

**DISTRICT REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

Thursday, July 17, 2014

4:30 P.M.

USDA Service Center

SWCD Office

Preston, MN 55965

***Minutes***

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

MEMBERS ABSENT: Leonard Leutink.

OTHERS PRESENT: Donna Rasmussen, Jeanette Serfling, Anne Koliha, Jessica Bronson (NRCS), Dave Copeland (NRCS), Travis Mead (NRCS), Tom Kaase (County Commissioner)

Jason Wetzel, Forestry Intern, was introduced.

Hazel called the meeting to order at 4:36 p.m. A quorum is present.

**I. AGENDA**

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

**II. TREASURER'S REPORT**

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to approve the June, 2014 Treasurer's report, subject to audit. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

**III. CONSENT AGENDA**

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Gossman to remove the approval of the April-June, 2014 supervisor vouchers from the consent agenda. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: None. Motion carried.

The Chair proposed to add the approval of the supervisor vouchers to the end of the meeting.

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to approve the amended consent agenda:

1. Secretary's Report – June 12, 2014 Regular Board Meeting Minutes
2. ~~Approve April-June, 2014 supervisors vouchers~~

3. Payment of District Cost Share Contract WB14-03 Rick Buchholtz, Farmstead Windbreak, in the amount of \$307.50
4. Final payment of CWF FY12-2 Vern Ristau, Feedlot Runoff Control, in the amount of \$29,216.00 and return \$1,000.00 earnest money for a total of \$30,216.00
5. Payment of State Cost Share Contract FY12-18 Glen Palecek, Well Decommissioning in the amount of \$750.00
6. Payment of District Cost Share Contract SC 14-04 Brett Broadwater, Summer Construction Temporary Cover, in the amount of \$1,630.00
7. Payment of District Cost Share Contract SC 14-03 Jerry Nagel, Summer Construction Temporary Cover, in the amount of \$1,385.00
8. Payment of District Cost Share Contract SC 14-02 David Mensink, Summer Construction Temporary Cover, in the amount of \$489.00
9. Payment of District Cost Share Contract SC 12-01 John Snyder, Summer Construction Temporary Cover, in the amount of \$537.90

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

#### **IV. REPORTS**

##### 1. Supervisor's activity report

Willford reported attending the Resolutions meeting on June 25<sup>th</sup> and a Root River Citizens Conservations meeting.

Hazel reported attending the Root River Citizens meeting held in Rushford Village, hosted the afternoon portion of the Women Caring for the Land tour, conducted interviews and attended meetings regarding the conservation technician position, and hosted the MFA Field Day.

Mensink reported doing the statement opening and check detail and conducted interviews for the Conservation Technician position.

Leutink was not present.

Gossman reported attending the Minnesota Forestry Conference in Cloquet, the Root River Citizens meetings in Chatfield and Preston, and the Forestry Meeting at Isinours.

Gossman also reported attending a Beginning Farmers and Ranchers meeting and is looking at a LCMR grant to put up deer exclosures.

##### 2. Staff reports

A written report was included in the board packets.

##### 3. Administrator's report

###### a. Resolutions meeting

The resolution submitted by the District was not passed.

###### b. RCPP proposals that include the Root River watershed

Rasmussen reported on the details of two Resource Conservation Partnership Program proposals that include the Root River Watershed.

c. Root River One Watershed, One Plan Pilot Project

The kick-off meeting for the project with BWSR will be in Rochester. A fiscal agent will need to be chosen and a policy committee set up.

d. Root River Citizens Conversations

Rasmussen reported that from three to fourteen were in attendance at the meetings held throughout the Root River Watershed. The purpose of the meetings was to inform people about land practices used in the Comprehensive Strategy and the local resources to correct the impairments.

e. DNR Root River Landscape Grant

The agreement has been received. The intern is working on the Isinours information for the forestry field day. The second intern will be working on the Lost Creek Hiking Trail.

f. LCCMR proposal for research on the effects of tile drainage on karst aquifers

Joel Groten, a former SWCD intern, who is now working for USGS, put in a proposal along with his supervisor to test three fields, two drained and one un-drained to measure the effect of water into the drain tile on the karst aquifers. More will be heard about this project in the future.

#### 4. NRCS

a. Dave Copeland – Assistant State Conservationist for Field Operations  
Copeland gave a brief history on himself. He has 14 districts in his area. He commented on the open Conservation Tech position in Fillmore stating that they didn't get the quality of applications they had hoped. The position will be advertised nationwide and they are doing what they can to get the position filled.

b. Jessica Bronson – District Conservationist

Bronson reported the Local Work Group meeting is scheduled for August 6<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am at the Conservation Building. She is working on CSP, CRP, status reviews, and noted they will not be a 4<sup>th</sup> round for EQIP applications.

Letters have been sent to give the opportunity to producers to re-enroll in CSP which will not be a competitive sign-up.

A summer field day was held at Dean Thomas', the second in a series of Technology trainings.

Travis Mead, the new soil con introduced himself and talked about his background.

#### 5. County

Kaase reported the County is starting to work on budgets.

He and Ron Gregg learned about wildflowers with Kent Dudeck. They also looked at sloughing off of the bluff near Gossman's home. They are bringing education back to the other Commissioners.

