



## Red River Valley Conservation Service Area

### Joint Powers Board Regular Meeting Wednesday April 5<sup>th</sup>, 2017

Mahnomen County Courthouse, 311 N. Main St. Mahnomen, MN

#### Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the RRVCSA – TSA 1 was held on Wednesday, April 5, 2017 in the lower level meeting room of the Mahnomen County Courthouse. Attendance was taken and can be provide upon request.

#### Call to Order

Chairman Flottesmesch called the meeting to order at 9:32 a.m.

#### Approval of Meeting Minutes

- November 2, 2016 Regular Meeting Minutes

With no changes to report, motion (Rinke, Schoff) to approve the November 2, 2016 meeting minutes as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

- November 15, 2016 Special Meeting Minutes

With no changes to report, motion (Miller, Gaukerud) to approve the November 15, 2016 meeting minutes as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

- March 14, 2017 Executive Meeting Minutes

With no changes to report, motion (Schoff, Miller) to approve the November 15, 2016 meeting minutes as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### Reorganization of the Board

- Chair. Jerome Flottesmesch is current and has been nominated to another term.

Motion (Schoff, Dittmann) to cease all nominations and cast white ballot. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

- Vice Chair. Linda Hanson is current. Lyle Dittmann has been nominated.

Motion (Sjostrom, Schoff) to cease all nominations and cast white ballot. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

- Secretary/Treasurer . Pete Revier is current and has been nominated to another term.

Motion (Thorsrud, Miller) to cease all nominations and cast white ballot. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

- Official Depository. Bremer Bank is current.

Motion (Revier, Gaukerud) to continue with Bremer Bank as our official depository. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

- Official Newspaper. Detroit Lakes Tribune is current.

Motion (Schoff, Dittmann) to continue with Detroit Lakes Tribune as our official newspaper. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **Financial Reports**

February Treasurer's Report was presented to the board. Motion (Dittmann, Revier) to approve the February Treasurer's Report as prepared. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **TSA Reports**

Host Manager – Peter Mead

- BWSR and Freshwater Society - many may have seen the invite to regional meetings for TSA organization. He and Jerome have been on the state committee looking at how best to deliver services and conduct business. Large corporations and independent school districts were reviewed. If you've been invited, Mead encourages attendance. Bemidji meeting is coming soon. Some of the main ideas have been:
  - Centralize Services
  - Dispersed Services
  - Privatize Services
- Renewal of TAA, Technical Approval Authority. Held mainly for 638 – Water and Sediment Control Basins. Job approval authority based on the technician's knowledge and then authority to design and approve a particular project. EJAA, Engineering Job Approval Authority. Area Engineer covers approval authority. Jeff Haverland will remain technically approved and authorized. Wording has changed and follows more closely to NRCS job approval standards.

Engineer – Jim Hest

- WSCBs – installed 29, designed 28, surveyed 9 and waiting to survey 5.
- Grade Stabilizations and Side Water Inlets – installed 32, designed 12, surveyed 5 and waiting to survey 2.
- Grassed Waterways – installed none, designed 1 and surveyed 1.
- Streambank / Shoreline Stabilization – installed 1, designed 1, surveyed 4 and waiting to survey 1.
- Surveyed 1 Diversion in West Polk.

Technician – Jeff Haverland

- Need to update EJAA as soon as possible.
- Nothing built so far this year.
- 6 projects dropped or sent to SWCD for design by Wes Drake.
- 31 basins designed and ready to install.
- Approximately 20 basins and side water inlets to survey & design.
- 1 streambank project designed and installed.
- 2 streambank projects awaiting survey & design.
- 1 wetland banking site awaiting construction.

GIS Specialist – Mary Steinlicht

- Completed 6 ArcGIS installs and desktop training with distribution of data.
- Held 4 ArcGIS Online and ArcGIS Collector trainings.
- Starting "refresher" AGOL and collector training.
- Performed Red Lake culvert inventory.
- Moved office from EOT to home.
- She, Peter and Brett completed MASWCD Leadership Academy in March.

### **Employee Evaluations**

After review and approval by the Executive Committee last month, nine questions from Survey Monkey were distributed to all District managers.

Comments were largely positive for all employees with Mary having the most positive results. Some issues with Jim and Jeff regarding timeliness still remain a concern but most problems seem to have been adjusted and/or worked themselves out. Communication issues have been resolved somewhat with Becker, EOT and WOT now sharing an engineer. This has been a huge help regarding distance between north and south areas. Jeff has been able to assist with projects for Norman and Mahanomen counties—who have not used his technical services often in the past.

