

# **Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting Wednesday, May 21, 2014**

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, May 21, 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 Claire Olson, and District Technician Marsha Watland.

**Call to Order** – Chairman Stenger called the meeting to order at 8:01a.m.

**April Meeting minutes** – minutes were reviewed prior to the meeting. There were no changes to report.

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

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

Motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to approve the payment of bills and the financial statements for the previous month. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

## **Reports –**

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

- Programs update from his May 7<sup>th</sup> DC conference call: EQIP applications ranking and scoring is underway and due this Friday, but funding is still pending. There are 22 applications with approximately \$131,000 in funding, but this number will be closer to \$160,000. The largest portion is for pasture and hayland planting. Producers can receive \$200-\$250 per acre if they agree to a five-year contract.
- Ray has completed the ranking interviews on CSP applications and has been entering the conservation measurement tool. All applicants have been eligible; however, some have fallen close to below eligibility requirements with the third resource control. Funding decisions will be completed by the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June.
- Update on WRE – Wetland Reserve Easements. He attended a meeting last Thursday in St. Paul. Other DCs were in attendance, BWSR, etc. They spoke of the partnership over the last few years. There still seem to be issues regarding easements dragging out for lengthy periods. Placing land into a permanent easement is difficult to secure with the three-year waiting period that continues to affect the program. He mentioned the Rice

Lake restoration that is working solely off easement, but the Rice Lake project with PRWD has now succumbed to additional restrictions. The state has the ability to work off easement but NRCS does not. He would like to have structure finished this year. Ed will work with Peter & PRWD on pursuing alternative funding. The project will be completed but will take a little longer to accomplish.

*District Engineering Technician, Claire Olson reported on the following:*

- The District has one tree planting yet to complete. Once we dry out a bit, this will be finished.
- Many construction sites are staked and ready but moving slowly because of recent soil conditions.
- She's been taking DNR well readings and has completed some of Ed's too.
- Working on projects with Jeff Norby and Jeff Haverland.
- WCA visits have been attended with a cease and desist order and potential violation near Long Lake.
- She distributed a handout of Ed Clem's comments on the Wellhead Protection Plan for the city of Frazee.

Peter Mead elaborated on the wetland violation and cease and desist off US Hwy 10 and Long Lake Rd.

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

County Ag Inspector

- 31 gravel pits have been certified with 2 inspected but not certified. Her new computer system will allow her to see some of the weed issues that are out there.
- Traveled with Jonah from Highway Dept. who is also working on treatment
- Pesticide exams have continued but have slowed quite a bit.
- No violations to report for pesticide applicators.
- Jeff Siira has taken care of most of the seed inspections. She reviewed some of the findings and is pleased with the results.
- Working with MNDOT from Walker; they will be treating Hwy 34 and 25 for spotted knapweed control.
- Bid received regarding recreation trail treatment. Marty Wiley is working on this; she will coordinate with him.
- Tansy has been the largest concern with gravel pit inspections.

Shoreland

- Shoreland inspections are underway.
- Would like to remove the berm labeling which will include native plantings. Permeable pavers will be stricken too.
- Holy Rosary held their water festival earlier this month and she was a presenter.
- Attended the Tulaby Lake Association meeting.

- 20 shoreland inspection sites to complete. She would like to work with Claire on the CAD aspects.
- Buffalo-Red River Watershed District has forwarded us a lake shore project to complete.
- The Berg site fell through. Huesman will be installed next week. Suby site slough on Pickerel Lake will add two rain gardens and should be completed next week as well.
- Conservation Corps arrives next week. They will work with two sites on Floyd Lake as well as many other shoreline projects.
- Gave a brief informative on the three cost-share contracts to be approved later in the meeting for shoreline projects.
- Spoke of the great teamwork in our office and amongst her native plant contractors and nurseries. All plant materials will be ready for pickup this Friday.
- Contractor training and certification that was to be held this June will hopefully be conducted late fall or spring of next year.

**Becker SWCD Position on ZOAC Setback Provision Recommendations** – Peter distributed a position paper to our Board members from Pelican River Watershed District regarding the ordinance setback negotiations. Homes are required to be setback with a stringline from adjacent properties until that home is conforming. Any reconstruction must be moved back, which is ideally less harmful to the lake. The setback requirement was motioned during the recent meeting to be removed altogether. Many agencies were opposed to this idea; it has now become a political issue. Peter is bringing this to our Board and is looking for their opinion and assistance in handling the issue.

This setback provision impacts lake water quality through storm water runoff. However, the question is whether this is manageable under current recommendations. Regulations for new construction must be moved back to the stringline requirements. Yet, existing structures can choose to remain at their current location. Variances will always take affect and may be cause for concern. Non-conforming lots are plotted lots whether inhabited with a structure or not. Many of these have been completed long ago and don't currently meet planning & zoning ordinances and requirements.

The recommendations made by the committee are justified – to change the present setback requirement of stringline plus 20% to a modified stringline which is the average of the setback of the two neighboring structures. This wording would meet our Soil & Water concerns much better regarding the quality of the lake as well as stormwater guidelines.

Lengthy discussion developed. This subject will go to public hearing next month. Peter will draft some information based on our discussion today and will forward that to Kathy and other Board members for review.

