

**Becker Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting
Wednesday, November 19, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, November 19, 2014 in the Conference Room of the Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Those present were Supervisors Tony Beck, Kathy Stenger, Jerome Flottesmesch and Eugene Pavelko. Others present include District Administrator Peter Mead, District Admin Assistant Jen Wentz, NRCS District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz and District Technicians Ed Clem and Marsha Watland.

Call to Order – Chairman Stenger called the meeting to order at 8:03 a.m.

Approve October Regular Meeting Minutes – no changes noted.

Motion (Beck, Flottesmesch) to approve the October 15th meeting minutes. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Review October Committee of the Whole Meeting Minutes – no changes noted.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Pavelko) to approve the October 20th meeting minutes. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Financial Reports and Bills for Approval – Peter reviewed these with the board.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Beck) to approve the October financial reports and November bills for approval. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Reports –

NRCS District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz reported on the following:

- CSP applications should have been completed by November 28 but several extensions have now moved the deadline to December 31st. We have 26 landowners signed up. All but 3 ag applicants backed out. Reenrollments had to maintain what existed in 2010. Many have since signed up for a 2015 contract application. There will be a re-ranking and scoring period later this winter. We have 18 contracts yet to complete in the office. Ed gives much credit to Ray Hummel for following through with this program.
- An EQIP training will be held January 15-16 in Walker for Ed and Ray. We're accepting applications now until the first of February. The first scoring period has ended with a second due November 21st and a third due December 19th.
- A deferred haying option is available under CRP.
- Sediment basins, grade stabilizations, surveys and construction continue, but all 2013 projects should be completed by next week.
- A project plan must be completed and approved, then reviewed by the landowner prior to survey and construction.

- He's been working with Adam on CRP. 117 contracts will expire at the end of December 2015. About 1/3 are riparian forest buffers. Now is the time to consider planting and replanting options.
- There was a WRP contract received at the end of September for survey on three easements in 2015. We have been sitting on these for over a year and finally received funding to complete the legal surveys. Many access problems still exist.
 - We are working through an easement issue regarding adverse possession. The property was recently surveyed beyond the existing fence line. Continuous grazing has been ongoing. Once the WRP is put in place, the area will be land-locked. A quit-claim has been requested by the state prior to the landowner installing the program.

District Technician Ed Clem reported on the following:

- Construction season is wrapping up but there are some unfinished projects yet to complete.
- Dirt work is still underway on Gary Villiard's property.
- As-built certifications will be next. Contractor invoices will be produced once these are completed.
- eLINK reporting will begin soon.
- We had quite a year with the Clean Water Land & Legacy program. Our 2014 accomplishment reports will be extensive and should signify the superb partnerships we have with local NRCS staff and other agencies.
- First count of the projects completed in 2014 include 38 water & sediment control basins, 5 wetland restorations and 2 grade stabilizations. The latter is an enormous undertaking often times compared to a city water main project.
- In addition, we saw massive growth with our shoreland program; several restoration projects were completed for Planning & Zoning.
- 227 acres of CRP were confirmed over the last few months. When combined with buffers, this produces over 37 miles of new grass barriers installed this year in 2014.
- This surge of conservation practices will not cease in 2014 as many of these projects will be carried over into next year as well.
- These projects wouldn't be possible without the extensive knowledge and vast efforts of everyone in this office. Teamwork is the key.

Peter presented photos of the most recent grade stabilization project on Curtis Nelsons land located south of Hwy 10 near Boyer Lake in Lake Park, as well as Bruce Nelson and Cameron Ullrich's nearby water and sediment control basins.

Bruce Nelson's filter strips and the tile break/wetland restoration at Mike Roen's were highlighted as well.

District Technician Marsha Watland reported on the following:

County Ag Inspector

- Currently working on her CAI annual report.
- Township weed inspector reports are being returned to our office and can now be updated. The final report will be submitted to our County Commissioners during the third week of December.
- Upper Midwest Invasive Species conference was well attended. Many sessions were geared toward AIS, but cooperative weed management presentations are steadily growing. She presented first on the agenda. In the future, she would like to visit more on tree varieties and

planting procedures for windbreaks, etc. She learned of many species that are becoming extinct in our area.

