



Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting Wednesday, September 19, 2018

Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, September 19, 2018 in the Conference Room of the USDA Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, MN.

Those present were Chairman Tony Beck, Eugene Pavelko, Jerome Flottesmesch, Travis Schauer and Kathy Stenger. Staff members include District Administrator Peter Mead, Office Assistant Alisa Bentley and NRCS District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz. Becker County Commissioner Barry Nelson and Representative Steve Green was also in attendance.

Call to Order

Meeting called to order at 8:35 a.m. by Chairman Beck.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda Items

(August 15, 2018 Regular Meeting Minutes; Employee Program Reports)

Chairman Beck noted a typo on meeting minutes under TNC Agreements.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Schauer) to approve the August minutes with noted correction as well as the agenda and consent agenda. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Financials

Treasurers Report and Bills for Approval. Mead reviewed the August reports and list of bills to pay for September.

Motion (Pavelko, Schauer) to approve August Treasurers Report and pay the list of bills. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Stenger) to approve the Supervisor's Quarterly Expenses & Special Meetings. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

District Reports

Administrator's Report was presented by Peter Mead, and is supplied as attachment A below.

State Representative Steve Green

Representative Green introduced himself and explained the nature of his visit. It was brought to his attention that Mahnomens SWCD feels they are being singled out for their opposition to organizational changes to the Technical Service Area, and there were rumors of removing them from the Joint Powers Board. He said changes have been proposed that Mahnomens feels they are giving away their voting powers if managers are allowed on the board, other districts are being uncompromising, and teleconferencing can solve the problems.

Flottesmesch explained his role as TSA Chair, and the Role of Becker SWCD as the Host District of the TSA. He also explained the challenges the TSA has faced since state funding constraints forced two TSAs to merge in 2009, problems holding quorums, and that TSA is a lot less about policy than it is operations. Local district boards set the policies, and administration handles operations within those policies. Amending the agreement to allow the managers to vote in representation of their district or serve as an alternate if board member solves issues with quorums, and brings efficiency to operations. Jerome feels teleconferencing is not a legal option, but perhaps that has changed.

Mead asked Green how familiar he was with the Structure and Purpose of Technical Service areas, and gave a brief history and overview of Non-Point Engineering assistance in MN, TSA's various compositions around the state, Funding, and the changes that took place in 2009. Mead explained TSA1 has 30 percent of the states cropland, more than any other TSA and covers nearly 20 of Minnesota and gave an overview of the 10 different options the

TSA has explored for organizational effectiveness. All 16 SWCD boards, including Mahnomen, have submitted letter in support of the changes. After two years of effort the changes were required to pass by resolution, and every SWCD but Mahnomen did so. The TSA has also offered amended language two times to no avail, and while teleconferencing may help achieve a quorum it won't necessarily lead to greater effectiveness or efficiency.

Representative Green stated he would have staff furnish the statute he believes addresses teleconferencing at open meetings.

There was discussion between Mr. Green and Commissioner Barry Nelson regarding Tax Forfeit Land, taxing authority, and composition of Watershed Boards. Rep Green stated watershed boards should be made up of county commissioners because they are elected officials, and will be introducing a bill.

Open Forum

Nothing presented

Buffer Implementation

Mead discussed obligatory requirements and reviewed BWSR's provided options for developing a buffer compliance review plan.

Motion (Flottesch, Pavelko) to have administration draft a policy including Option 1 on both compliance and random spot checks, as well as a defined process to refer non-compliant parcels to the County and present to the board for approval.

Grants and Agreements

Review and approve Minnesota Land Trust Contract for Services

Mead explained that MN Land Trust approached the SWCD regarding their wetland easement program and presented a \$2500 contract for services to conduct outreach in 2018, with future funding available. These are protective working lands easements with more latitude than typical government programs, and they work with the landowner on the terms and payment amounts up to market value.

Motion (Stenger, Pavelko) authorizing administration to enter the Minnesota Land Trust Contract for Services. Affirmative. Unanimous. Carried.

Review and approve BWSR Ogema Road Bank Joint Powers Agreement

Mead presented a Joint Powers Agreement with the MN Board of Water and Soil Resources to provide closing, acquisition and implementation assistance on the Ogema Wetland Road Bank project for the amount of \$9,000.

Motion (Flottesch, Stenger) to approve the agreement with BWSR. Affirmative. Unanimous. Carried

AIS Prevention Vouchers for Approval

Pelican River Watershed District. Total project costs \$4,000.

City of Detroit Lakes. Total project costs \$4,000.

Motion (Flottesch, Stenger) to approve the above noted AIS prevention vouchers. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

State Cost Share Contracts for Approval

#SCS-17-10, Paul Muckenhirn, Shoreland Stabilization. Total estimated project costs \$4,946 with eligible 50% cost share payment of \$2,320.

#SCS-18-6, Paul Muckenhirn, Critical Area Planting. Total estimated project costs \$4,946 with eligible 50% cost share payment of \$153.

