

**Becker Soil and Water Conservation District  
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting  
Wednesday, December 18, 2013**

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, December 18, 2013 in the Conference Room of the Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Those present were Supervisors Tony Beck, Duane Grossman, Kathy Stenger, Jerome Flottemesch, and Don Lefebvre. Others present include Becker County Commissioner Barry Nelson, District Administrator Peter Mead, District Administrative Assistant Jen Wentz, District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz, District Technician Ed Clem and District Technician Marsha Watland.

**Call to Order** – meeting was called to order at 8:09 a.m.

**November Minutes** –

Motion (Grossman, Flottemesch) to approve the November regular meeting minutes as presented.  
Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Financial Reports and Bills for Approval** – Peter reviewed Treasurer’s Report for November paying special attention to income received for the month and overall for the year as well as disbursements made.

Motion (Flottemesch, Stenger) to approve the November Financial Reports and Bills for Approval.  
Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Reports** –

*Ed Musielewicz, NRCS District Conservationist reported on the following:*

- He received the staffing panel for the Soil Conservationist position. He must make a decision and the candidate should accept by Christmas. He made his recommendation but the offer has not been proposed yet.
- Danny Webber has accepted the Area Conservationist position in Thief River Falls. January 13, 2014 is his starting date.
- He and Jeff will attend an EQIP conference call later this morning.
- Information on programs
  - There is no AWEP program regarding Ag Watershed for the Red River Valley
  - We will compete for EQIP dollars around the state. Minnesota has 21 million dollars in EQIP funds allocated for this year. We received 26 million last year. It will be more competitive this year. Deadline for scoring on forestry and soils initiative is December 20.
- We’ve made CSP payments for 2013. We’re currently in a scoring period until Jan 17<sup>th</sup> and those will be for 2014 contracts.
- Phil Doll will do a feature with Vicki Gerdes from the newspaper regarding accomplishments on Brink Lake. The project is now finished. Ed distributed photos of the progress and completion.

- Recently met with new WRP staff in Fergus Falls. Discussed land easements from the past, present, and future. There will be no restrictions on us funding the project as previously discussed.

*Ed Clem, District Technician reported on the following:*

- Construction season was cut short in November. This will put more pressure on us in the spring of 2014 to complete projects that were delayed.
- He has moved his workstation into John Voz's former office. The new PF Biologist will be located at Ed's previous work area. Ed will transition to the County network in the next two weeks after Adam Kleinschmidt retains the federal work station.
- Tree plans are a bit slow for this time. 2014 state cost-share program limitations exclude much of our normal tree plan shelterbelts.
- Ed mentioned the recent White Earth Lake shoreline reclamation.
  - Landowners have lost their shoreline over the years due to past storms and other natural elements
  - The DNR Hydrologist approved to have them reclaim it.
  - They applied for a variance to add to their building and shoreline and were required to install a native, shoreline buffer by Planning & Zoning.
  - Becker SWCD became involved and Marsha produced the plan. However, the landowner disregarded the plan and made significant changes.
  - In the end, a WCA violation and possible OHW violation with the DNR has been discussed. Because of this, we no longer have an interest in this project and are looking to DNR for enforcement.

*Marsha Watland, District Technician reported on the following:*

County Ag Inspector

- CWMA grant was mailed in recently. DuPont will give us money for herbicides over and above what we already receive for the grant.
- Intern coming in May-August will work in all areas except clerical.
- Marsha reviewed the Becker County CAI Annual report for 2013 and noted this yesterday during the Becker County Commissioners meeting as well.
  - She has decreased her time on this program because of the influx of shoreline projects.
  - Bio control has been strong.
  - She wasn't able to help with spotted knapweed requests as she had in the past.
  - Pesticide exams continue to be the same, with seed inspections down.
  - She reviewed her hours and miles that were spent throughout the year for various areas: training, weed inspection, weed control, outreach, pesticide activities, and bio control.
- MN Department of Agriculture will invest in pollinator control in our area and work toward overall improvement.
- Marsha read from a letter received from the Clean Water Act permits not needed for pesticides already regulated under the FIFRA act. She and her partners will push for this change on the Farm Bill.
- A concern for the future – Spotted Wing Drosophila. This insect will become a major problem for our fruit crops in Becker County.
- Emerald Ash Bore has become a huge problem in MN and is in the Minneapolis area. Within two years, this region will be robbed of their ash trees.

- Mountain Pine Bark Beetle is currently in Canada and north of Montana and could enter northern MN in future years. Jack and Red Pine are its preferred species.

#### Shoreland Specialist

- Marsha reviewed her shoreline projects for 2014. She has a total of 31 projects thus far. Landowners with completed projects are recommending her services to others.
- As long as the recent grant applications are approved, all of the projects listed should be completed in 2014.
- Labor grant will cover maintenance and installation of District projects.
- Marsha has been making contacts with Planning & Zoning and the DNR Hydrologist to get everyone informed and consistent on future shoreline projects.

**MASWCD State Convention Recap** – The Supervisors and employees made comments on some of the sessions they attended at the convention: cover crops, water quality and tiling, and healthcare changes.

**2014 Healthcare Changes** –Peter reviewed the new 40% additional tax charged to employers in 2015 which is based on the amount of healthcare benefits paid to each employee.

