for staff to continue working to educate legislators about the impact of SSB 3134.

Motion by Oleson, second by Kanz

To authorize the Board President to sign correspondence on behalf of the Board opposing SSB 3074 provision for the elimination of local option sales tax funding while expressing continued support by the Linn County Conservation Board for the funding of the Natural Resources & Outdoor Recreation Trust fund.

Vote: aye; all present
 nay; none
 absent: Burke

ITEM R2. Public comment
None

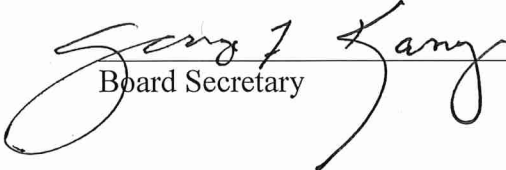
ITEM R3. Adjourn

The meeting was adjourned at 12:27 PM
Daniel Gibbins typed the above minutes.



Recording Secretary

SEAL



Board Secretary