



Board of Supervisors Meeting
SWCD/NRCS Conference Room
USDA Service Center

Wednesday, May 15, 2024
Meeting Minutes

Supervisors Present:

Michelle Andresen, Chair
Curt Ballard, Vice Chair
Tony Beck, Treasurer
Gene Pavelko, Public Relations
Travis Schauer, Secretary

Staff Present:

Bryan Malone, District Administrator
Jamie Bischoff, Office Manager
Christy Johnson, Education/Outreach Coordinator
Deana Westberg, Office Manager
Brandon Gill, Becker County Ag Inspector
Jim Rorah, Program Technician

Absent:

Ed Musielewicz, NRCS

Call to Order

Chair Andresen called the meeting to order at 8:28 a.m.

Agenda

Approval of Agenda

Motion (Ballard, Schauer) to approve the May Agenda. All in favor, motion carried.

Minutes

Approval of Meeting Minutes – April 17, 2024 - Regular Meeting Minutes

Motion (Schauer, Beck) to approve the May 2024 meeting minutes. All in favor, motion carried.

Financial

Treasurers Report and Bills for Approval

Bischoff presented the Treasurers Report and Bills for Approval. The board asked for a three-year comparison regarding tree sales for the next board meeting.

Motion (Ballard, Pavelka) to approve the April 2024 Treasurer's Report and the May bill payments. All in favor, motion carried.

CWMA Grant Agreement

This grant is to provide cost share for chemicals to treat noxious weeds. Brandon must save all his stuff on his H drive because nothing has been updated to the S drive since Marsha left.

Motion (Schauer, Ballard) to approve entering into this grant agreement. All in favor, motion carried.

Cost Share

Watershed Based Funding Applications

1W1P-16-BR DeSc, WASCBS - Project cost \$136,788.50; \$90% Cost Share \$16,488.28, EQIP is also funding this project.

1W1P-17-BR BiSt, WASCBS - Project cost \$72,668.50; 90% Cost Share \$65,401.65

1W1P-15-BR LiLu, Conservation Cover - Project cost \$4,178.79; 75% Cost Share \$3,134.09

1W1P-16-BR ToBu, Conservation Cover – Project cost \$782.73; 75% Cost Share \$587.05

1W1P-17-BR JaAl, Conservation Cover – Project cost \$8,094.30; 90% Cost Share \$7,284.87

1W1P-18-BR JuSc, Conservation Cover – Project cost \$5,024.98; 75% Cost Share \$3,768.74

1W1P-02-BR AILe, Conservation Cover – Project cost \$1,000.00; 75% Cost Share \$750.00

Motion (Beck, Schauer) to approve the Watershed Based Funding Applications. All in favor, motion carried.

Watershed Based Funding Amendment

1W1P-13-OT ChOk, WASCBS – EQIP funding was less than estimated therefore, an additional \$249.49 is needed to cover 90% of the cost. The total cost-share payment will be increased from \$10,973.00 to \$11,267.49.

Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to approve the Watershed Based Funding Amendment. All in favor, motion carried.

Watershed Based Funding Voucher

1W1P-13-OT ChOk, WASCBS – The project cost \$18,874.00; EQIP \$5,719.11 and 90% Cost Share \$11,267.49. **Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to approve the Watershed Based Funding Voucher. All in favor, motion carried.**

SSTS

SSTS-24-02 RaSk, SSTS Upgrade – Project cost \$13,575.00; 100% Cost Share \$13,575.00.

Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to approve the SSTS Upgrade Application. All in favor, motion carried.

Aquatic Invasive Species

Curly leaf pond weed chemical treatment reimbursement grant PRWD requesting \$4,000 for treatment of curly leaf pond weed. Toad Lake Association requesting \$4,000 for treatment of curly leaf pond weed. Once treatment is done, each will submit paid invoices, a map or report from an aquatic plant surveyor, valid permitting at the time of treatment and a letter requesting reimbursement.

Motion (Ballard, Beck) to approve the AIS grant applications. All in favor, motion carried.

