

Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors
2017
Operating Rules, Guidelines and By-Laws

MISSION STATEMENT

The Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District is a locally elected unit of government whose mission is to promote natural resource stewardship through educational, technical and financial assistance.

Fillmore County Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors

District I		Brian Hazel
District II		Tim Gossman
District III		Kathryn Tesmer
District IV		Robert Pickett
District V		Travis Willford

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FILLMORE SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

RULES OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

INTRODUCTION

The Fillmore Soil and Water Conservation District (District) is a soil and water conservation district established and operated pursuant to Chapter 103C of Minnesota Statutes and governed by an elected Board of Supervisors (Board). These rules are intended to facilitate the transaction of business by the District Board and its committees.

These rules shall become effective upon passage by the District Board. Acceptance of the office of a District Supervisor constitutes acceptance of the obligation to abide by these Rules.

ARTICLE 1

TRANSACTING THE BUSINESS OF THE DISTRICT

- 1. Organizational Structure.** The business and affairs of the District shall be managed by the Board. It is collectively the responsibility of the Board to make policy and oversee the implementation of policy as the governing authority for the District. An individual Supervisor has no authority to act on behalf of the Board or the District, except to the extent such authority is expressly conferred upon him/her by a majority of the Board. The Board implements its policies by hiring, supervising and directing the District Administrator. The District Administrator is responsible for implementing policies adopted by the Board and for hiring, supervising and directing the staff of Fillmore SWCD.
- 2. Vacancies.** A vacancy in the Board resulting from the death, resignation, removal or disqualification of a Supervisor shall be filled by a majority vote of the remaining members of the Board. A Board Supervisor so appointed shall serve until a possible successor is elected. (Refer to 103c.305 subdiv. 6)

Board supervisors or other persons may suggest names of potential supervisors to the Board. These suggestions shall be submitted to the Board for consideration. The Board may request additional information, such as a resume or statement of interest, in making its determination on the potential supervisor. The Board shall make it clear to the proposed supervisor that as part of their duties, they will be expected to agree to and follow all rules, guidelines, and/or bylaws in place for the Board. The Board shall vote on this recommendation, and it shall be passed if majority vote has been achieved.

3. Officers and Committees

1. **Terms of Office.** The term of each Board member is defined by Minnesota Statute.
2. **Chair.** In addition to such other powers or duties as the Board may stipulate, the Chair shall preside over the debate. The Chair shall sign all contracts and agreements on behalf of the District or designate such authority. The Chair shall have such other powers as may be granted by Minnesota law.
3. **Vice Chair.** If the Board shall elect a Vice Chair, the Vice Chair shall, in the absence or disability of the Chair, perform the duties and exercise the powers of the Chair, and shall perform such other duties as the Board may prescribe.
4. **Treasurer.** In addition to such other powers or duties as the Chair or the Board may prescribe, the Treasurer shall have such other powers as may be granted by Minnesota law. In the absence of the Treasurer, the chair shall be appointed to sign the Treasurer's report as submitted for approval.
5. **Secretary.** The Secretary shall attend all meetings of the Board and record or delegate all votes and the minutes of all proceedings in a book kept for that purpose. The Secretary shall also perform such other duties prescribed by the Board. In the absence of the Secretary, the Chair shall be appointed to sign the minutes as submitted for approval.
6. **Committees.** The Chairman may establish committees composed of one or two Supervisors to carry out the functions specified in the resolution of the Board establishing the Committee. Committees so established are subject at all times to the direction and control of the Board. These Rules apply to such committees and members of such committees to the same extent as they apply to the Board.
7. **Vacancy of a Committee Member.** If the office of any officer or committee assignment becomes vacant, the Supervisors then in office, although less than a

quorum, may choose a successor, who shall hold office for the unexpired term with respect to which such vacancy occurred.

