



Regular Board Meeting - Wednesday, September 23, 2015

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, September 23rd in the Conference Room of the USDA Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, MN.

Those present were Supervisors Tony Beck, Kathy Stenger, Jerome Flottesmesch, Travis Schauer and Eugene Pavelko. Others present include County Commissioner Barry Nelson, District Administrator Peter Mead, Admin Assistant Jen Wentz, NRCS District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz, District Technician/Wetland Specialist Ed Clem, NRCS Soil Conservationist Ray Hummel and Ag Inspector/Shoreland Specialist Marsha Watland.

Call to Order Chairperson Stenger called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

Approval of August Meeting Minutes – no changes noted.

Motion (Pavelko, Flottesmesch) to approve as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Financial Reports and Bills for Approval – Peter reviewed the August financial reports and September bills for approval.

Motion (Beck, Flottesmesch) to approve August financial reports and September bills for payment. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

3rd Quarter Supervisor Vouchers & Expenses

Special Meetings

July 21st – NRCS Workgroup; attended by all supervisors

July 29th – Budget Committee meeting; attended by Beck & Schauer

August 18th – County Commissioner meeting; attended by Flottesmesch

Motion (Flottesmesch, Schauer) to approve Supervisor special meetings as listed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

District Reports

District Conservationist – Ed Musielewicz

- CSP reenrollments will be completed at the end of month. We have 19 in all.
- Aaron has been doing a great job with CRP reenrolls. We have close to 100 contracts and near 1,500 acres.
- CRP contracts consisting of trees will need to be reenrolled during the expiring year in order to remain eligible.

- New GRP (Grassland Reserve Program) offers a flat rate of \$15 per acre. Conversion from permanent hayland to pastureland is cost-shared. This sign-up ends in November.
- CRP and CSP spot checks are due at the end of this month.
- 2016 EQIP planning will begin after October.

District Administrator – Peter Mead

- Manager's meeting held in our TSA regarding Ag certainty, buffers, funding, shared services, staffing and preliminary budget discussions as well.
- Similar to Districts, legislative appropriations have increased NPEA funding to TSAs.
- Dissolving the current JPB and forming a new Joint Powers organization has been a topic of discussion. MCIT will be contacted for legality rules.
- Dept of Ag presented at length on the Ag Water Quality Certification Program and the group identified the need for two coordinators in the Red River Basin.
- Dave Jones, NRCS Area Engineer met with Ed, Peter, Marsha and Claire, visiting several shoreland projects to evaluate how some shoreland BMPs could fit within NRCS Standards.
- Current staffing plan with NRCS – Ultima contracts have shifted to one person assisting two offices; some will continue to be dedicated to one office.
- High school intern Kourtney Huff is with our office until mid-November. She is weeding, identifying and labeling the plant material in our rain garden project and will assist with other miscellaneous projects.

Program Updates

District Programs – Ed Clem

- With the great weather we've been having, many construction projects are coming to a close. For example: Roger Foltz-Basins, Gary Myers-Basins, Bruce Nelson-Basins, Tom Bergren and Keith Faus-Grade Stabilization, Bruce Hines-Basins, Darwin Hendrickson-Basins, Kevin Lunde-Grade Stab, Kevan Nelson-Basins & Grade Stabilization.
- If all goes well, we should be finished with construction season by the 2nd week of November.
- Several recent wetland requests to install wildlife ponds. Approximately 70% of these excavation projects never happen. Many proposals add open water to cattail choked wetlands and willow swamps.
- He and Claire processed a 5-mile wetland delineation from Two Inlets to the west for a slope grading and shoulder widening project. The District will be reimbursed a small portion of the costs involved in this formal and labor intensive delineation. We may need to reevaluate our cost structure for projects such as this.
- Follow-up on a wetland violation on the north end of Little Cormorant Lake. Landowner is building a house and has pushed a the large hill into a farmed wetland. We've been working with him to remove the fill. Eventually, this wetland will be restored to better condition than it was initially.
- Assisting a landowner with vacating an easement through neighbor's yard and applying for a WCA exemption to cross a wetland.
- Becker County Planning & Zoning has asked him to help with the Osage Sportsman's Club. They've expanded their shotgun range and have cleared many trees near Straight Lake. He is establishing a Stormwater Pollution Prevention plan for the department. MPCA is involved too.

Shoreland and Ag Inspector – Marsha Watland
County Ag Inspector

- Met with Jona from Highway Dept. regarding fall treatment and highway assessments. Wild Parsnip is still germinating and late fall treatment is a great control method. She has notified Dana from MNDOT and Stacey with USFWS that we are pushing fall treatment.
- Finished semiannual gravel pit inspections. Treatment has been requested for mid-October.
- Application for the next CWMA grant will be geared towards recreation trails. Approximately 100 miles near Tullaby Lake has been treated properly.

Shoreland

- Described the shoreland designs yet to be completed. Site evaluations have been fairly smooth. All projects have been dated to ensure timely completion.
- Two Inlets Lake project: streambed running through and the addition of two new culverts. The erosion has caused increased sand deposits. She, Jeff Norby and Peter will assess this area in the fall.
- Big Elbow Lake has seen nearly 9 shoreland protection sites this year.
- Slope and coir log assessment on Lake Eunice.
- Continuing with site evaluations for 2015 installs and completing 2014. Currently performing site evaluations for 2016 installs.
- Little Cormorant site prep; reviewed Zoning regulations with landowner. She is happy with the initial landowner communication.
- BRRWD Fall Tour is set for mid-October. Bruce Albright would like to showcase the Morgan and Hochhalter sites within our area of the watershed.
- Attended the Plant Material committee meeting. Reviewed test sites of pollinator plantings and was instructed on their usage for native buffers and other conservation practices. Three types of seed planters were assessed for their seeding quality.