Comprehensive Watershed Management Planning

Incentives for Shoreline Preservation

Malone explained the shoreland goals for the Crow Wing 1W1P are to restore 2 miles of shoreland in 10 years. Statistics show that shorelands are being degraded at a rate of 1-2% each decade. There are 200 miles of shoreline in the focus lakes which means a loss of 2-4 miles in the past decade. How do we halt this loss? The board was asked to consider new alternatives to encourage landowners from degrading their shoreland as our current methods are not gaining ground.

MASWCD

File for Election May 21-June 4

Malone reminded Andresen, Schauer and Pavelko to file for election by June 4, 2024.

Area 1 Meeting June 18, 2024

Malone gave the board a reminder to attend the Area 1 meeting is June 18, 2024. Pavelko will attend the planning meeting tomorrow morning.

Resolutions

If we have any resolutions for Area 1 meeting, please let Malone know.

Governance 101, July 16-17, Alexandria

Malone invited the supervisors to attend this opportunity if they are interested.

Leadership Institute

The board would like to send one staff member to this training. Malone will email the staff to see if there is interest.

Chairman Andresen closed the regular meeting and opened the public hearing at 9:29 a.m.

Public Hearing – Wetland Conservation Act

Knapp Driveway WCA Replacement Plan

Date of Application: 3/13/2024

SWCD District Administrator Malone explained that Angela Knapp is seeking approval of a plan to construct a driveway in Cormorant Township Section 34 for the purpose of accessing the upland portion of their property.

Becker TEP Findings and Recommendation for Knapp Driveway Wetland Replacement Plan

The TEP finds that the project purpose and need of driveway construction for vehicle access to the upland portion of this platted lot of record, for potential development of lake home construction, is reasonable and prudent.

The TEP finds that the requirement of listing at least two alternatives that avoid wetland impact is met. The “do nothing” alternative can be discounted because it does not address the project’s purpose and need. The second alternative of accessing the buildable portion from a neighboring lot by access easement can be discounted due to refusal by neighbor. The TEP suggests that a third alternative of constructing a bridge across the wetland should be considered by the LGU. The TEP defers to the LGU about whether the bridge option is reasonable and prudent.

The TEP finds that the applicant’s plan to locate the driveway along the property line setback and limiting the driving surface to 12 feet are good faith efforts to minimize impacts to the wetland.

The TEP finds that this project should not have a significant adverse impact on threatened and endangered species, rare natural communities, and special fish and wildlife resources.

The TEP finds that the proposal to purchase 3,840 sq ft of wetland credits from the MN Wetland Bank program to replace the 1,920 sq ft of wetland impact at a 2:1 ratio should adequately replace the public value of wetland loss that will occur as a result of this project.

The TEP finds that the sequencing requirements under MN WCA Rule Chapter 8420 to avoid, minimize, and replace unavoidable impacts have been addressed by this plan.

The TEP recommends approval of the Knapp Driveway Wetland Replacement Plan.

Following the presentation of TEP Findings and Recommendations, Chairman Andresen asked for any other comments in favor or against the application. **Hearing none, the public hearing was closed, and the regular board meeting was reopened at 9:46 a.m.**

Discussion: Malone notes that the SWCD Board, serving at LGU for the MN Wetland Conservation Act in Becker County, should make findings and then decide in favor or against this application.

The bridge option was discussed at length and determined that it did not seem reasonable and prudent as construction of the bridge and pilings may impact the wetland as much as building a driveway.

Findings: The LGU concurs with the TEP's findings, recommendations, and conditions for approval for the Knapp Driveway WCA Replacement Plan.

