

## **Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting Wednesday, April 16, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, April 16, 2014 in the Conference Room of the Ag Center Building located at 809 8<sup>th</sup> Street SE, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Those present were Supervisors Tony Beck, Duane Grossman, Kathy Stenger, Jerome Flottemesch and Eugene Pavelko. Others present include County Commissioner Barry Nelson, District Administrator Peter Mead, District Admin Assistant Jen Wentz, District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz, District Technician Ed Clem, District Technician Marsha Watland, new Engineering Technician Claire Olson, and new Office Assistant Leticia Kiehl.

**Call to Order** – Chairman Stenger called the meeting to order at 8:00 a.m.

**March Meeting minutes** – minutes were reviewed prior to the meeting. There were no changes noted.

Motion (Pavelko, Grossman) to approve the March meeting minutes as written and presented.  
Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Financial Reports & Bills** – Peter reviewed the financials for the month of March.

Motion (Beck, Flottemesch) to approve the payment of bills for April and the March financial statements. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

### **Reports –**

*Peter Mead introduced our newest members of the SWCD office:*

Claire Olson is our new Engineering Technician and Leticia Kiehl is our part-time Office Assistant for the District and ¾ time staff member for NRCS contracted through Ultima. Both ladies started Monday, April 14. Claire will assist with shoreland design and construction inspections as well as trees.

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

- Field office appraisal was completed in March. We were noted as commendable. Ed has already discussed a few items recommended with our staff. Documentation needs to be more effective. We must establish an individual development plan for the new Soil Conservationist, Ray Hummel. Also, a few small security measures will be corrected.
- CSP is coming soon. Our conservation measurement tool will be active next week. All applicants that were signed up in the first week of February will be ranked and scored. By May, this will be completed. Contracts should be ready for landowners in July.
- He has been completing status reviews with landowners and informing them of projects available and suitable to their land.
- Staking has begun on several projects but has been minimal thus far. Surveys for grade stabilizations have been started as well.
- Contractors will begin before many crops are in the field.
- Obligations of 2014 applications will be completed before summer.

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

- Gearing up for construction season.
- Tree season is in full swing. Most of our trees will be delivered on Friday, April 25<sup>th</sup>. We are moving closer to an average year of tree sales.
- Wetland activities are increasing.

*Shoreland Specialist/County Ag Inspector, Marsha Watland reported on the following:*  
County Ag Inspector

- Recently attended County Ag Inspector meeting went well. Presenters had great topics to share with amazing feedback. She was even able to make an organic farming contact.
- Attended MNDOT training in Fergus Falls for a day presentation. She was the only CAI in attendance. She shared information regarding bio-control.
- MNDOT and USFW met her on Hwy 10 regarding invasive phragmites next to the railroad tracks with a small portion on a private piece of land.
- Gravel pit inspection letters were mailed yesterday. She should have the inspections completed by the end of April.

Shoreland Specialist

- She attended the April 4<sup>th</sup> Planning & Zoning meeting regarding shoreland and gravel pits.
- Mailing work orders to respective shoreland site visit clients. She has 15 clients thus far.
- Collaborating with Adam Kleinschmidt and NRCS at the Poling site. This project will fall under the DNR Aquatic Invasive grant.
- Has received information from Peter regarding area lake association meetings. COLA is asking us to create presentation materials for various meetings.

Discussion arose in regards to Stakke Lake landowners petitioning the Watershed District to raise water levels and establish a permanent outlet elevation.

- Remains busy with design; is now receiving an upfront fee regarding this additional work.

*Becker SWCD Board Chairperson, Kathy Stenger reported on the following:*

- Attended the Area 1 Chair/Managers meeting at the beginning of April.
- LeAnn Buck gave a good presentation on the future of Area 1.
- One Watershed, One Plan must be based on everyone's input to make the implementation a success. This should be a 10 year policy.
- Supervisors should be more involved with education and involvement of the public towards our conservation goals.
- Resolution to split Area 1 in half by north and south sectors failed at the state convention but we are now working on a compromised solution.
- Discussion regarding the lack of an agenda and the disorganized establishment of the meeting in general.

**Software / Equipment Upgrades and Purchases** – Peter reviewed previous discussions on these needs for the office. He proposed a few options to the Board for equipment needs and/or upgrades as well as software additions.

He reviewed the amount of funds set aside in the budget from capital outlay for these proposals. There will also be a need to pull just under \$11,000 from the District's fund balance. Marsha has a list of materials needed for her projects as well.

