



Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting Wednesday, March 17, 2021

Meeting Minutes

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday March 17, 2021 at the Becker County Courthouse – 1st Floor Meeting Room, Detroit Lakes, MN.

Those present were Supervisors Travis Schauer, Tony Beck, Eugene Pavelko, Michelle Andresen and Curt Ballard. Staff members District Administrator Bryan Malone, Office Manager Deana Westberg, NRCS District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz, District Program Technician Aaron Salo and County Commissioner Barry Nelson

Call to Order

Chairman Schauer called the meeting to order at 8:40 AM.

Approval of Agenda and Consent Agenda Items

(February 17, 2021 Regular Meeting Minutes; Employee Program Reports)

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

Financial Reports

Treasurers Report

Malone reviewed the February Treasurers Report and the March Bills for Approval.

Motion (Andresen, Ballard) to approve the Treasurers Report and bills for payment. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Email Treasurers Report in Advance

Malone asked the board if they would like the Treasurers report emailed in advance. The consensus was yes to email before the monthly meeting highlighting anything new.

Billing Rate

Malone reviewed the 2021 Billing Rate and explained the calculation process.

Motion (Ballard, Beck) to approve the 2021 Billing Rates as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Supervisor's Quarterly Expenses & Special Meetings

1st Quarter Supervisor's Quarterly expenses and Special Meetings reviewed and approved.

Motion (Beck, Andresen) to approve the Supervisor's Quarterly Expenses & Special Meetings. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

District Reports

District Administrator Bryan Malone reported:

- Taking vacation to Arizona March 25 – 29th
- Still holding weekly staff meetings on Monday mornings
- Went to the County Board meeting on March 16th to discuss their participation in the Otter Tail 1W1P planning process
- Attended the County Department Head meeting
- Completed the annual elink reporting
- Sent in the 2021 NACD Technical Assistance grant application
- Attended the Area 1 Technical Training Team meeting and the MASWCD Local Work Group training sessions
- Some activity with the AgBMP loan program: \$190,000 for Ag Waste System & \$14,000 for SSTS upgrade
- Sent in a work request for MCC to spend a couple weeks helping us on shoreland projects
- Phil Doll from Becker SWCD has offered to be the planning coordinator for the Wild Rice Steering Committee
- TSA 1 District Managers meeting on March 3rd to discuss increasing technical assistance options with the additional funding received through the 1W1P Watershed Based implementation funding. Planning for a TSA 1 Board meeting on March 31st
- WCA- participated in the Monthly TEP meeting for the Danielson project
- RIM – new “working lands” pilot easements group met to discuss ranking of applications

Open Forum

The question was asked if the SWCD should consider selling native grass seed through the office. Would we be set up as Dealer and only order as needed? We do not want to compete with other local businesses. Malone will research this possibility and bring back more information to the board.

The Wild Rice 1W1P work plan has \$70,000 budgeted annually for Technical and Engineering. The TSA is reorganizing and is proposing that Engineering Technician Haverland be considered as a Becker SWCD employee. Haverland could be a shared Engineer Technician for Becker, Clay, Norman & Mahnommen SWCD's, using the Wild Rice 1W1P T&E funds plus the remaining TSA funds from each district needed to cover his employment costs.

TSA Reorganization

The Red River Valley Conservation Service Area (RRVCSA) – Over the past 6 months the TSA Managers have been working on developing a recommendation for a staffing reorganization recommendation to provide more effective and efficient technical assistance. Existing Engineering staff could be hired by a SWCD District leaving one GIS Specialist with the TSA. The remaining TSA funds would be equally divided among the 16 Districts to help cover the Engineering costs. Each District will be responsible for the 10% non-state match. Wednesday March 31, 2021 is the next virtual TSA board meeting.

County Weed Inspector

Marsha Watland, County Ag Inspector has requested to increase the Pesticide Testing rates for out of county businesses. Consensus was to increase the Pesticide Exam tests for out of county individuals and businesses to \$50.00 to help cover the County Ag Inspector expenses. In county applicators/businesses will remain at \$25.00 for Pesticide Exam Testing.

