



## Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting Wednesday, March 18, 2020

### Meeting Minutes

#### Join us via videoconference:

<https://beckerswcd.my.webex.com/beckerswcd.my/j.php?MTID=ma6e4762d57caf116118c5f377a87533b>

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday March 18, 2020 in the Conference Room of the USDA Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, MN.

Those present were Supervisors Travis Schauer, Tony Beck, Eugene Pavelko and Michelle Andresen (via virtual conferencing). Staff members include District Administrator Peter Mead, Office Manager Deana Westberg, NRCS Soil Conservationist Travis Doeden and Becker County Commissioner Barry Nelson (also via virtual conferencing).

Board Supervisor Jerry Flottesch was unable to attend due to medical treatments. Regrettably, Jerry will be officially retiring the end of March 2020.

**Call to Order** Chairman Schauer called the meeting to order at 8:32 a.m.

#### **Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda Items**

(February 19, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes; Employee Program Reports)

Motion (Beck, Pavelko) to approve the consent agenda items including the February meeting minutes and employee program reports. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### **Financial Reports**

Mead reviewed the Treasurers Report and Bills for Approval.

#### Supervisor's Quarterly Expenses & Special Meetings

Quarterly expenses and special meetings were reviewed for the First Quarter of 2020. Adjustments for absences and additional meetings included Wild Rice WD Policy Committee Meeting

Motion (Pavelko, Andresen) to approve the February Treasurer's Report, March bills for payment and the Q1 payroll and expenses along with the noted adjustments. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

#### **Reports**

##### **Administrators Report was given by Peter Mead.**

- The Covid-19 Public Health Emergency has been the major topic of conversation and cancelling all meetings and group events. One district employee is self quarantined for the recommended 14 days due to an overseas vacation.
- Mead reported that the Equip planning meetings with individual landowners for Cost Share programs have been progressing well.
- Mead attended 1W1P advisory planning meetings for Wild Rice, Buffalo Red and Red Eye. Discussion on how time consuming these meetings have been, but happy to report that they are moving along on schedule.

- Mead reported on MAWQCP Ag water applications. 16 producers from Becker SWCD to get certified.
- Becker SWCD has 2 fulltime seasonal employment positions posted on the county website for an Engineering Technician and a Conservation Technician.

**District Conservationist's Report was given by Travis Doeden.**

Programs:

- Doeden reported that the NRCS is working on a 1-year extension for 2015 CSP contracts. The application acceptance deadline for 2020 EQIP funding was March 13<sup>th</sup>. Application acceptance for 2020 CSP renewal funding is March 20. Producers affected by CSP deadlines were sent certified letters.
- Staff attended training on the new assessment system (CART) which gives a program neutral score that can be used.
- The CRP general signup ended February 28<sup>th</sup>. Becker had 91 applications submitted which is surprising low.
- All 2019 CSP payments were completed March 4<sup>th</sup>.

Staffing:

- Bob Guetter will start his team lead duties on March 30<sup>th</sup>.
- Mitch Neige accepted the Soil Conservationist position in Perham. This will be a shared position for NW Area 1.
- The Civil Engineering Technician position in Detroit Lakes closes March 18<sup>th</sup>.
- A Pathways student is scheduled to start May 26<sup>th</sup>. Pathways provides college students practical experience with the NRCS.

**Public Health Emergency Response**

COVID-19 Planning Memo was put together by Mead on March 16, 2020 for Becker SWCD Board of Supervisors and Employees following the State recommendations. This is a contingency plan to ensure the health of personnel and constituents associated with the COVID-19 pandemic. Effective immediately:

- **Board members and staff should implement social distancing**
- **Working remotely** – employees may be permitted to work from home with prior authorization from the District Manager
- **In the event of illness** – any employee exhibiting cold or flu symptoms is instructed to stay home. For COVID-19 related absences, extended medical benefits apply. If all regular benefits are exhausted, the employee can request up to 10 paid leave days advanced.
- **Site Sanitation & Hygiene**

Telecommuting Policy was discussed. The county issued laptops can be used at home by logging into a secure VPN. Discussion on work time productivity and using sick leave. The policy is subject to change and Mead can make the administrative decisions to make such changes as needed.

**Open Forum**

A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) between the NRCS and BSWCD was handed out and reviewed. This updated MOA explains the purpose, background, statement of mutual benefit and general provisions between the Detroit Lakes NRCS and BSWCD. This MOA still needs to be executed by the state and then will be signed.

### **Non-Structural Land Management Projects (NLMP)**

A Non-Structural Land Management Practices implementation plan request form FY 2020 conservation cost share base grant copy was handed out and discussed. This grant is for the erosion control and water management program through December 31, 2021. Payments will be a flat rate, not to exceed 150% of the NRCS-EQIP FY 20 Cover Crop scenario rates with a cap of \$3,500.00 per applicant.

Motion (Beck, Pavelko) to approve the Nonstructural Land Management Practices FY 2020 Conservation Cost Share Base Grant. Affirmative. Unanimous. Carried

### **Local EQIP Workgroup**

Decision to select a date for the 2020 Local Workgroup Meeting was tabled for now.

### **Supervisor's Retreat Recap/Follow Up**

The annual Supervisor's retreat was originally scheduled to be held at the Tamarac Wildlife Refuge on February 12<sup>th</sup>. Due to inclement weather it was rescheduled for February 19<sup>th</sup> in the conference room of the Cormorant Community Center located in Pelican Rapids held after the monthly board meeting.

The board members commented that it was both an educational and fun day. It was great to be able to spend the day getting to know more about the employees.

A group exercise of writing down SWCD problems and solutions was entered into a spreadsheet for further follow up. One of the solutions was purchasing a No-till drill/planter to provide a service for cover crops. Discussion was held on providing this service and drill/planter size. Decision to do more research and present at next month's meeting.

### **Clean Water Legacy Vouchers for Approval**

#CWL-42-BR, RRR Mattson Partnership, Water & Sediment Control Basins-Total Project Cost: \$69,740  
Cost Share: \$31,383

Motion (Andresen, Pavelko) to approve the Clean Water Legacy Vouchers as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried

### **Clean Water Legacy Applications for Approval**

#CWL-11-TD, Brent Gilbertson, Full Season Cover Crop-Total Project Cost: \$2,302

Motion (Beck, Andresen) to approve the Clean Water Legacy Applications as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried

### **State Cost Share Applications for Approval**

# SCS-19-6, Brent Gilbertson, Full Season Cover Crop-Total Project Cost: \$1,280

# SCS-19-7, Travis Schauer, Full Season Cover Crop-Total Project Cost: \$3,442

# SCS-19-8, Allen Bergquist, Full Season Cover Crop-Total Project Cost: \$3,500

Motion (Beck, Andresen) to approve the State Cost Share Vouchers as presented. Affirmative: Pavelko, Beck, Andresen. Schauer abstained from voting. Carried

### **Adjourn**

Seeing no further business, Chairman Schauer adjourned the meeting at 9:58 am.