4. Meetings. The business of the Board is transacted during meetings and upon a vote of a majority of the Supervisors present. Board meetings shall be conducted in accordance with Minnesota Statutes Sections 103C.301-.335, the Minnesota Open Meeting Law, the Minnesota Government Data Practices Act, and Robert's Rules of Order at the discretion of the chair.

1. **Organizational Meeting.** Each January, the Board shall conduct an organizational meeting, which may be a regular monthly meeting, at which the Board shall elect a Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer, and Secretary. Committees shall be appointed. Board members shall set the per diem and mileage rates and designate the financial institutions, and date, time, and place of its regular monthly meetings. Rates cannot exceed those established by the state of Minnesota.
2. **Notice.** Meetings of the Board may be convened only after proper notice. The type of notice depends upon the type of meeting. The regular meeting of the Board shall be held on the dates and at the place and time established by the Board at its Organizational Meeting. The date, time and place of regular meetings shall be posted or published by the District Administrator or Administrative Assistant. If the time or place of a regular meeting is changed, notice of the time and place of the meeting must be given in the manner of a special meeting. Special meetings may be called by the Board Chair or upon the approved motion of Board members. Notice of special meetings shall be given to Board members (and the public in the manner described by the Open Meeting Law) by mail at least 72 hours before the meeting. Emergency meetings may be called only in situations that demand the immediate attention of the Board. Notice of the emergency meetings shall be given by telephone or any other available means as soon as is practical prior to the meeting. The notice of a special or emergency meeting must include a description of the business to be conducted. The business transacted at a special or emergency meeting shall be limited to items specifically contained in the notice of the meeting. The District Administrator or Administrative Assistant shall provide to the Supervisors at least three days prior to a regular meeting agendas and relevant printed materials to be received and/or discussed at the meeting.

3. **Quorum.** A majority of the total number of Supervisors constitutes a quorum. No business may be conducted by the Board unless a quorum is present.
 4. **Actual Attendance Required.** Actual attendance is required in order to cast a vote or to meet quorum requirements. Votes may not be cast by proxy. Failure to attend more than three (3) regularly scheduled meetings in a row or four (4) regularly scheduled meetings in any one year shall constitute neglect of duty within the meaning of Minn. Stat. 103C.315 and could, with a board motion, subject the Supervisor to the sanctions set forth in these Rules.
 5. **Decorum at Meetings.** Board members are expected to conduct themselves at Board meetings in a pleasant, polite, courteous and respectful manner. Board members shall strive not to speak while another Board member, a staff member, or a member of the public has the floor. There shall be no name-calling or profanity. Indecorous language or behavior shall be grounds for the imposition of sanctions as set forth in these Rules.
5. **Government Data.** The government Data Practices Act, Minn. Stat. Ch. 13, applies to the District. The Act specifies that each public body must designate a "responsible authority" to handle requests for data. The "responsible authority" for the District is the District Administrator. Thus, all requests or inquiries regarding District data received or made by a Board member must be forwarded to the District Administrator. The District Administrator shall be responsible for searching for the data, classifying the data within the scope of the request and for making the specific response to the request for data. The District Administrator and District staff are obligated to provide a Supervisor with data he/she needs in order to carry out his/her duties as a Supervisor. Thus, District data should not be accessed or modified by a Supervisor.

Section 1619 of the Food, Conservation, and Energy Act of 2008 prohibits USDA, its contractors, and cooperators, from disclosing information provided by an agricultural producer or owner of agricultural land concerning the agricultural operation, farming or conservation practices, or the land itself, in order to participate in a USDA program as well as geospatial information maintained by USDA with respect to such agricultural land or operations, subject to certain exceptions and authorized disclosures. Examples of such data include, but are not limited to, conservation plans, wetland determinations,

Highly Erodible Land Determinations, acreage amounts, assistance notes, National Resources Inventory point date, flood damage surveys, program contract information, maps, surveys, charts, and aerial photographs if they contain data identifying characteristics of the agricultural land. Sharing of routine information as necessary for the implementation of conservation programs with partners will be permitted through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) "Acknowledgement of Section 1619 Compliance" signed by the SWCD Board Chair on December 17, 2009.