Motion (Beck, Ballard) to approve the out of county Pesticide Exam Testing increase as presented.
Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Irrigation Management

Malone reviewed the Online Irrigation Management Assistant tool that has been supported by a group of SWCDs over the last few years by contributing \$1,500 each. The U of M has applied to LCCMR take over the program but if approved would not be funded until after July 1st, however, to use the tool in 201 the online software updates are needed prior to the growing season. Benton SWCD has requested each SWCD to contribute \$625 to the cost to update for the 2021 growing season. This online software is used for Irrigation Scheduling, soil moisture and rainfall estimates.

Motion (Pavelko, Andresen) to contribute \$625 towards the Irrigation Management Assistant Tool software update. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Supervisor's Retreat Recap/Follow Up

The Supervisor's appreciated the employee presentations and lunch.

Financial Assistance

Bid Policy

Quotes:

It is recommended that all projects solicit for 3 quotes for each conservation practice cost-share contract.

Contract holder not familiar with the process:

SWCD staff may assist contract holder by sending the materials to the construction contractors in the cost-share contract holder's name.

Engineer's Estimate:

The engineer will produce a cost estimate for each project and can be used for developing cost-share contracts. The cost estimate will be the lowest cost alternative. The engineer will also calculate a contingency.

Engineer's Estimate less than \$50,000:

If no quotes are received for a project, then engineer's estimate will be the maximum amount used to calculate the cost-share payment and construction can begin.

Engineer's Estimate over \$50,000:

A minimum of 2 quotes are required, 3 are preferred. Construction cannot commence until quotes are received. The District Administrator can ask for additional quotes. Examples:

- 1) Only one quote slightly over the engineer's estimate. Would be required to get second quote.
- 2) Two quotes higher than the engineer's estimate but within the contingency, the District Administrator may approve.
- 3) Two quotes higher than the engineer's estimate and contingency, the District Administrator may require a third quote to verify.
- 4) If solicited for 3 quotes and only received one AND is below the engineer's contingency, the District Administrator may approve.

Service Fee:

To maximize staff efficiency, once the project design is agreed to by the cost-share contract holder and then staked for construction, any time spent to re-design or re-stake will be billed to the contract holder at the SWCD Engineer's billable rate.

Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to approve the Bid Policy as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried

Well Sealing

Eligible practices to be covered under the State Cost Share at 50% with a cap of \$325.00 per contract and a maximum of \$2,500 per cost-share allocation year.

Motion (Ballard, Andresen) to approve the Well Sealing as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried

Clean Water Legacy Applications for Approval

#CWL-50-BR, Joel Crabtree, WASCOB–Total Project Cost \$26,035: 75% Cost Share: \$9,763 BR II & \$9,763 BRWD 319

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

State Cost Share Applications for Approval

SCS-20-3, Randy Lefebvre, WASCOBS–Total Project Cost: \$7,846; 75% Cost Share: \$5,885

Motion (Ballard, Pavelko) to approve State Cost Share Application as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried

SCS-20-4, Curt Ballard, Windbreak -Total Project Cost: \$4,025 ; 75% Cost Share: \$1,985 SCS & \$1,033 USDA

Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to approve State Cost Share Application as presented. Affirmative: Ballard abstained from voting. Carried

SCS-20-6, Ray Skaro, Well Sealing–Total Project Cost: \$625; 50% Cost Share: \$312

Motion (Beck, Pavelko) to approve State Cost Share Application as presented. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried

SCS-20-5, Travis Schauer, Windbreak -Total Project Cost: \$2,130 ; 75% Cost Share: \$1,026 & \$571 USDA

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

Adjourn

Seeing no further business, Chairman Schauer adjourned the meeting at 10:59 am.

Approved: Michelle Andresen, Becker SWCD Secretary

Date: 4/21/2021