



Red River Valley Conservation Service Area

Joint Powers Board Regular Meeting Tuesday April 5, 2016

Mahnomen County Courthouse, 311 N Main St, Mahnomen

The regular meeting of the RRVCSA – TSA 1 was held on Tuesday, April 5, 2016. Those in attendance were Peter Mead-Becker Manager; Jen Wentz-Becker Assistant; Lyle Dittmann-EOT Supervisor; Darren Newville-EOT Manager; Brad Mergens-WOT Manager; Julian Sjostrom-WOT Supervisor; David Miller-Red Lake Supervisor; Joe Montonye-Grant Manager; Kevin Kassenborg-Clay Manager; Carol Schoff-Clay Supervisor; Jerome Flottesmesch-Becker Supervisor; Scott Balstad-East Polk Supervisor; Odell Christenson-Grant Supervisor; Lisa Newton-East Polk Manager; Lori Thronson-Norman Manager; Tanya Hanson-Red Lake Manager; Aaron Habermehl-West Polk Technician; Dusty Jasken-Mahnomen NRCS; Aaron Neubert-Mahnomen Manager; Pete Revier-Mahnomen Supervisor; Mark Christianson-Norman Technician; Don Bajumpaa-Wilkin Manager; Dave Rinke-Traverse Supervisor; Scott Johnson-Roseau Manager; Jamie Osowski-Kittson Manager; Nicole Bernd-West Polk Manager; Linda Hanson-Pennington Supervisor; Danny Thorstad-Marshall Co-Manager; Pete Waller-BWSR BC; Brett Arne-BWSR BC; Dave Jones-NRCS Area Engineer and Doug Thomas-BWSR Asst Director for Regional Operations.

Call to Order – Flottesmesch called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

He noted the TSAs 2015 fiscal year audit is complete and the bound copy was received last month. This is available for review.

Approval of January Meeting Minutes

Motion (Schoff, Dittmann) to approve January meeting minutes as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Financial Reports

Mead reviewed February Treasurer's Report with the board. Wentz noted a brief summary of where the TSA stands with March monthly figures, but this has not been confirmed.

Motion (Rinke, Hanson) to approve February financial reports. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

TSA Reports

Mead presented on behalf of Jim Hest, Engineer's Report

44 Basins designed for 2016 Construction, 5 sites surveyed and 2 awaiting survey. 9 Grade Stabilizations designed for 2016 construction and 20 sites to survey. 1 Streambank protection project designed for 2016 installation, 1 surveyed and 1 to survey. 2 grassed waterway projects surveyed.

Mead presented on behalf of Jeff Haverland, Technician's Report

Construction is starting very early this year. Both Grant and Norman need projects staked this week. WOT is also waiting on plans for spring construction.

The Mahnomen wetland banking site went to Houston Engineering due to complexity and the EOT site impacts neighboring landowners so it will be scaled back or dropped. The majority of the projects listed with site visit will probably be dropped due to lack of funding. Request numbers seem to be way down, probably due to the low crop prices. This is actually good for Jeff, as he can get up to speed on the latest Autocad and the new GPS system that should be in later this month.

Mead presented on behalf of Mary Steinlicht, Shared Services

Mary and Peter (Largely Mary due to time constraints) have been participating in the Testing phase for BWSR Buffer Tracking Tool. Attended first training of PTM App with Houston Engineering. Working on maps for Grant County's water plan update, and participating in the 2016-2017 MASWCD Leadership Institute for Problem Solving. Upcoming training with districts, beginning with Wilkin County on iPads/Garmin GLO and ArcGIS online. Peter and Mary have been working on training sessions with ESRI in order to build some relevant, valuable training for everyone in the TSA, as well as persuing an enterprise license agreement with ESRI that will provide the most functionality at a discounted rate.

BSWR UpdatesShared Services Funding

Doug Thomas thanked everyone for their input and all the time and effort that was placed into the process. Statewide, they're trying to develop a charter to move forward with the best solution. This has been adjusted over the years when state funding was made available. Local matches and funding cuts played a large role in these changes. The following items will be addressed – needs, governance, management, funding – they're hoping to have the charter complete in 30-45 days and spend the summer and fall working on the changes that need to happen prior to FY 2018 and 2019.

Enhanced Shared Services will be available FY 2017 and the hope is to have them available in 2018 and 2019. In the foreseeable future, NPEA funds plus \$240,000 of new money should be available to the TSAs.

Thoughts on Reorganization

Questions and concerns from the group...