#SCS-18-7, Lake Park-Audubon Schools, Critical Area Planting. Total estimated project costs \$2,866 with eligible 50% cost share payment of \$1,433.

Motion (Pavelko, Flottemesch) to approve the above noted State Cost Share grant contracts. Affirmative:
Unanimous. Carried.

State Cost Share Contract Amendments & Vouchers

#BA-1, D&D Moore LLP, expiration date. New install expiration date is 07/01/2019.

#BA-2, Bruce Tinjum, expiration date. New install expiration date is 07/01/2019.

#SCS-17-9, Darwin Hendrickson, Cover Crop. Total project costs \$3,500 with 100% approved funding and cost share payment of \$3,500.

#SCS-18-5, Bruce Nelson, Mulching. Total project costs \$2,000 with 75% approved funding and cost share payment of \$1,500.

Motion (Pavelko, Flottemesch) to approve the above noted State Cost Share Contract Amendments & Vouchers. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Clean Water Legacy Contract Cancellations

#CWL-36-LP, Barbara & Lane Engberg, Shoreline/Streambank Stabilization Raingarden, landowner no longer interested.

Motion (Stenger, Pavelko) to cancel contract as no further assistance is needed at this time. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Clean Water Legacy Contracts for Approval

#CWL-46-LP, Guy Kittleson, Shoreland Stabilization. Total estimated project costs \$4,263 with 75% cost share payment of \$3,197.

Motion (Flottemesch, Stenger) to approve the above noted Clean Water Legacy grant contract. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Clean Water Legacy Vouchers for Approval

#CWL-1-CAP, Becker County, Middle Cormorant Beach Project. Total project costs \$92,820 with cost share payment of \$58,000.

#CWL-3-UB, Schouviller Dairy, Water & Sediment Control Basins. Total project costs \$16,229 with 90% approved funding and cost share payments of \$14,606.

#CWL-4-UB, Becker County, Grade Stabilization. Total project costs \$18,710 with 100% approved funding and cost share payments of \$18,710.

#CWL-39-LP David Gaboury, Shoreline Stabilization. Total project costs \$5,610 with 50% approved funding and cost share payments of \$2,805.

Motion (Flottemesch, Stenger) to approve the above noted Clean Water Legacy grant vouchers. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Adjourn

Chairman Beck adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

ATTACHMENT A: ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT 9/19/2018

A regional Buffer Implementation Update Meeting was held in Detroit Lakes, where we hosted and facilitated discussion between Darren Mayers, North Region BWSR Buffer and Soil Loss Specialist, Tom Gile, BWSR Buffers and Soil Loss Operations Supervisor and regional SWCD and Land Department staff regarding compliance updates, compliance tracking, alternative practices, and program enforcement.

Met with Aaron, Ed Musielewicz and a certified organic landowner on the Straight River regarding sprinkler system improvements, a new pumping plant and irrigation water management. State (CWL) portions of the project will be completed this fall.

Attended a workshop showcasing a newly developed LiDAR-Derived restorable wetland inventory that provides new data for targeting and planning wetland restorations in the Red River Valley. This new data was derived from digital elevation models that were processed to remove roads, drainage features and hydrologic alterations to identify drained wetland basins and is available basin wide.

Thanks to sponsors Cenex Coop of Lake Park, Agassiz Seed, Crystal Sugar and Buffalo Red Watershed District we were able to join forces this year with the Sustainable Farming Association to host this year's event "Dirt Rich" at the Lake Park American Legion and on the Schauer farm. The event was well attended, and had tangible examples of the trials and tribulations of adopting soil health practices in historically conventional agricultural operations.

Completed and submitted the "Top-Down: Buffalo Watershed Accelerated Improvement Project" clean water legacy grant application, requesting \$796,000 in funding for projects and practices in the entire Becker County portion of the Buffalo River Watershed. Initial comments seem favorable. Completed but withdrew the Straight River Surface and Groundwater Improvement project, pending release of new information next year that should provide more defensible pollution reduction goals and additional supporting information.

Appeared at the Sept 4 Board of Commissioners meeting for the Budget discussion and gave information in support of the SWCD's 2019 Budget allocation request. Few if any questions were asked and the board seemed receptive, but it came to a split vote in Commissioner Okeson's absence and our request was tabled. County Administrator Jack Ingstad reached out to Peter for further supporting information, which was supplied and forwarded to the Commissioners for consideration. Mead also sent the information to several partners and advocates and encouraged them to reach out to the county board to offer their support if they saw fit. Discussion ensued. In the future the board would like to provide the Commissioners the same level of detail, by program, and work towards developing operational agreements that clearly define the deliverables for each program.

Submitted corrections to The Detroit Lakes Tribune regarding their coverage of the swcd request in a 9/5/18 article on County Budget proceedings which contained several pieces of erroneous and/or incomplete information.