ARTICLE 2

RULES OF CONDUCT

1. **Employee Policies Applicable to Supervisors.** The following policies set forth in the District Personnel Policy Handbook shall apply to Board members:
 - Internet/Email Use Policy (Section 3.92)
 - Employee Conduct Policy (Section 4.1)
 - Sexual Harassment Policy (Section 4.2)
 - Employee Code of Ethics (Section 4.7): Acceptance of Gifts and Favors (4.71), Confidential Information (4.72), Use of Property (4.73), Conflicts of Interest (4.74), Resolution of Conflicts of Interest (4.75), Acceptance of Advantage (4.76)

However, the disciplinary portions of these policies shall not apply to Supervisors. A Supervisor who violates any of these policies shall be considered to have engaged in "malfeasance" or "neglect of duty" within the meaning of Minn. Stat. § 103C.315 and may be sanctioned as set forth in these Rules.

2. **Action in furtherance of Mission.** The Board is a policy-making body and must act as a majority when making any determinations. Therefore, it is imperative that each Board member act in a manner consistent with and in furtherance of the policies, mission and core values established by the majority of the Board. Therefore, when a Supervisor appears in public and speaks on any issue concerning the District and/or its general mission or specific projects or practices, such Board Supervisor shall express the official Board position on the issue. If a Board Supervisor personally disagrees with the Board's

position, the Board member shall only express his/her personal opinion if the Board member first:

- Presents the official position of the Board;
- Clearly explains that his/her personal position is the minority position; and
- Explains that s/he is speaking as a citizen rather than expressing the opinion of the Board.

3. Per Diem and Reimbursement of Travel Expenses Incurred on Behalf of the District. A Board Supervisor is entitled to a per diem in the amount set by the Board when engaged in activities on behalf of Fillmore SWCD. However, no Supervisor shall receive per diem payments that total more than \$550.00 per month. Supervisors, who attend meetings or functions on behalf of the District and in furtherance of the goals of the District, shall be eligible for reimbursement of reasonable and necessary travel expenses actually incurred. If the Supervisor uses his/her own personal vehicle, mileage reimbursement shall be payable in the amount established by the United States Internal Revenue Service. For meetings other than regularly scheduled monthly Board meetings, it is the policy of the District Board that Supervisors may only receive a per diem payment and be reimbursed for travel expenses when attending special board meetings and committee assignment meetings as directed or approved by the Board.

Board members planning to attend other meetings representing the Fillmore SWCD or educational opportunities to enhance their role as a Fillmore SWCD Supervisor should obtain prior approval from the Board to receive per diem and mileage. If time constraints prevent prior approval, board members may submit a request, included in their quarterly vouchers, for consideration of post approval by the Board. Prior approval must be obtained from the Board for all out-of-state travel. All reimbursements for travel related expenses require the appropriate receipts.

4. Interaction with District Staff.

1. **Direction and Assignment of Work.** The Board shall direct and assign the work of the District Administrator. The District Administrator shall direct and assign the work of all other District staff.
2. **Supervision, Evaluation and Discipline of Staff.** While a Supervisor may provide

input to the District Administrator, the District Administrator and not the Board shall be responsible for the supervision, direction, evaluation and discipline of individual staff members. However, nothing shall preclude the District Administrator from eliciting the assistance of the Board, an Officer or an individual Supervisor in the performance of the District Administrator's duties as personnel manager.

3. **Interaction.** Board members' interaction with the District Administrator or with staff must recognize that only the board acting as a whole can govern and give direction to the District Administrator.
4. **Problem Resolution.** If a problem arises between a Supervisor and a staff person, it is expected that the individuals involved will seek to resolve the problem promptly. If they are unable to resolve the problem, the District Administrator shall intervene. It is the responsibility of the District Administrator to deal with the involved staff member and the responsibility of the Board to deal with the involved Supervisor. If a problem arises between the District Administrator and a Supervisor, the District Administrator and the Board member shall make all attempts to resolve the issue themselves. If sincere and diligent attempts by both parties do not resolve the issue, then the District Administrator and the Supervisor shall present the situation jointly to the Board. The Board shall resolve all such disputes brought before it and its decision shall be final.