1. Restructuring the area, which is currently too large geographically, is our biggest need. Reaching quorum is a concern.
2. Two separate areas can be created at any time, as long as a funding split is not needed.
3. Different management structures are definitely an issue. Regarding staff, we still operate as two separate areas.
4. Workload analysis that tracks projects completed as well as those that were dropped due to time constraints.
5. Future funding to keep both staff.
6. Participation from the far northern and southern regions has lagged and is somewhat due to management differences.
7. Thomas reminded everyone that a JPB is not required. However, it is a requirement to hire an employee if you're the employer, but not in order to appropriate funding. Areas should be encouraged to think about other options specific to them.

RRVCSA Reorganization

All District's in our area were presented options that were noted in the letter provided to BWSR. Mead received responses from 15 out of 16 counties. Many were largely in support of option 3D – Restructure the existing Joint Powers agreement between the SWCDs of Technical Service Area 1, forming a governing board comprised of delegated District Managers or elected District Supervisors, along with a northern and southern region

executive committee comprised of **3 district managers** from each region. Committee members would be elected from the TSA Board and serve 2 year terms. Fiscal operations and Committee roles would be as described in Option 3C (a primary host district will serve as fiscal Agent for TSA1 and provide day-to-day oversight for employees in their region, while a secondary co-host will provide day-to-day oversight for employee(s) in the other).

Needs are a concern but what we're lacking is oversight and management of the TSA. Will allowing managers to participate in decision making translate into better participation in meetings in order to conduct business? Informative, timely meetings offered on a consistent basis are a concern. We could try conducting business via web or televised broadcast as long as they're interactive.

Today's operation is more oriented towards staff than supervisors as it was in the past. Districts using the technical services seem like the better candidate to make decisions for the TSA.

The formulated option solves the governance problem but not the geographical issues. The additional funding with Enhanced Shared Services can be used for capacity and hiring new staff in the north and south to reduce the geographical distance between counties.

Jen Wolf, MCIT has made it clear that she is available to assist with moving forward on restructuring the Joint Powers Agreement.

Approval of Preferred Strategy

At this time, we need to look at the options that are necessary and makes changes on a step-by-step basis.

Motion (Balstad, Schoff) to give all Districts the right to appoint either a supervisor or manager to attend regular meetings and form one executive committee consisting of seven members that are geographically balanced for all District needs. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Alterations to the JPB wording will be completed by Peter Mead, reviewed by his legal counsel, distributed amongst all Districts in the area, reviewed by their legal counsel if needed and then given final approval to move forward at the next regular TSA meeting. Our hope is to have this new structure in place for FY 2017.

Technical Training and Certification

Many agencies have come together on this project; the final draft was endorsed last September.

Mead encourages the JPB to endorse this training concept. It will allow and better define local needs in our area and utilize funding in the areas that need it most in order to achieve and maintain the technical approval authority to plan and implement those practices. Adopting this strategy will allow Districts to prioritize training needs, inform agencies and deliver training to everyone in the area.

Motion (Miller, Flottemesch) to involve the TSA in this Technical Training Certification strategy. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2016 Training Opportunities

Mead has distributed emails regarding an upcoming training near Thief River Falls. Conservation Planning

training is coming up in August. He pushes the board and managers to offer suggestions for these and various sessions in order to make them available and relevant for everyone.

NRCS & JAA/TAA Developments

Dave Jones, NRCS Area Engineer out of the Thief River Falls office spoke of the recent changes regarding job approval authority. This was established as an NRCS system solely used for NRCS staff and not meant to be shared with partners but has culminated into more. The system recognizes credentials and quality of work that we have in our current staff, but has now changed for engineering services provided by others. Jones will continue to use his PE qualifications under the state engineer's license and job approval authority gives him the ability to do this. He will ensure that NRCS staff remains certified under this approval authority. However, non NRCS staff, individuals and non TSPs which include TSA Engineers, will now need to meet additional requirements in order to receive job approval authority.

FY 2017 Finance and Operations

Preliminary Budget Discussion

Mead reminded everyone of the Enhanced Shared Services funding and salary increases for FY2017. This may change with ESRI training costs and possible addition of staff.

Executive Committee Composition / Appointments

They will remain the same until our June board meeting.

Training Committee Composition / Appointments

Mead is looking for volunteers in moving forward with our training process to develop options beneficial to the group. Tanya Hanson-Red Lake, Don Bajumpaa-Wilkin and Darren Newville-EOT have stepped forward to assist with this. Bryan Malone-Pennington was suggested, but he will need to confirm.

Next Meeting

Wednesday, June 8th at Mahnomen Courthouse meeting room

Adjourn

Motion (Schoff, Dittmann) to adjourn the meeting at 11:48 a.m. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Approved: Pete Revier, RRVCSA TSA-1 Secretary

Date: November 15, 2016