**V. OLD BUSINESS**

1. Consider DNR Ground Water Level Monitoring Program Contract for FY2015

Motioned by Gossman seconded by Mensink to re-approve the DNR Ground Water Level Monitoring Program Contract for FY2015 due to increases in the amount of reimbursement from DNR. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

2. Discuss next phase of health insurance discussions

January 1<sup>st</sup> is the next renewal for the health insurance. Employee information needs to be submitted by December 1<sup>st</sup>, and renewal rates won't be available until October 1<sup>st</sup>. An eight percent increase was used in budgeting. Decisions will need to be made on how much the District will deposit into the employees HSA accounts. A timeline will need to be set up so that a plan will be in place by October 1, 2014.

3. Select 2014 Outstanding Conservationist

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to select John and Deb Bruihler as the 2014 Outstanding Conservationists. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

**VI. NEW BUSINESS**

1. Consider draft 2015 proposed budget

Rasmussen reviewed the 2015 proposed budget pointing out the unknowns and increases being projected. In order to balance the budget, she used surplus funds from MRBI conservation planning reimbursements.

2. Consider 2015 County Allocation request

The allocation amount has remained the same since 2008. Rasmussen reported that in looking at benefits, increased insurance costs and the large amounts of accrued Paid Time Off, the District has a large liability. It is unknown at this time whether NRCS will have any contribution agreements that may help with funding. Copeland said they should know by the end of August. The board discussed what amount should be requested.

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Gossman to submit the 2015 allocation request to the County in the amount of \$235,000.00. Affirmative: Mensink, Gossman, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Kaase left the meeting at 5:43 p.m.

3. Consider SE MN Water Resources Board Feedlot VI Grant Agreement in the amount of \$49,800.00

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Willford to approve the SE MN Water Resources Board Feedlot VI Grant Agreement in the amount of \$49,800.00. Affirmative: Mensink, Gossman, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

4. Consider disposal of plotter and whether or not it should be replaced

Rasmussen reported the plotter no longer works and is old enough that parts and service is no longer available. Costs for a comparable plotter range from \$3,000 to \$5,000.

Motioned by Willford seconded by Gossman to dispose of the plotter and work with the County to get printing services as needed. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

5. Consider hiring Conservation Technician per recommendation from the Hiring Committee

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Willford to hire Caleb Fischer per the recommendation of the Hiring Committee. Fischer will start August 4<sup>th</sup>. Affirmative: Mensink, Gossman, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Fischer had scheduled time off from August 11-13<sup>th</sup> with his previous employer. Rasmussen asked the board if he should be paid for the time and have a negative balance or be required to take the time without pay. Board consensus was to have him take the time unpaid.

6. Consider State Cost Share Contract FY14-05 Rodney Koliha, Grassed Waterway, in the amount of \$2,460.00

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to approve State Cost Share Contract FY1405 Rodney Koliha, Grassed Waterway, in the amount of \$2,460.00. Affirmative: Mensink, Gossman, Hazel. Opposed: none. Abstained: Willford. Motion carried.

7. Consider State Cost Share Contract FY14-06 Steve McCallson, Water and Sediment Control Basin, in the amount of \$5,000.00

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Gossman to approve State Cost Share Contract FY14-06 Steve McCallson, Water and Sediment Control Basin, in the amount of \$5,000.00.

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

8. Discuss new plat book option from Rockford Map Publishers

Copeland let the meeting at 6:09 p.m.

Rasmussen reported Rockford Map Publishers have a new policy in which they will give credit for the old plat books on an order for new books. The board reviewed the proposal for the purchase of 70 books plus 30 free books.

Motioned by Gossman seconded by Mensink to approve the purchase of 70 plat books plus 30 free plat books from Rockford Map Publishers at the proposed cost.

Motioned by Mensink seconded by Gossman to amend the motion to add "the plat book expenses will be paid from the Special funds account". Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to approve the purchase of 70 plat books plus 30 free plat books from Rockford Map Publishers at the proposed cost and pay the expenses from the Special Funds Account. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

9. Consider close out of BWSR FY2011 Restoration Technical Assistance Grant

Motioned by Willford seconded by Gossman to approve the close out of the BWSR FY2011 Restoration Technical Assistance. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

10. Consider resignation of Dawn Bernau, Nutrient Management Specialist, effective August 8, 2014

Chair Hazel asked that members of the Personnel Committee be present at the exit interview with Bernau.

Motioned by Willford seconded by Gossman to accept the resignation of Dawn Bernau, Nutrient Management Specialist, effective August 8, 2014. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

11. Discuss hiring to fill Nutrient Management vacancy

Rasmussen reported to the board the possible options for funding for the Nutrient Management position and asked for input on whether to advertise as it is unknown at this point whether there will be funding available. The Board further discussed whether to go forward with the hiring. To go forward with advertising, the job description would need to be revised and include the need for a strong agronomy background. The need to be upfront with the applicants on the funding issue was stressed.

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to advertise for a new Nutrient Management Specialist, posting the position internally, per policy, and if no one applies, then post the job publically. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

**VII. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

Motioned by Gossman seconded by Mensink to approve the July 2014 payables. Affirmative: Mensink, Gossman, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

Serfling asked for a volunteer for the statement opening and check review on Friday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Willford volunteered.

Motioned by Willford seconded by Mensink to approve the April – June supervisor vouchers. Affirmative: Gossman, Mensink, Willford, Hazel. Opposed: none. Motion carried.

**VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

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

The meeting was adjourned at 7:09 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Leonard Leutink, Jr.