

Red River Valley Conservation Service Area – TSA 1  
Executive Committee Meeting  
March 14, 2017

---

The special budget committee meeting of the RRVCSA-TSA 1 was held at the Mahnommen County Courthouse on Tuesday, March 14, 2017. Those in attendance: Peter Mead, Jen Wentz, Linda Hanson-Pennington Supervisor, Carol Schoff-Clay Supervisor, Jerome Flottesch-Becker Supervisor, Pete Revier-Mahnomen Supervisor, Lisa Newton-East Polk Manager, Tanya Hanson-Red Lake Manager, Lori Thronson-Norman Manager, Bryan Malone-Pennington Manager, Scott Balstad-East Polk Supervisor.

### **Call to Order**

Chairman Flottesch called the meeting to order at 9:30 a.m.

For clarification purposes, Executive Committee Members are as follows:

- 3 Officers, currently Jerome Flottesch-Chairman, Linda Hanson-Vice Chair & Pete Revier-Secretary/Treasurer
- 2 Administrators, currently Tanya Hanson and Bryan Malone
- 2 Board Members, currently Carol Schoff and Scott Balstad
- Ex Officio Members, Host and Secondary Host Districts, currently Peter Mead, Jen Wentz and Lisa Newton

Next meeting date is set for Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at the Mahnommen County Courthouse. We will approve matters discussed today.

### **Financial Reports**

Mead reviewed the financial reports from February 2017 paying close attention to FY17 NPEA funds which were tied to the FY17 Enhanced Shared Tech Services and received at the end of February. Because of the delay, our fund balance has a negative impact. We hope to gain charges for services income and boost this back into the positive. Jen reviewed the budget statement from FY16 Audit showing a deficit of \$70,499.

Motion (Hanson, Schoff) to approve the financials as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **TSA Management & Structure Workgroup**

Report to Date. Mead and Flottesch have been involved with this workgroup facilitated by the Freshwater Society to look at existing business models of TSA mgmt. throughout the state. Metro counties work much differently than Central counties with many utilizing a contractor only system. Other models being examined include NRCS, MNDOT, an ISD, a Cooperative and UPS. As always, there continue to be suggestions of TSA staff being state employees.

Desired outcomes: Recommend 3 preferred models and develop a more uniform approach throughout the state.

### **Area Technical Training and Certification Teams**

The MN Technology Training & Certification Strategy was adopted by the RRVCSA Board April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2016, and the Area one Technical Training and Certification Team held its first meeting Thursday Feb 16<sup>th</sup> in Thief River Falls. Megan Lennon, BWSR Training and Certification Coordinator, is coordinating and this was the first meeting of an area team in MN. Statewide priorities were identified by BWSR and NRCS for 2017:

- Soil Mechanics 1 & 2 Training
- Conservation Planning Training
- Soil Health
- Engineering Field Tools & Hydrology / Hydraulics

- WSCB Training

Three local training priorities were identified for our area.

- Ag (393) Filter Strip & Tech note 31 practices
- Water and Sediment Control Basin Design
- Side Water Inlets/Grade Stabilization Design

Eric Anderson will head Filter Strip / Tech note training, with a target date of Sept '17. Wes Drake will provide WSCB Training this spring and fall as part of existing training planned under Enhanced Shared Services. Megan will assist with facilitating discussions with area and state engineers to build a statewide model for consistent 638 training for all TSA/SWCD/NRCS staff across the state. Wes Drake and Jim Hest were identified as potential trainers on 410 design.

### **RRVCSA Reorganization**

Status of Resolutions. Everyone but Mahnomen has signed the reorganization resolution. Pete Revier, Mahnomen Supervisor, was approached for input on behalf of his county and noted that a consensus of his board supervisors was not met. Discussion was adequate but concerns surrounded distance and time prioritization. The use of technology may be a good alternative but the legal requirements surrounding interactive TV may be an obstacle. Revier also suggested stipends or incentives for attending meetings, and the idea of District staff retaining full control is a concern.

All present spoke of their views with the current situation. Many spoke of the plans set forth by their board for members and member alternatives designated to the TSA Board.

Next Steps. We can re-draft a solution that will better suit all boards throughout Area 1. Peter will review interactive TV legalities with Jen Wolf from MCIT as they pertain to full, regular board meetings.

### **Enhanced Shared Services**

Identified Options. Work plan has been approved. Grant work plan has a set aside of \$240,000 plus match for technology purchases. We have been reviewing technology solutions for Districts by working with Lakes Area Cooperative to develop our own common computer environments with firewall and VPN. However, not every District wants or needs this. Many Districts are hoping to make something happen now. Leadership training and problem solving exercises have given some recommendations.

With that said, Mead is hesitant to move forward with the Coops decision. We could divide the money evenly between 16 Districts and offer a basis of how the money is to be spent in order to remain within grant perimeters and work plan guidelines. This method will afford more creativity amongst Districts, get the money out there where needed and assist in spending the technology funds.

Recommended Approach. In order to accelerate implementation, make the funds available to each District equally with the ability for them to make a choice based on specific need. We will table any action on this until the budget has been discussed and approved.

### **Employee Evaluations**

Review of Criteria. Last two years this has been completed through Survey Monkey. Questions were tied specifically to each employee's job description. Mead reviewed questions. It was proposed to add the following:

- Communication regarding project completion and deadlines for each stage of the project.
- Landowner testimony which may have already been shared with District staff.

Responsible Party. Lisa Newton, East Polk Manager will now maintain this duty and relieve Mead of the task. As for salary increases, Mead and Wentz will review FY17 expenses and establish an allowed amount. A flat rate as opposed to a percentage seems to please most board members.

Motion (Schoff, Hanson) to offer a flat rate wage increase to each of the three employees subject to their evaluation and board approval. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### **FY2018 Budget Discussion**

Review Draft Budget. Figures from the current FY17 budget were carried over. Charges for Services income has run short in the past. We should decrease this figure by \$35,000 and budget a total of \$40,000. Insurances were budgeted twice as high in FY16 as FY17 with no change to actuals. Wentz will look into this but it could be due to prepayments.

Committee Recommendations. Hold \$50,000 from the \$240,000 Enhanced Shared Technical Services in order to assist with TSA purchases/operations. The remaining \$190,000 will be distributed between 16 Districts for a total of \$11,875 to each.

Motion (Balstad, Hanson) to pay each of the 16 Districts within TSA 1 a total of \$11,875 for technology and/or enhancements. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Hanson, Schoff) to recommend a draft budget as discussed and modified by Mead and Wentz. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### **Adjourn**

With no further business, motion (Hanson, Schoff) to adjourn meeting at 11:12 a.m. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Approved: Peter Revier, RRVCSA TSA-1 Secretary**

**Date: April 5, 2017**