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to authorize the administration to make the necessary equipment purchases up to \$4,000. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Grossman, Beck) to authorize the administration to upgrade the software needs of the office and utilize \$11,000 from the fund balance.

**CY13 Peterson Company, Ltd Audit Bid** – Jen noted the increase of \$50 over last year's proposal. The engagement letter has been mailed to us for approval. The audit cost for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2013 will be \$2,100.

**Review Prairie Plan Joint Powers Agreement** – Peter reviewed the Joint Powers Agreement that the Board has received and will sign and return the agreement to DNR this week.

**TWP Weed Inspector Training** – all Supervisors' attended the Township Weed Inspector's meeting held in Callaway on March 20, 2014. This stipend was not added to their first quarter pay voucher. It will be added to the second quarter's voucher and will include mileage expenses to and from the event.

**EOT Irrigation Scheduler and Nitrogen Management Programs** – Peter met with staff from East Otter Tail office.

- East Ottertail SWCD and the Dept. of Agriculture are adding a few more weather stations to the Central MN Ag Weather Network this year. Pine Point Township is one of the desired new weather station locations in Becker County. Data is collected from these stations for ET calculations and other factors for the EOT Irrigation Scheduler Program.
- The EOT web page is now updated daily with weather station information.
- Benefits of this program are nutrient reduction, ground water protection, reduced water use, energy savings and increased production.
- Our producers are welcome to participate in this program. We would like to promote this within our office with assistance from our PF Biologist, Adam Kleinschmidt.
- EOT has also received funding to expand their Adaptive Nitrogen Management program. Aerial photography and Guided stalk sampling will be offered at zero cost to the participants. The first field is free; each additional field will cost \$300.
- The counties included in this study will be Becker, Otter Tail, Hubbard, Wadena, and Todd.
- Our goal for Becker County is to enroll 10 fields in 2014.

**RIM Buffer Program RFP** – this program is run separately from other RIM programs. Our District has never submitted a proposal for funding on this project and has been approached to change that for the current year. Peter is now working to complete this by Friday. He is proposing to target filter strips on at least 10% of the available riparian acres. This amounts to about 1,000 acres overall that will be buffered. There is also wildlife expansion money available with this program.

Motion (Flottemesch, Grossman) to authorize administration to create and submit an application for the RIM Buffer Program. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Lassard-Sams Outdoor Heritage Council RFP** – The Council is seeking a request for funding. The District and NRCS has discussed this with staff. We propose a county-wide buffer program which will include water quality incentives and wildlife habitat enhancements that will involve pollinators as well. Requests are due in June. This funding will be for next year.

**2013 Clean Water Legacy Applications** – Peter presented the Board with a visual of the work that will be completed on Kevin Lunde’s property. The landowner would like to have the two basins built this spring before his crop is placed. The filter strip can be constructed afterwards.

The following contracts were presented for consideration and Board approval:

Contract #13-18 with Kevin Lunde, filter strip and incentive. Total project cost estimate \$6,090; eligible financial assistance \$3,090 from CRP 2014-2024 and \$3,000 from 2013 CWL funds.

Contract #13-19 with Kevin Lunde, grade stabilization and water & sediment control basins. Total project cost estimate \$26,830; eligible financial assistance \$16,156 from NRCS-EQIP and \$7,991 from 2013 CWL funds.

Contract #13-20 with Kevin Lunde, water & sediment control basins. Total project cost estimate \$15,314; eligible financial assistance \$4,742 from NRCS-EQIP and \$9,041 from 2013 CWL funds.

Motion (Grossman, Pavelko) to approve the 2013 Clean Water Legacy contracts as presented and for the amounts noted. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Other** – Our annual 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Tour is scheduled for Monday & Tuesday, May 12 and 13 at Ike Fischer Farm. We have five of the typical six schools attending this year. With a previously planned testing schedule, Rossman Elementary cannot attend. The District has tried to follow a consistent schedule with this tour every year and will announce next year’s date a year in advance. This should allow our school’s to plan accordingly.

Jerome spoke of watershed districts past and present with special notes regarding the Buffalo Red River and Wild Rice watersheds.

Barry Nelson spoke of the review committee for county resolutions and comments regarding potential restrictions and controls under the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)’s proposed Waters of the United States Rule.

Being no further business, motion (Grossman, Pavelko) to adjourn the meeting at 10:33 a.m. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Approved: Duane Grossman, Becker SWCD Secretary      Date: May 21, 2014**