ARTICLE 3

ETHICS POLICY

1. **Legislative Purpose.** Officials in public service must maintain the highest possible standards of ethical conduct in their transaction of public business. Such standards should be clearly defined and known to the public as well as to local officials. Furthermore, the proper operation of democratic government requires that local officials be independent, impartial, and responsible to the people; that government decisions and policy be made in the proper channels of the government structure; that public office not be used for personal gain; and that the public have confidence in the integrity of this government. In recognition of these goals, there is hereby established a Code of Ethics for all Supervisors. The purpose of this Code is to establish ethical standards of conduct for all Supervisors by setting forth those acts or actions that are incompatible with the

best interest of the people of Fillmore County, and by directing disclosure by Supervisors of private financial or other interest in matters affecting the County and District.

2. Definitions.

1. *Administrative action* means an action of a nonministerial nature by any Board member.
2. *Legislative action* means introduction, sponsorship, debate, voting and any other official action on any ordinance, resolution amendment, nomination, appointment, report or other matter pending or proposed before the Board.
3. *Candidate* means any individual who files an affidavit of candidacy or petition to appear on the ballot for an elective public office.
4. *Election* means a general, special, primary or special primary election.
5. *Local official* as defined in Minnesota Statutes, Section 10A.01 means a person who holds elective office in a political subdivision or who is appointed to or employed in a public position in a political subdivision in which the person has authority to make, to recommend, or to vote on, as a member of the governing body, major decisions regarding the expenditure or investment of public money and shall include the supervisors, who are elected officials.

- 3. Conflicts of Interest.** Board members should not participate in or vote on issues by which they are personally affected. Said supervisor should recuse themselves from any voting on an issue where there is a conflict of interest.

Any member of the Board who in the discharge of his or her official duties would be required to take an administrative or legislative action or make a decision which would substantially affect his or her financial interest, or those of a business with which he or she is associated (hereafter the affected person), unless the effect of the affected person would be no greater than on other members of his or her business classification, profession or occupation, shall take the following actions:

- The affected person shall prepare, on such form as prescribed by the state ethical practices board, a written statement describing the matter requiring action or decision and the nature of his or her potential conflict of interest;
- The affected person shall deliver a copy of the statement to the Chair of the Board;

- If a potential conflict of interest presents itself and there is insufficient time to comply with the provision of subsections (1) and (2), the affected person shall orally inform the Board of the potential conflict. The affected person shall file a written statement as prescribed above within one week after the potential conflict presents itself.
 - The affected person shall remove himself or herself, if possible, from influence over the action or decision in question and assign the matter to a subordinate. The Board may, upon request, excuse the affected person from taking part in the action or decision in question.
 - If the affected person is not permitted or is otherwise unable to abstain from action in connection with the matter, he or she must file with the Chair of the Board a statement describing the potential conflict of interest and the action taken. Such statement must be filed within one week of the action taken.
4. **Representation for a fee.** No Supervisor shall represent a client for a fee before the Board.
 5. **Statement of economic interest.** Each individual required to file a statement of economic interest shall do so in compliance with Minn. Stat. § 10A.09. All statements filed with the Board Chair shall be public data.
 6. **Penalty for false statements.** A report or statement required by this section shall be signed and certified as true by the person required to file the report. Any person who signs and certifies to be true a report or statement which he or she knows contains false information, who knowingly omits required information, or who fails to file a report or statement when required by this section, is subject to penalties established by law.
 7. **Gifts.** No person or entity shall offer to give a Supervisor or the Supervisor's spouse or dependent children, and the Supervisor shall not solicit or receive, anything of value (including a gift, favor or service, or a promise of future employment), which would cause the total value of such things received from the same person or association to exceed one hundred dollars (\$100.00) during any calendar year, and which is either (a) based on any understanding that such Supervisor's vote, official actions or judgment would be influenced thereby, or (b) where the circumstances are such that it could reasonably be inferred that the thing of value would influence the Supervisor in the discharge of his or her duties.