Visited with new NRCS State Conservationist Troy Daniels and newly hired Area Resource Conservationist Allan Lepp covering local operations, vision for the future, program changes, reorganization, leasing and the overall FPAC process as well as other pressing topics. Ed Musielewicz and Peter introduced all of the SWCD and NRCS staff and gave Troy a tour of various types of projects in Detroit, Richwood and Callaway townships.

Met with the International Waters Institute, Houston Engineering and East/West Otter Tail SWCD to review progress in development of the PTMApp for the Otter Tail River Watershed. QA/QC of spatial products is now complete and the group is moving on to selection of proposed BMPS and validation of practice effectiveness to develop a PTMApp driven implementation plan for the Otter Tail, targeted load reductions, and indices of cost effectiveness.

Attended the Buffalo Red River Watershed District's annual fall tour. This year's tour focused largely on stormwater control and flood damage reduction projects in Clay and Wilkin Counties. Of particular interest was the two stage channel work on the Whiskey Creek Project. Becker, West Otter Tail, and Wilkin SWCDs were commended by the District for their work.

Peter and Phil had a teleconference with Dennis Rodaker, BWSR Wetland Mitigation Project Manager and Tom Wenzel, BWSR Senior Water Resources Engineer regarding the Ogema Investors LLP Wetland Road Bank project. The Ogema group has accepted BWSR's easement offer, and BWSR is seeking our assistance with title work,

closing and recording of the easement, as well as assistance with Implementation of the project. A Joint powers agreement for these tasks will be presented today for consideration and approval.

Musielewicz and Mead met on-farm with this year's Outstanding Conservationist nominee Tim Hendrickson, His wife Kristine, and their four children to collect information and take pictures for submission to MASWCD for this year's awards ceremony at the annual MASWCD state convention. The efficiency and sustainability of Tim's cow/calf operation is something to marvel.

Held and facilitated a teleconference for the Crow Wing Healthy Watersheds partnership. Discussion centered on development of the TNC/SWCD agreement for services, Targeting Outreach Activities, Screening, scoring and ranking criteria and processes, easement acquisition updates and partner objectives. TNC agreement should be forthcoming shortly.

Attended FAC meeting between FSA, RD, NRCS and SWCD department heads discussing building operations, building safety, staffing changes, FPAC, and changes in the leasing process & responsible agency staff.

Has begun work with Ed Musielewicz to update employees Ecological Sciences Job Approval Authority. First priorities are updating Salo, Clem, Doll, Olson and Watland's JAA (respectively), and then beginning the tract for Dahring & Rykhus.

Aaron Salo informed Mead that a Becker County Landowner expressed interest in possibly donating a parcel of land to the SWCD for permanent protection and education. Aaron, Peter and Phil Doll visited the parcel, which has a mix of remnant prairie, pasture, 25 tillable acres and an entire peninsula on a lake ripe for development (and thus protective measures). We will be visiting with the owner in the near future to discuss their visions and possible options.

The fourth grade fall conservation days at the Cormorant Sportsman's Club are this Thursday and Friday, and the Ninth grade career expo is set for Thursday at the Kent Freeman Arena. ED Clem, Jeff Norby, Max Ryhkus & Logan Riedel will run the soil soakers station, walking 4th grade groups through infiltration experiments, discussing soil structure and with extra time at each station this year will be examining soil profiles as well. Peter, Nicole Wallace and Brandon Dahring will be at the career expo highlighting opportunities in conservation planning, engineering, shoreland restoration and soil science.

Appeared at the County Finance Committee meeting Monday to participate in further Budget discussion. The committee recommended approval of our full budget allocation request. Also presented project costs and vouchers for the Middle Cormorant Swimming Beach which were also recommended for approval.

Attended the Board of Commissioners meeting Tuesday morning for Budget Discussions and to present vouchers for approval for the Middle Cormorant Beach Project and the County 21 Right of way grade stabilization structure adjacent to the Schouviller project. Mead fielded questions from Commissioner Grimsley and addressed concerns over wetland delineation costs but ultimately, after much ado the SWCD's allocation request was approved without opposition. The county also approved full costs of \$92,820 for the Middle cormorant project, with \$34,820 coming from the County Rec Fund, \$28,000 coming from FY 2017 & 2018 BWSR Capacity and \$28,000 coming from 2017 & 2018 County Capacity Match. Peter Noted that Malstrom's electric cut their bill by \$500.00 as a donation to the project. The County 21 Grade Stabilization voucher was also approved and signed by Board Chair Don Skarie.

Last night Mead attended Cormorant Lakes Watershed District's first Advisory Team meeting that's been held in quite a while. The District has rekindles the advisory team to comply with state statute by providing guidance on budget, goals, priorities and general activities of the District. Watershed Districts are encouraged to have SWCD representation on the committee. The meeting was brief, and served more or less as a formality to define goals and elect a chair and recorder. The next meeting is set for 6:30 pm May 7, 2019.