

Des Moines County Conservation Job Description

Position: Board Member

Appointed by: Des Moines County Board of Supervisors

Compensation: Conservation Board members serve without pay, but may be reimbursed for expenses incurred while carrying out official county duties.

Basic Responsibility: Works within the corporate, decision-making framework of a five-member board to set policy regarding activities and affairs of the conservation department, according to the guidelines set forth in Chapter 350 of the Code of Iowa.

Term: Five-year term. Selected on the basis of "demonstrated interest in conservation matters" as required by law (Code of Iowa) and other criteria indicative of a good board member, as indicated in this Job Description. Board members must be residents of the County.

Status: Once appointed, county conservation board members become county officials and should work to address the conservation needs of the county in a positive, responsible manner. Conservation boards receive county tax money and other funds to carry out their duties. However, the Conservation Board is a separate governmental entity, with the authority to govern itself and make decisions without interference or approval of any other governmental body, unless otherwise stated in the Code of Iowa.

County Conservation Board (CCB) Responsibilities: The CCB operates as a corporate body, meaning individual members acting independently have no legal status or authority and cannot commit or bind the CCB by their actions. The CCB must hold regular monthly meetings and annually formulate a budget. The CCB may transact business with a minimum quorum of three members at an official meeting. Iowa law authorizes CCBs to:

1. Adopt by-laws. Establish rules and regulations.
2. Enter into contracts.
3. Fix time and place of regular and special meetings.
4. Employ an Executive Director to carry out Board policies and programs (Executive Director may hire other staff, with Board approval).
5. Acquire land by gift, purchase, lease, agreement, exchange otherwise in fee or with conditions for public museums, parks, preserves, playgrounds, forests, and other purposes.
6. Study the need for conservation areas and facilities and adopt a coordinated plan to meet such needs.
7. Plan, develop, preserve, administer, and maintain all areas and facilities under its jurisdiction.
8. Accept, in the name of the county, gifts, bequests, and contributions.
9. Charge and collect fees for use of facilities and equipment.
10. Furnish employees uniforms and other items necessary to complete duties.

Individual CCB Member Responsibilities:

Characteristics, abilities, and skills of a good board member include:

1. Ability to listen and weigh facts before making decisions.

2. Ability to work within the consensus or majority rule structure of the board decision-making process.
3. Knowledge of CCB authority and laws pertaining to CCB activities.
4. Willingness to express opinion and give input during official meetings.
5. Willingness to be active and participate on behalf of the CCB at other meetings.
6. Ability to communicate clearly.
7. Ability to serve the citizens of Des Moines County, without undue special interest bias.
8. Understanding the proper channels of communication with an Executive Director.
9. Has time and energy to devote to promotion and development of conservation programs in official meetings, conferences, and other situations.
10. Courage to withstand pressures from political, special interest, and individual interventions.

In carrying out the duties of a CCB member, individuals should:

1. Attend official board meetings. Regular meetings are held the first Wednesday of every month. Other meetings are scheduled throughout the year on an as-needed basis.
2. Be actively involved in meetings affecting the CCB's programs, including budget hearings, meetings with legislators, supervisors, etc.
3. Be prepared for meetings by studying information and reports concerning items to be considered for action.
4. Actively support the CCB system by attending the annual state conference and responding to requests from the Iowa Association of County Conservation Boards (IACCB).
5. Promote growth, development and professionalism of CCB staff and board members.
6. Attend continuing education trainings offered by the IACCB. The main trainings are a two or three-day conference in September and a one-day meeting in March or April.
7. Stand behind the Executive Director and his staff publicly. If concerned about individual decisions or actions, privately express those to the Chairperson and/or Executive Director.
8. Differentiate between problems requiring CCB action and those which should be solved by the Executive Director and his/her staff.
9. Promote support for the CCB program among county residents.
10. Be actively involved in the budget process - giving input in the formulation of a budget proposal that is fiscally responsible, cost effective, yet maintains the quality of the Conservation Board's programs and activities.
11. Oversee monthly budget expenditures.
12. Consider recommendations and suggestions for program development presented by the Executive Director.
13. Work with other board members and the Executive Director to formulate short and long-range goals and objectives.

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