Aquatic Invasive Species – Peter Mead, in Karl Koenig's absence

- Education and outreach: Karl was captured in the newspaper outlining his ideas for AIS; he held a 20 minute radio spot in White Earth; he attended the White Earth Lake rules meeting for their annual walleye tournament and built rapport with the resort owner. He will also attend the Big Cormorant fishing tournament, September 26th & 27th and will have inspectors and decontamination units available.
- Inspection and decontamination will continue through October 18th.
- As of September 9th AIS inspectors have completed 15,462 checks and 160 decontaminations. Inspectors have put forth 12,130 hours for a rate of 1:21 inspections per hour. Hubbard averaged 1.58/hour last year and the DNR averaged 1.7, but Hubbard has no mobile decontamination and we pay 45 minutes to 1 hour Level 2 shift of drive time and setup.
- Next year's aim is to increase the inspection per hour rate and overall number of inspections.
- Adjusting the starting pay rate by \$1 per hour or less will allow additional inspection hours and a lead/supervisory inspector.
- Enforcement matters: Pontoon inspected on Big Detroit with AIS. Material was removed and a CO was called to intervene.
- The Becker County Sheriff's office has inspected over 600 watercraft this season and issued several citations. Final numbers for the season will be available in October.
- Ken Olson of the Melissa/Sallie association forwarded a request to landowners to inspect dock and lift equipment on Lake Sallie. There has been great support on Pickerel Lake for this inspection tool. Other lake associations have agreed to the inspections or have installed sampling devices.

- Flowering Rush herbicide treatment on Pickerel Lake has been successful in damaging the existing plants. More treatment is needed next year. Volunteers are assisting with site monitoring.
- We have seven inspectors that remain on staff into October.
- Dunton Locks tram committee met. Further input was desired by the group from Pelican River Watershed District and the City of Detroit Lakes. Both Lake Associations wish to work together and seem to agree all possible considerations need to be reviewed before a decision or additional investment is made.

Leasehold Improvements / Office Expansion – Peter met with our landlord and his architect. The proposal will extend our current space by 30’ from the south side of the building. Rear door entry will not change. Variances need to be reviewed with the city. Bids should be in by the next meeting, with construction possible in early spring.

In the meantime, our storage room, adjacent to the conference room, is being rearranged to offer as much space as possible. Walls will be cut in the next 6-8 weeks to install windows and offer an additional 1-2 work spaces.

Our off-site storage facility currently houses decontamination units and AIS supplies. Tweeton Refrigeration will move our tree cooler to this location. Having all tree handling, wrapping and pick-up at this new facility will be a major improvement from our current situation at Hartman Hide & Fur.

Motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to authorize administration to move forward with the District’s storage needs including movement of the tree cooler, other necessary adjustments to office equipment, files and capital equipment as outlined above. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

SWCD Buffer Program – Peter reviewed the proposal he and Aaron established to offer guidance to the public on the new state buffer law. He instructed board members with a mapping presentation of Stinking Lake. He reviewed areas within our county that require 50’ buffers. We now have a mailing list of potential needs within our county. This is mandatory by November 1st of 2017 on public water bodies and the following year for public ditches. CRP will no longer be an option after November 1st 2017.

2016 Staffing Plan – Peter reviewed the recent discussions regarding new staff. Additional requests were proposed by Jen. Peter recommends appointing a staffing and workload analysis committee.

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to allow the board to develop a personnel committee to preside over these and future staffing and workload considerations. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Discussion. Chairperson Stenger appointed Pavelko and Schauer to lead this committee.

Agreements and Contracts

2013 Clean Water Legacy Grant Contracts for Approval

CWL-33-2013, Norma (Bruce) Nelson, Filter Strip & Critical Area Planting. Estimated project costs \$28,715; eligible cost-share \$5,531.81

Motion (Schauer, Pavelko) to approve the above contract as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2015 Clean Water Legacy Grant Contracts for Approval

CWL-11-BR, Norma (Bruce) Nelson, Filter Strip & Critical Area Planting. Estimated project costs \$28,715; eligible cost-share \$5,383.73

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to approve the above contract as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2014 State Cost Share Vouchers for Payment

14-17, Bob Penner, Shoreland Protection / Critical Area Planting. Total project costs \$7,367.50; cost-share payment \$261.

Motion (Beck, Schauer) to approve the above 2014 state cost-share payment. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

2015 State Cost Share Vouchers for Payment

15-6, Bob Penner, Shoreland Protection / Critical Area Planting. Total project costs \$7,367.50; cost-share payment \$2,500.

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to approve the above 2015 state cost-share payment. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

DNR Aquatic Habitat Vouchers for Payment

DNR-08, Deb Trautner, Shoreland Stabilization. Total project costs \$6,338.17; cost-share payment \$4,754.

Motion (Pavelko, Schauer) to approve the above DNR Aquatic Habitat cost-share payment. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Upcoming Events

- Cormorant Outdoor Classroom at the Sportsman's Club, September 24-25
- District Board meeting, October 21
- BWSR Academy Training in Brainerd, October 27-29
- MASWCD Area 1 Annual Meeting in Hallock, November 3
- Buffalo-Red River Watershed District Fall Tour, November 15
- MASWCD Annual State Convention in Bloomington, December 6-8

Adjourn

Being no further business, motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to adjourn meeting at 11:03 a.m.

Approved: Gene Pavelko, Becker SWCD Secretary

Date: October 21, 2015