- The District CAI meeting was held in Mahnomen. 19 of the 22 counties attended.
- Two representatives from Becker County Hwy and Natural Resources will attend the CWMA meeting in December. They will meet at USFWS. Becker County NRM has seen a steady increase in tansy invasions especially among tree plantings. Proper management will be the focus in these areas. Reforestation and road treatments seem to be the most damaging to our recreational trails.
- Tansy remains a high priority concern in our county; the Twin Cities is beginning to realize this. She has been working long and hard to get results on controlling this invasive species through letters and notices to property owners in the most heavily infested areas. She hopes that by 2017 we will see viable results and credits the assistance of area townships.
- A new weed will be introduced called Saxifrage – now in Kittson County and possibly affecting Becker, Hubbard and Mahnomen counties.

Shoreland Specialist

- Shoreland project for next spring – Bateman, Two Inlets. Landowners are removing a retaining wall in a public swimming area. 80' of shoreline will be re-landscaped including terracing and native plantings.
- Continues work on the shoreland contractor licensing sessions.
- All installations for 2014 will be presented next month; Planning & Zoning will view this as well.

BWSR Academy Recap – Peter reviewed the sessions that were attended by all District employees. Various learning experiences were enjoyed by all. One session, especially key to reducing administrative paperwork overload, included the grant tracking category of *Tracking Landowners from Hello to Goodbye* and was presented by Troy Kuphal from Scott County, Jay Riggs from Washington County and Nathan Hylla from Stearns County. Their system utilizes Sharepoint and Microsoft Access to incorporate all reporting into one program that collects landowner information from the first call to the final construction inspection. This database allows a user to enter data once to be used again and again.

Peter has approached Rick Kelsven from Becker County IT Department to incorporate Microsoft Sharepoint in our office. Rick is already working on this for Human Services and plans to hire staff to implement further but has run short on funding by about \$25,000. Peter proposes that the Soil & Water District could produce that amount with our unbudgeted and unrealized revenue from 2014 CRP contracts.

Board discussion continued with a short Q&A session. After negotiations are complete and the software is in place, this would possibly begin in our office by February 2015.

Motion (Flottesch, Pavelko) to authorize administration to move forward with the addition of Microsoft Sharepoint and offer the funds necessary to put this in place within Becker County and our office. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

BWSR FY2013 Grant Verification Process – We have volunteered to be included in this round of verifications. This will comprise anything relating to grant funding and includes the TSA, area watersheds and Becker County offices.

Abandoned Well Sealing Discussion – Because of recent contract cancellations and state money being returned, we've been approached by several partners to discontinue well seal cost-share funding. There

are other options for assistance if landowners are having a difficult time paying for these costs such as EQIP funds and Minnesota Department of Ag low interest loans. Board discussion continued.

We propose to discontinue any additional well sealing contracts using state cost-share funding.

Motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to discontinue the well sealing program using state cost-share funds effective January 1, 2015. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Approve 2015 Tree, Shrub and Native Plant Order Forms – newly completed forms for trees and native plants were distributed to all.

Many varieties were removed based on previous year's sales. A few new varieties were added. The shoreland packet was removed and a pollinator section was included. We now offer a native plant order form which includes three kits for rain gardens, pollinators and shoreland. All kit species will be plugs. Discussion.

The board agreed to change the pollinator kit and offer a smaller size for a bit more variety.

Motion (Beck, Pavelko) to approve the 2015 tree order form and native plant form with the changes discussed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

MASWCD Convention Arrangements & Annual Business Meeting – business meeting information was distributed to all supervisors and final convention travel arrangements were discussed.

2013 State Cost Share Amendments – the following contract amendments were presented for consideration:

Contract #13-12 with David Larson. Well-sealing contract extended to a completion date of October 15, 2015.

Contract #13-19 with Jeffrey Andersen. Well-sealing contract extended to a completion date of November 30, 2015.

