

DISTRICT REGULAR BOARD MEETING

Thursday, August 20, 2015

4:30 P.M.

USDA Service Center

SWCD Office

Preston, MN 55965

Minutes

MEMBERS PRESENT: Tim Gossman, Brian Hazel, Leonard Leutink, Pam Mensink, Travis Willford

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Donna Rasmussen, Jeanette Serfling, Jessica Bronson (NRCS), Harry Root (County Commissioner), Ethan Lapham (Fillmore Central Ag Instructor)

Gossman called the meeting to order at 4:30 p.m. A quorum is present.

I. AGENDA

Motioned by Willford seconded by Hazel to approve the agenda. Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford. Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

II. TREASURER’S REPORT

Motioned by Leutink seconded by Mensink to approve the July, 2015 Treasurer’s report, subject to audit. Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

III. CONSENT AGENDA

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to approve the following consent agenda items:

1. Secretary’s Report – July 16, 2015 Regular Board Meeting Minutes

Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

IV. REPORTS

1. Supervisor’s activity report

Willford reported attending the EQIP Workgroup meeting on July 29th.

Hazel had nothing to report.

Mensink reported attending the JPB meeting on July 29th. She did the fair interview by phone on July 21st and had an Education Committee meeting to choose the scholarship recipient.

Leutink reported doing the statement opening and check review on August 3rd and attending the Forestry Committee follow-up meeting.

Gossman attended the follow-up Forestry Committee meeting. He reported that next year they are planning a trip to Forestville.

a. Introduce Ethan Lapham, Fillmore Central Ag Teacher
Willford introduced Ethan Lapham, the new Ag Teacher at Fillmore Central. Lapham told briefly about his background and his plans and goals for the year.

2. Staff reports

A written report was included in the board packets.

a. County Fair Booth

Serfling reported on the activities during the Fair at the SWCD booth.

3. Administrator's report

a. Forestry Field Day

The Forestry Field Day was held on July 29th with about 60 people attending. A follow-up meeting was held and planning for next year discussed.

b. Clean Water Fund Applications

Three Clean Water Fund applications will be submitted for:

- Two Feedlot projects
- FSP application for funds for Phase II of the project
- Pond clean-outs in the South Fork

c. Ag Water Quality Certification Program

MDA received \$9 million in funding to get the program going. The Whitewater Watershed is one of the pilot projects. Mark Root, Winona SWCD, is certified to work with the farmers to do the certifications. Sheila Harmes will be doing the grant reporting and administration. There will be funds for two part-time positions at the Winona SWCD to design and implement practices.

d. BWSR Buffer grants

BWSR had information in their board packet stating the amount being awarded to Fillmore for the Buffer Grant will be \$30,000. The dollars are based on the number of shoreland miles in the county.

e. LCCMR Cover Crop Grant

The JPB should be getting the grant agreement in the next few days for signature and then the sub-recipient agreement hopefully will be ready for

signature at the next meeting. There will be money for education, Extension and analysis of ag land in cover crops.

f. Root River One Watershed, One Plan update

The Work Group has reviewed several draft sections of the plan that will now be reviewed by the Advisory Committee. The Policy Committee will be reviewing these sections also plus the comments of the Advisory Committee.

g. Conservation Lunch with Congressman Tim Walz

Rasmussen reported that Congressman Tim Walz was at a farm east of Preston on Camp Creek that had completed a large trout habitat project. Questions were asked about the Whitewater fish kill, staffing for NRCS, and Nature Conservancy funding for a habitat program. The NRCS rain simulator was demonstrated.

h. Rural by Design workshop information

Rasmussen reported the Rural by Design Workshop information is now available. The workshop is being held at Eagle Bluff in January. The District is listed as a promotional partner.

I. Iowa proposes Watershed Management Authority for Upper Iowa River

This is a meeting that is developing in Iowa similar to the One Watershed, One Plan. They will be working to get public entities working together.

4. NRCS

Bronson reported she is processing CRP renewal plans and doing CRP status reviews. She stated she is on the Farm Bill Committee this year.

The panel for the Assistant State Conservationist was rejected so the position will be re-advertised.

Cover Crops will be flown on in the next couple weeks.

5. County

Root reported that they are looking at budget information. All departments are looking at their own budgets and making cuts where they can. The new Extension Coordinator starts September 1st.

V. OLD BUSINESS

1. Review County Budget Meeting Information

Rasmussen reviewed the information that will be presented to the County Board with the budget request which lists the projects and practices, the grants being administered and the dollars associated with each for 2014 and so far in 2015.

