

Ford County Farm Committee Minutes

Monday, May 19, 2025 in the Sheriff's Boardroom in the Ford County Jail

Call to Order: Mr. Niewold called the meeting to order at 4:30pm

Roll Call: Cindy Ihrke, Garrett Kerber, Tom McQuinn, Sarah Mussman, and Greg Niewold - Present. Others present: Kendall Deesburg and Nick Purcell

Public Comment: Kendall Deesburg commented on his desire to see the IRAP agreement move forward, and that the 30 acres pasture area is limiting to involvement and may not be large enough for enrollment if the committee and board choose to move forward with the program.

Old Business:

- 1) Discussion was held regarding the CRP operating agreement. Mr. Niewold stated that he and Mr. Killian have been working on it, and that several factors that need research have come up, such as but not limited to contract length of CRP, as well as what is allowed/not allowed (ie hunting). Mrs. Ihrke reminded the committee in her opinion this is not an exclusive agreement but open for public use and she believes there is a state statute that the county is not liable for issues arising on 'public ground.' Mr. McQuinn stated the operator would be #1 for insurance and Ford County would be #2 for any liability if it arose. No action taken.

New Business:

- 1) Discussion was held regarding payment of the land deeds for all 3 farms as well as the 65 acres being transferred from the FC Public Building Commission to FC. Mr. Niewold informed the committee that State's Attorney Killians budget will be covering these costs after a conversation he and Mr. Killian had. No action taken.
- 2) Mrs. Mussman made the motion to ratify the October 5, 2023 amended US Fish and Wildlife agreement, Mr. McQuinn 2nd. After a brief discussion the motion carried for full board approval at the next full county board meeting.
- 3) Discussion concerning the IDNR IRAP program took place, with Mr. Niewold following up with IDNR on minimum acres allowed for sign-up, as well as specifics on liability insurance under the program, as well as understanding of specifically who is "neither party" in section #13 of an IRAP agreement. No action taken.
- 4) Mr. Niewold moved, and Mrs. Mussman seconded the motion to allow Mr. Niewold to work with the FSA office to correctly show production ground and non-production ground on Farm #2944 (County Farm #3). After discussion clarifying these changes are for the enrolled US Fish and Wildlife acres as well as areas around a homestead in the SW corner of the farm the motion carried and moves to the full board for approval at the next full county board meeting.
- 5) Mr. Niewold moved and Mr. Kerber seconded a motion to seek bids for tree removal, hedgerow removal/stripping, and root raking on County Farm #3 at the conclusion of the current 2025 crop year. After lengthy discussion Mr. Niewold rescinded his motion. Mrs. Ihrke stated she would like to see a conservation plan created for the farm and/or county, and also receive 'approval' from FSA that the hedge can be stripped on the East, North, and West property lines, and potentially removed from the county road to the pasture, while stripping the hedge that borders the west side of pasture ground, and feasibility of removing the scrub trees running east/west from the west property line to the pasture, as well as removal of all trees in waterways. Mr. Niewold will discuss with FSA and/or NRCS, and bring it for further conversation at a future meeting.

- 6) There was no discussion concerning seeking bids for waterway fixes, it was tabled until the preceding hedge/tree topic is answered as it has to occur first.
- 7) Discussion was had regarding the ability to modify Mr. Purcell's lease as the tillable/plantable acres are not in agreement with the FSA map and the US Fish and Wildlife program as well as a homestead on the SW corner of the property. Mr. Niewold will converse with Mr. Killian concerning the ability to modify the acres in the lease.

Safety Report - None

Adjournment - Mrs. Mussman made the motion, Mr. Kerber seconded. No discussion. Motion Carried. Meeting adjourned at 5:34pm

Greg Niewold
Ford County Farm Committee Chairman