

Soil & Water Committee

Meeting Minutes

November 11, 2025

The meeting was called to order by Committee Chairman Koch at 10:09 a.m.

Members present for roll call were Owen DuCharme, Kate Krachey, Mary Kuhn, and Chad Sime. Members of the community were also present.

Motion by Kuhn, second by Sime to approve October 22, 2025, minutes as mailed. Motion carried unanimously. Krachey abstained.

Land Conservationist Report, Dave Troester: Troester shared with the committee that in the last month he has worked on the Land and Water Plan, received feedback from DNR and DATCP. DATCP checklist states we met all the requirements. Troester added "I received a few letters, and today's public hearing". Troester continued his report informing there are a few last nutrient management plans yet to be received. Clean sweep was a success. AIS grant is due 11/15/2025. Troester informed the committee that the Town of Freeman will be holding a Nutrient Management Class. The poster contest, tree sale, follow up on Showen sand pit are all being worked on.

Troester informed the committee that there are overdue nutrient management plans. A discussion followed resulting in Kuhn asking for an earlier cut off date. Sime added if you have overapplied responsible application has disappeared.

Chairman Koch asked to have a discussion and possible action on both Livestock Siting Applications together. Koch asked the members of the committee to discuss or ask questions, share thoughts. Because there was so much material, defer a decision until the December meeting. Today should be more fact finding.

Sime stated he has looked through the packet. Sime continued by stating he is a firm believer of it's my land, I can do what I want, on the same note, it can't negatively affect someone else's land. Personally, I don't disagree with Koch, I agree with a December decision. Sime added, if the manure pit is done correctly, manure is an asset, to grow crops more competitively. Better than pot ash out of Canada. Make sure I's are dotted and the T's are crossed.

Krachey stated her family are beef farmers. Krachey reiterated what Sime stated, adding as farmers we are always conservationists.

Kuhn stated she is a farmer as well. Currently, I'm not ready to decide.

DuCharme stated he is a retired feed dealer. DuCharme stated he is concerned about the roads.

Koch asked the Grubers questions regarding the operation.

Koch: Where do the pigs come from? Who purchases them when they are finished? Gruber: Pigs will come from various states, Iowa and Michigan primarily. Will go to supplementing cell farms, primarily in Iowa and Michigan.

Koch: Do the pigs never leave the barn? Gruber: No.

Koch: There are 2 LLC's – are the principles similar? Gruber: Yes, very similar.

Separate 70% of manure – stay off public road, pump into surrounding fields.

Koch: Would you provide the County with the Bio security plan? Gruber: Yes.

Koch: How many employees will you hire? Gruber: One per operation. Three – four hours a day. On load in/out days there will be two – three staff per facility. The operation is self-sufficient.

Koch: Will the county be notified when spreading manure will occur. Gruber: Yes.

Koch: What is the total cost of the construction? Gruber: \$1 million each location.

Koch: How long will construction take? Gruber: Three to four months, depending on the weather.

Koch: What is the mortality rate? Gruber: 1%

Koch: How big will the compost area need to be? Gruber: Most mortality happens when the pigs are 30-40 lbs.

Koch: Will there be surface application of manure? Gruber: Approximately 30% in spring and some in fall.

Koch: Are you actively looking for additional land to apply manure. Gruber: Not actively, neighbors have come to us interested in having manure spread.

Koch: Over the course of time would there be excess nutrients. Gruber: No. Iowa is very similar. Phosphorus and has the same nutrient management plan regulations - Iowa facility currently. Nitrogen is higher, phosphorus is lower

Troester: What is the Nutrient Management plan yield goals? Gruber: Our goal is 250 bushels for corn. 2025 Iowa corn was at 250 bushels this year, Wisconsin corn was at 225 bushels.

Koch: Will the county get a map of compost sites? Gruber: Yes.

Koch opened questions to the public.

Community member: There are two different LLCs. Is anyone related by blood or marriage? Gruber: No.

Community member: A letter from Marietta township inquired about the cost to the township, specifically increasing the levy.

Joe Childs: The roads will be affected by heavy truck loads. Childs asks the county to use common sense rules. Adding fire fighters should be trained, essentially, we are subsidizing one person's business, a lot of things we are not prepared for. How long until they (Gruber's) realize it's more efficient to build a sow farm right next door. Must have rules that make sense for Crawford County. The I's dotted and T's crossed mentality is a dangerous way to proceed. We need common sense rules, which may require more than Troester and Bunting to regulate. Crawford County does not have the rules in place. Adding 500 more spreadable acres would make a huge difference but requires resubmitting the application. Gruber (Mary): The trucks pay taxes. There will be two - four trucks a week for a year. Gruber: We have no intentions of building sow farms.

Koch stated we have a month, if anyone would like more clarification please call or email Dave Troester. Today, I'm not able to decide. We will add these items to the December 9 agenda.

(Mary) Gruber: We have the acres required. Childs: There was protest over Roth's .5 acres per animal, this is .22 acres per animal and feels the acreage is not adequate, there is no standard, we are setting a precedent. Approving the applications is a dangerous precedent to set.

Discussion and possible action on the Roth Feeder Pig II- Livestock Siting Permit: Troester received an email stating it has been more than two years since approval. The DNR has paused Roth II. Prohibiting them from populating. Koch tabled the item to the December 9 meeting so that Mr. Roth may attend.

Motion by Sime, second by DuCharme to approve vouchers as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Land & Water Projects report, Travis Bunting shared with the committee that the truck topper is finally on. Last week the last project was completed. CREP transfers have been done for easements. Surveying will start in December, when deer hunting has ended.

Wildlife report, Greg Cerven asked the committee to set commodity prices for 2025. Motion by Krachey, second by Kuhn, to set the 2025 commodity prices at \$3.99 per bushel of corn, \$10.18 per bushel of soybeans, \$150.00 per ton of alfalfa, and \$1.90 per stem of stems. Motion carried unanimously.

Motion by Krachey, second by DuCharme to set the 2025 80% harvest date on November 15, 2025. Motion carried unanimously.

NRCS, no report.

DNR Forester, Rebecca Vasquez, not report.

UW Extension report, Kuhn stating things are moving along. Due to state cuts, the FoodWise coordinator was lost. There have been several budget cuts.

FSA report, Sime stated there have been two staff members in the office taking crop reports.

Kuhn asked if FSA or a stand-alone insurance company would insure a margin on livestock. Krachey stated it would be a private insurance company possibly go through your crop insurance company.

Krachey requested poster contest information to take to local schools.

Public Comment - please come to our noon public hearing if you can. Taking input on the 10 year soil and water plan.

Sime suggested to the committee, on a long-term basis, pushing for more staff. Crawford County needs staff to answer questions locally.

Next meeting date is Tuesday, December 9, 2025.

Motion by Krachey, second by Kuhn, to adjourn the meeting at 11:15 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Amy Oppriecht".

Amy Oppriecht
Administrative Assistant