Motion (Schauer, Beck) to approve the Knapp Driveway Wetland Replacement Plan to impact 1,920 square feet of wetland and replace those impacts by purchasing 3,840 square feet (2:1 ratio) from the MN Wetland Bank and if the applicant determines that a bridge would be reasonable and prudent without impact, that would be acceptable also. In favor: Beck, Schauer, Pavelko, Andresen. Opposed: Ballard. Motion carried

Project Funding

Structural Funding Source

Malone presented a spreadsheet of structural practices to be installed in 2024. Earlier in the year, it appeared that not all of them would be installed as EQIP funding was not allocated to these practices in the first round and all SWCD funds would be expended. However, MN NRCS has received additional funding recently and all projects will be able to be funded in 2024 without spending all the SWCD funds. Watershed Based Funding (WBIF) is not making up for competitive Clean Water Funding (CWF) that Becker SWCD has been successful with in the past. These competitive funds are still needed to complete our mission. WBIF seems to be rewarding those that did not seek competitive CWF grants in the past. Another application will be made for CWF funding this fall and NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCP) or National Water Quality Incentive (NWQI) applications will be investigated for additional funding.

Shoreland Restoration

In the fall of 2022, Brandon and Wes worked together to design a shoreline buffer and a shoreland stabilization project. Due to miscommunication on our part, a cost share application was not submitted. The stabilization portion of the project was done to specifications, so we could justify payment of \$3,500.00 as described in our cost-share policy for shoreland stabilizations. However, the buffer portion was not installed according to plans, so it was recommended to not assist in paying for that portion of the project. Since this project was installed prior to a cost-share contract being approved, any payment would need to be made from District funds and not State sources.

Motion (Pavelko, Schauer) to approve payment of \$3,500.00 to Rob Hart for his shoreland stabilization project. All in favor, motion carried.

Open Forum

No business was brought forward.

Staff Reports

Brandon Gill, Becker County Agricultural Inspector, gave his report to the board.

District Administrator - Bryan Malone

1W1P – Met with the PRWD and CLWD to discuss our shoreland priorities for Lake focus. We will focus our efforts on the Floyd lakes area with PRWD since they have a 319 grant to assist with cost-share efforts and the CLWD will focus on Upper Cormorant Lake. Attended the Crow Wing River Watershed Policy Committee and the Technical Advisory Committee meeting in Staples where we finalized some of the last details for the Draft plan which should be ready to review at our June 3rd meeting. The Otter Tail Advisory Committee met on May 6th.

Projects – Worked on the RIM alteration letter and had it ready to send only to find out that he found a buyer and will be selling the land. The new tree planter was delivered April 23rd and

reviews have been good from the staff. Marilyn Tuominen SSTS upgrade will happen later this summer. Dennis Schouviller and Bill Steffl received bids for their WASCB project to start construction soon. There has been more interest in forest management plans in the last month. Prepared Chad Okeson voucher. Ed M and I have been working on the project list and trying to figure out what could be funded for cost-share. Looks like all of them may get funded now that some EQIP funding made it to some of our projects!

Personnel – Ranked applications and conducted interviews for the Program Technician on April 22-23. Jim Rorah has accepted the position and will begin employment on May 15th (he will attend the Board meeting so you can meet him). We wish Adam good luck on his new endeavor and we are sure he will do great! No action on the Engineering Technician position. This will be Deana's last meeting. We will miss her expertise with our Bookkeeping and her positive attitude in the office. We are thankful that she was willing/able to spend the last few months with Jamie to ensure a smooth transition. We are also thankful that Jamie has joined our team!

Meetings and Other – Ordered a new computer for Adam's position as NRCS informed us they will not be supplying that for us any longer. Signed the lease agreement for tractor at Adkins. The Minimum this year is \$7,000 or \$28/hr at 250 hours. Prepared for the Wild Rice Policy Committee meeting on April 29th. Met with Deana and Jamie on the grant log. FAC meeting.

TSA – Prepared a new workplan for the FY25 NPEA grant. Also received the Quarter 1 reports from the other SWCDs with TSA funding.

Board Meeting Dates

Thursday, June 20th

Wednesday, July 17th

Tuesday, August 20th

Wednesday, September 25th

Adjourn

Seeing no further business, Chair Andresen adjourned the meeting at 10:37 a.m.



Secretary



District Administrator

20 Jun 2024

Date

6/20/2024

Date