**Area 1 Meeting** – this will be held July 9 @ McCollum's Preserve in Bejou. We have the option to bring forth any resolutions. None were proposed at this time.

**MASWCD Area 1 Meeting Survey** – survey materials were mailed to our Board members. Kathy mentioned what LeAnn Buck stated at the meeting: separation of our area into two sections – north and south – is a bad business strategy. A centralized meeting location should be discussed and decided upon to ensure proper communication throughout neighboring Districts.

We should meet at one location for simplicity purposes and in a more centralized setting. The ideal location for this, based on distance between the two furthest Districts, would be the Shooting Star in Mahanomen. This information will be reported back to Sara Gronfeld with Traverse SWCD.

**MCIT Payroll Estimates** – our insurance company asks for a payroll estimate yearly as a basis for our worker's compensation insurance fees. The salary figures for our Board members are inflated and established on a flat and fixed figure. MCIT has given us the option to continue using this method or remove our Board members altogether. It may not be a best business practice to remove this insurance for liability purposes. District staff will check into this further.

**Farm Bill Assistance Program RFP Submittal** – in regards to Adam Kleinschmidt's current position. Peter reviewed the proposal for next year and the variety of programs and projects that these funds would cover and allow for our District.

Accomplishments were noted as well. Programs that this position would cover and assist with include RIM, new CRP contracts and re-enrollments, Working Lands Initiative, Native Prairie Bank, management plans, RIM-WRP, and expiring CRP excluding continuous. We would also have a potential for two US Fish & Wildlife partnerships.

Proposed matching funds for this grant would come from Buffalo-Red River Watershed District and Becker SWCD.

Motion (Grossman, Beck) to accept the proposal drafted by Peter Mead for the Farm Bill Assistance Program for fiscal year 2015. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Biennial Budget Request Submittal** – Peter recently produced three BBRs for the District, BWSR, and the County all relating to the legislature and what it takes to keep us providing conservation practices on the land and water. He reviewed the funding requirements for all projects that we participate in. He noted some of the changes he has requested, especially with WCA and Shoreland operations. He is asking for an additional \$40,000 to complete these projects.

In addition, TSA funding has fallen short over the last several years. He broke down the figures in order for the Board to realize the need for more funding throughout this program as well.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Grossman) to approve the BBRs that Peter has completed and proposed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**MASWCD Leadership Institute Attendance** – Peter noted that the leadership training is up and running again for this year. He plans to attend the 2014-15 session.

Motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to approve Peter Mead’s attendance in the Leadership Institute training for this FY2014-15. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Personnel Policy (O/T-Flex-Personal Leave) Accrual and Usage** – Peter mentioned the confusion in our wording on the Personnel Policy handbook in regards to earning over-time/comp time and using vacation or sick leave in the same pay period.

Also discussed was the definition of an Exempt employee which does not earn over-time and/or compensatory time. The handbook should be amended to include specific language regarding this. Nancy Grabanski, Human Resources director for Becker County, will be approached on this subject.

**2013 & 2014 State Cost-Share Shoreline Program Project Applications** – Peter reviewed the shoreline cost-share contracts with our Board.

The following contracts were presented for consideration and Board approval:

Contract #13-29 with Dave & Claudia Welte, shoreland protection on Big Detroit. Total project cost estimate \$9,693; eligible 2013 state cost-share \$4,693.

Contract #14-2 with Geri & Bill Harbeke, shoreland protection on Lake Maud. Total project cost estimate \$3,940; eligible 2014 state cost-share \$1,970.

Contract #14-3 with Dave & Sally Suby, shoreland protection and rain garden on Pickerel Lake. Total project cost estimate \$3,006; eligible 2014 state cost-share \$1,503.

Motion (Grossman, Flottemesch) to approve the 2013 and 2014 state cost-share contracts as presented and for the amounts noted. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

The following 2014 tree planting vouchers were presented to the Board for payment approval:

Contract #13-20 with Todd Andresen, shelterbelt establishment. Total project cost \$305; District share of cost-share payment \$228 from 2013 state cost-share.

Contract #13-22 with Don Maninga, shelterbelt establishment. Total project cost \$1,510; District share of cost-share payment \$1,132 from 2013 state cost-share.

Contract #13-27 with Jeremy Roering, shelterbelt establishment. Total project cost \$873; District share of cost-share payment \$654 from 2013 state cost-share.

Contract #13-28 with Brian Rubenstein, shelterbelt establishment. Total project cost \$1,090; District share of cost-share payment \$807 from 2013 state cost-share.

Motion (Flottesch, Pavelko) to approve the payment of vouchers as presented and for the dollar amounts noted. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

**Other –**

Next year's budget must be discussed and approved by a committee before July 1st. Peter asked for assistance regarding budget work. Tony Beck and Duane Grossman have offered to assist with this project. We have tentatively set the date to discuss the District's FY2015 budget on Thursday, June 12 at 10:00 a.m.

Jen reminded everyone that District I and IV Soil & Water Supervisors are up for re-election. Elections opened May 20th and will close June 3rd.

Peter announced that Ed Clem was appointed as member of the Lake Eunice Township board. He will certainly be an asset to their association.

Being no further business, motion (Grossman, Beck) to adjourn the meeting at 11:34 a.m.

**Approved: Duane Grossman, Becker SWCD Secretary      Date: June 18, 2014**