8. **Confidential information.** No Board member shall use or disclose confidential information gained in the course of or by reason of his or her official position or activities, including, but not limited to, any data classified as private, confidential, nonpublic or protected nonpublic pursuant to Minnesota Statutes, Chapter 13, in any way that could result in financial gain for the Board member, members of his or her family, or any business with which he or she is associated.
9. **Violation of Ethics Policy.** Violation of the Ethics Policy shall be considered "malfeasance" or "neglect of duty," and may result in sanctions set forth in these Rules.

ARTICLE 4

SANCTIONS FOR VIOLATION OF THESE RULES

Violation of any portion of these Rules shall be considered "malfeasance" or "neglect of duty". Sanctions for violation of these rules will be in accordance with state statute procedures103c.

ARTICLE 5

AMENDMENTS TO RULES

These Rules may be amended or repealed by the affirmative vote of a majority of the Board provided that: the text of the proposed change was provided in writing along with the notice of the meeting at which such proposed change is to be considered; and the Board shall not adopt, amend or repeal any Rule to the extent such action causes any Rule to violate Minnesota Statutes, the United States Constitution or the Constitution of the State of Minnesota.

Board Service Commitment Pledge and Standards

As a Fillmore Soil & Water Conservation District Board Member recognizing the important responsibility I am undertaking in serving as a member of the Board, I hereby pledge to carry out in a trustworthy and diligent manner the duties and obligations in my role as a board member.

ROLE:

I acknowledge that my primary role as a board member is (1) to contribute to the defining of the organization mission and governing the fulfillment of that mission, and (2) to carry out the functions of the office of Board Member and/or Officer as stated in the Supervisors Handbook or Operating rules.

My role as a board member will focus on the development of broad policies that govern the implementation of institutional plans and purposes. This role is separate and distinct from the role of the District Administrator, who determines the means of implementation.

Commitment:

I will exercise the duties and responsibilities of this office with integrity, collegiality and care.

I Pledge:

1. To establish as a high priority my attendance at all meetings of the board and committees on which I serve.
2. To come prepared to discuss the issues and business to be addressed at scheduled meetings, having read the agenda and all background material relevant to the topics at hand.
3. To work with and respect the opinions of my peers who serve this board, and to leave my personal prejudices out of all board motions.
4. To always act for the good of the organization.

5. To represent this organization in a positive and supportive manner at all times and in all places.
6. To observe the parliamentary procedures and display courteous conduct in all board and committee meetings.
7. To refrain from intruding on administrative issues that is the responsibility of management, except to monitor the results and prohibit methods that conflict with board policy.
8. To avoid conflicts of interest between my position as a board member and my personal life. If such a conflict does arise, I will declare that conflict before the board and refrain from voting on matters in which I have conflict.
9. To support in a positive manner all actions taken by the Board even when I am in a minority position on such actions.
10. Prohibit mistreating, provoking or harassing other employees, supervisors, or making unwarranted criticism or accusations against other employees or supervisors.
11. To agree when placed as Chair or on a committee to: Call meetings as necessary until objectives are met; ensure that the agenda and support materials are mailed to all members in advance of the meetings; conduct the meetings in an orderly, fair, open, and efficient manner; and make committee progress reports to the board at its scheduled meetings.
12. To participate in the annual plan meetings, planning retreats, board development workshops, seminars, and other educational events that enhance my skills as a board member.

Board Member Signature: _____

Date: _____

Revised and Approved: February 11, 2010

Reviewed and Approved: February 17, 2011

Reviewed and Approved: February 16, 2012

Reviewed and Approved: February 16, 2013