**Grant Applications** – Peter reviewed the following grants with the Board:

- MN Conservation Corps Conservation Apprenticeship grant
  - Allows the District to have an additional employee from May-August in order to reduce our technicians workload with various projects
  - Final decision should be made in mid-January
  - Position will be hired and paid for by the Conservation Corp and will employ college students
- MN Conservation Corps Crew Labor CWF grant
  - Provides a minimum of 5 crew members to work eleven days
  - Offers maintenance on shoreline buffers from 2013
  - Supplies labor for native buffer projects in 2014
- CWL Soil Erosion and Drainage Law Compliance Program grant
  - Allows for drainage ditch inventory and inspection
  - Partner with Becker County and Pelican River Watershed District
  - Includes ditches 11, 13, 14, 15, 16, and 20
  - Inspection database, inspection and BMP prioritization
  - Total request \$40,710 with a local match of \$11,000

Motion (Lefebvre, Grossman) to approve the grant applications presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Employee Leave Balances** – Peter reviewed the employee leave balances as of November 30<sup>th</sup> for annual, sick, and OT/Comp payments. Carryover limits were discussed.

**Supervisor Vouchers and Special Meetings** – Jen noted the special meetings that were held in this quarter. They are as follows:

4<sup>th</sup> Quarter of 2013 Special Meetings

- November 19: MASWCD Area I meeting held in Ada
- December 1-3: MASWCD state convention held in Bloomington

Motion (Grossman, Flottemesch) to approve the special meetings as noted. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Grossman, Flottemesch) to approve the supervisor's vouchers as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Envirothon Donation Approval** – Jen reviewed changes for the 2014 Envirothon with an increase to the Districts expense totaling \$200. Of that expense, the Senior Envirothon will receive \$150 and the Junior Envirothon will receive \$50.

Motion (Lefebvre, Stenger) to approve the Envirothon donation for 2014. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Cost-Share and Clean Water Legacy Contracts and Vouchers** – The following contracts were presented for consideration.

State Cost-Share

Contract #13-18 with City of Audubon, well sealing. Estimated project cost \$500; eligible cost-share equals 50% or \$240.

Contract #13-17 with Rich Jasken, shelterbelt. Estimated project cost \$592.50; eligible cost-share equals 75% or \$389.

Contract #13-19 with Jeff Anderson, well sealing. Estimated project cost \$500; eligible cost-share equals 50% or \$240.

Motion (Flottemesch, Grossman) to approve the above contracts as presented and for the amounts listed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Clean Water Legacy

Contract #CWL-14-2013 with Matt Bjerke, water & sediment control basins. Estimated project cost \$10,000; eligible cost-share equals 75% or \$7,500.

Contract #CWL-13-2013 with Kevan Nelson, water & sediment control basins. Estimated project cost \$25,000; After EQIP funding eligible cost-share equals 25% or \$6,186.

Motion (Lefebvre, Flottemesch) to approve the above contracts as presented and for the amounts listed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

The following Clean Water Legacy vouchers were submitted for payment approval:

2013 Clean Water Legacy

Contract #CWL-7-2013 with Cameron Ullrich. Installed shallow lakes filter strip and wetland buffer incentive. Total project cost \$62,012.62. This project will receive \$23,857.92 of CRP funds. Eligible CWL payment \$37,892.86.

Contract #CWL-9-2013 with Norma (Bruce) Nelson. Installed shallow lakes filter strip and wetland buffer incentive. Total project cost \$12,826.80. This project will receive \$6,466.32 of CRP funds. Eligible CWL payment \$6,360.48.

Contract #CWL-4-2013 with Tom Bergren. Installed tile and embankments. Total project cost \$20,800. This project will receive \$13,138.89 of EQIP funds. Eligible CWL payment \$5,581.11.

#### 2012 Clean Water Legacy

Contract #CWF-2-2012 with Okeson Farm Partnership. Installed 6 WASCObS with drainage tile and embankments. Total project cost \$28,441.69. Eligible CWL payment \$21,331.27.

Contract #CWL-8-2012 with Tom Bergren. Installed WASCObS with tile and embankments. Total project cost \$4,357.50. Eligible CWL payment \$4,357.50.

Motion (Flottemesch, Grossman) to authorize payment of the above contracts and for the amounts presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### **Other –**

Don Lefebvre submitted his letter of resignation. The Board reviewed this earlier. There was discussion of who will serve as his replacement. Final decision will be made after the first of the year. Hopefully, that individual will be sworn in at the January meeting but no later than February.

Motion (Flottemesch, Grossman) to approve Don Lefebvre's retirement and letter of resignation with great regret. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

After the MASWCD state convention, Paula Mohr, Editor of the Farmer Magazine approached Peter and would like to write a story on the recent changes in our District. We will take a few photographs after the meeting to help her with this project.

There will be a gathering held after the January 2014 board meeting in the USDA office conference room to honor the years of service Don Lefebvre has given to the District. Specific information regarding this celebration will be forthcoming.

Being no further business, motion (Flottemesch, Grossman) to adjourn the meeting at 10:31 a.m.

**Approved: Duane Grossman, Becker SWCD Secretary      Date: January 15, 2014**