Contract #13-29 with Dave & Claudia Welte. Native buffer cost adjustment. Total state cost-share funds of \$3,904.74.

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to approve the 2013 state cost-share amendments as listed above. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2014 State Cost-Share Contracts – the following contract was initiated from the recent parking lot pavement project on our office property that was shut down due to lack of permitting. Storm water calculations were included in the plan that Claire Olson established. The following contract was presented for consideration:

Contract #14-9 with Curtis Briggs, rain garden. Estimated project cost \$4,000; eligible state cost-share \$2,000.

Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to approve the 2014 state cost-share contract listed above. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2013 & 2014 State Cost-Share Vouchers for Payment – the following contracts were submitted for payment approval.

Contract #13-29 with Dave & Claudia Welte, native buffer. Total project cost \$5,206.31; actual cost-share payment \$3,904.74.

Contract #14-2 with Dustin Jasken, well sealing. Total project cost \$1,010; actual cost-share payment \$240.

Contract #14-6 with Dennis & Sonja Swangler, native buffer. Total project cost \$5,128.23; actual cost-share payment \$1,746.

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to approve payment of the above listed 2013 & 2014 state cost-share contracts. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Clean Water Legacy Cancellation and Contract Reassignment – the following changes were made in October but not noted in the agenda or the meeting minutes.

Contract #CWL-13-2013 with Kevan Nelson. EQIP payment amounts are confirmed. Cancel contract with 2013 funds and reassign to the remaining 2012 Clean Water funds.

Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to cancel the 2013 CWL contract noted above. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Contract #CWL-4-2012 with Kevan Nelson, water & sediment basins. Estimated project cost \$28,943; eligible cost-share \$3,618 and additional funds of \$18,090 from 2014 EQIP.

Motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to approve the 2012 CWL contract as noted above. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Other –

Replacement of Duane Grossman is taking longer than anticipated. The candidates proposed by the committee meeting last month have all turned down the position. Other suggestions were given. Another offer will be made to the suggested parties. We should have more information in December.

Rice Lake decisions regarding the Targeted Watershed interview attended by Peter and Tera Guetter will be announced by mid to late December.

We're in dire need of a new desk for our engineering technician who will be busy putting together design plans for upcoming projects. Peter proposes that we follow through with a newer model for her workstation.

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to authorize administration to purchase a new workstation for Claire Olson. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

RRVCSA – TSA 1 meeting highlights: MASWCD Area 1 Director, Ken Pederson was in attendance and noted the new stable funding request being brought to our state legislatures. Their goal is to convince the legislature and partners that we need steady funding to keep our offices running. Possibilities are being put forth to offer more permanent funding for all Districts. Competitive grants alone can't keep staff in our offices. Informing our state legislature is a critical step to making this change for the future.

Pavelko attended his town board meeting last week regarding AIS cross arm installations in the Floyd Lakes area. His lake association distributed a letter that noted Becker Soil & Water Conservation District's approval of this project. Our position is and will continue to be focused on the terrestrial side of this issue. We have NOT authorized or approved any of the AIS cross arm installations on these lakes.

Board discussion continued. We fear that these restrictions will only cause more anger amongst the public and lead to intentionally infested waters.

Five shoreland variance requests were brought forth last week to the Becker County board of adjustments. After recommendations to deny were heard from our SWCD office and DNR staffs, all five were passed. These requests should not have been approved unless there was “notable and distinct” hardship involved. This was not the case in any of the requests. We propose making appeals on all of them but are unsure if our suggestions will be heard. The board of adjustments doesn’t understand the technical aspects of these projects. Consistency with the county water plan and state standards are being ignored. The law states that you don’t set precedence by creating a variance. County ordinance should not be written to allow for variances.

Upcoming Events –

MASWCD Annual Convention, Bloomington: December 7-9

Ag Issues Forum, Callaway Community Center: December 17

Being no further business, motion (Beck, Flottemesch) to adjourn the meeting at 11:07 a.m. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Approved: Gene Pavelko, Becker SWCD Secretary Date: December 17, 2014