The current budget has a lot of unknowns, but the supervisors encouraged Rasmussen to present it as is to the Commissioners.

VI. NEW BUSINESS

1. Consider Returning College Student Scholarship Recipient

Motioned by Willford seconded by Hazel to award the Returning College Student Scholarship to Lindsey Weiss, per the recommendation of the Education Committee. Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

2. Consider approval of FY2016 & 2017 SWCD Program and Operations Grant Agreement in the amount of \$96,321.00

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to approve the FY2016 & 2017 SWCD Program and Operations Grant Agreement in the amount of \$96,321.00. Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

3. Consider Technical Assistance Percentage from FY2016 State Cost Share Grant

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Willford to set the percentage at 20% for technical assistance from the FY2016 State Cost Share Grant. Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

4. Consider renewal of Notary Commission for Serfling which expires January 31, 2016

Motioned by Leutink seconded by Willford to approve the renewal of the Notary Commission for Serfling which will expire on January 31, 2016. Affirmative: Leutink, Mensink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

5. Consider nomination of Bill and Steve Bailey for the MASWCD Forest Steward Award

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Leutink to nominate Bill and Steve Bailey for the MASWCD Forest Steward Award. Affirmative: Leutink, Mensink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

6. Consider September Board meeting date

Motioned by Willford seconded by Leutink to change the September meeting date to Monday, September 14th at 4:30 pm due to supervisor conflicts. Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

7. Consider Conservation Practice Assistance Contract FY15-08 Rick Ruberg, Grassed Waterway, in the amount of \$660.00

Motioned by Leutink seconded by Mensink to approve the Conservation Practice Assistance Contract FY15-08 Rick Ruberg, Grassed Waterway, in the amount of \$660.00.

Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

8. Consider Conservation Practice Assistance Contract FY15-09 Dan Miller, Grassed Waterway, in the amount of \$757.71

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Leutink to approve Conservation Practice Assistance Contract FY15-09 Dan Miller, Grassed Waterway, in the amount of \$757.71.

Willford asked for more information before proceeding with the vote. The history of the project was explained and discussed. Rasmussen was asked to get additional information from BWSR as the board members felt they didn't have adequate information to make a decision.

Motioned by Willford seconded by Gossman to table the motion until additional information is received from BWSR. Affirmative: Mensink, Leutink, Willford, Gossman. Opposed: none. Abstained: Hazel. Motion carried.

9. Consider registration and lodging for staff to attend 2015 BWSR Academy

Rasmussen reported that she and Ronnenberg will be presenting at the Academy and that several other staff expressed interest in attending.

Motioned by Leutink seconded by Hazel to approve payment of registration and lodging for staff to attend 2015 BWSR Academy. Affirmative: Hazel, Leutink, Mensink, Willford, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

10. Consider attendance and expenses for Fall Area 7 Supervisor/Employee Meeting

Motioned by Leutink seconded by Willford to approve staff and board attendance and pay expenses for the Fall SE MASWCD Supervisors and Employees Meeting on September 15th. Affirmative: Hazel, Leutink, Mensink, Willford, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

11. Consider purchase of phone/service for Area Soil Health Technician

Rasmussen reported that the Soil Health Technician gets a large number of phone calls on his personnel cell phone and inquired whether a separate work cell phone could be obtained for him. The costs could be paid for from his grant. She is looking into the costs for a Trac Phone and purchasing minutes.

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Hazel to purchase a Trac Phone and the number of minutes needed for business calls. Affirmative: Hazel, Leutink, Mensink, Willford, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Lapham suggested using Google Voice, which is a free app on a smart phone.

12. Personnel Committee discussion items

The Personnel Committee had discussed several things and wanted to bring them to the full board. They discussed ideas to reward those long term employees that have topped out on the pay scale and only receive COL raises. They looked at different formulas based on a percentage of their annual wage.

Rasmussen asked the County if they have policy regarding longevity pay. The County currently pays long term employees, for example, \$10 per month for each month of the year on their five year increment anniversaries. Mensink suggested implementing a similar policy as the County.

This will be discussed again next month.

Mensink, Root, Lapham and Bronson left the meeting at 6:13 pm.

VII. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE

Motioned by Leutink seconded by Willford to approve the August, 2015 payables. Affirmative: Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Serfling asked for a volunteer for the statement opening and check review on Friday, September 4th. Willford volunteered.

VIII. ADJOURNMENT

Motioned by Hazel seconded by Leutink to adjourn the meeting. Affirmative: Leutink, Willford, Hazel, Gossman. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 6:20 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Travis Willford