WSCBs and side water inlets have been taking up most of Jim's time when the Engineering Technician is qualified and authorized to complete many of these projects. Larger projects seem to take a considerable amount of time. Historically, the TSA has been utilized for engineering. Survey and simple design can and should be performed by our Districts locally with assistance and approval from Jeff and Jim as needed.

Because our NRCS partners are changing – reducing six areas to four – working together at a local level amongst a few Districts should be our model moving forward. Our current structure DOES need to change. Communication needs further enhancement. Lisa Newton, East Polk Manager is willing and available to assist with personnel responsibilities.

Our TSA is following through with various training efforts including survey, sediment basins, grade stabilizations and side water inlets, 393 standards, etc. Direct assistance on a particular area has been requested by a few Districts as well.

A small pay increase is recommended for all three employees in the next fiscal year. This was included in the budget.

### **Enhanced Shared Services**

2016 Funds: these grant funds were used for the following purchases: ArcGIS, CAD, etc. and third party engineering services.

2017 Funds: the proposal from Lakes Cooperative for a common computing environment was not approved based on cost nor is there a need for a central server and firewall in every office. We can better utilize the funds by providing \$70,000 for operational costs of the TSA from 2017 ESS Part 1 grant. The remaining funds will be made available to SWCDs in order to increase technology including survey equipment, build capacity or fund a technical position. These funds are intended to be used for enhancing shared services. BWSR Approval and a work plan amendment will be required. The funds must be spent by December 2019.

Motion (Balstad, Schoff) to designate \$70,000 from 2017 Enhanced Shared Services Part 1 for TSA operations and distribute the remaining Part 1 and Part 2 funds among all 16 Districts of TSA 1 pending BWSR Approval. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **Fees for Service**

As the last update was completed in 2014, it's been decided to review our fee schedule and make changes as needed. West Polk mentioned private sector rates from various consulting firms such as Widseth, Smith & Nolting and Houston Engineering. Because of the recent demand for BMPs and Buffers as well as 1W1P updates, charges for services have been discussed in more detail. Raising our

fees would only pass those additional project fees onto the landowner. The TSA was formed to utilize private engineers less and to provide services to the landowner at minimal cost. We have no intention to compete with private firms. Engineering costs are seldom passed onto the landowner, forcing Districts to absorb those costs.

Funding sources were discussed. Project funding will almost always come after the project has been surveyed and designed. Initial billing and then re-billing will happen. It's best to consider all projects as cost-share unless otherwise noted. Vast majorities are clean water projects or EQIP funded.

Motion (Balstad, Rinke) to approve a 10% inflation increase across all fees listed on the current fee schedule effective today, April 5, 2017. The 20% maximum of total project costs will remain unchanged. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **FY 2018 Budget**

The 2018 Budget was updated during the executive committee meeting. Recommendations were to decrease charges for services and hold operational costs from Part 1 Enhanced SS. 2018 NPEA funds will remain at \$130,000. Total revenues will approach \$578,000. Personnel services increased \$1,500 per employee with the remaining Part 1 Enhanced SS to be disbursed among Districts. Other expenses remain mostly unchanged.

Motion (Miller, Schoff) to approve FY 2018 Budget as prepared and presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **TSA Reorganization**

We came short of a unanimous resolution to amend our existing JPA. Distance still remains an issue. Pennington has since mailed a letter from their board in agreement of forming two TSAs. We need to decide whether to revisit the options, make further suggestions or scratch the idea altogether. Possible suggestions: pursue a similar alternative but change the language slightly, complete and confirm a meeting agenda in advance which is not changed until the meeting date. Managers would then have messenger abilities to allow for more flexibility.

The issue at hand: Mahnommen County elected officials want to remain in control of TSA decisions and not lose their authority over hired District staff. Mahnommen suggested a language change from *Section 5.2 Letter A, Qualifications* but in doing so, we're back to the original resolution developed in 1995.

We could offer proxy delegation for managers to act as voting members when supervisors are not present or able to attend. Mead will adjust the current resolution language and forward the update to members for their consideration.

Next regular meeting will be held Tuesday, June 20<sup>th</sup> after the MASWCD Area 1 meeting in Crookston.

### **Adjourn**

As there is no further business, motion (Schoff, Miller) to adjourn the meeting at 3:00 p.m. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

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

**Date: June 20, 2017**