



**Becker  
Soil & Water  
Conservation District**

**Board of Supervisors Monthly Meeting  
SWCD/NRCS Conference Room  
USDA Service Center  
Tuesday, January 21, 2025  
Meeting Minutes**

**Supervisor's Present:**

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

**Staff Present:**

Bryan Malone, District Administrator  
Jamie Bischoff, Office Manager  
Christy Johnson, Office Assistant  
Logan Riedel, Program Technician  
Ed Musielewicz, NRCS District Conservationist

**Call to Order**

Chair Andresen called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m.

**Agenda**

Andresen called for approval of the agenda.

**Motion (Beck, Schauer) to approve the January agenda. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Minutes**

Approval of December 18, 2024 meeting minutes

**Motion (Beck, Ballard) to approve December 2024 minutes. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Organizational**

**Election of Officers**

2024 Officer positions were reviewed.

**Chair**- Michelle Andresen.

**Vice Chair** –Curt Ballard.

**Secretary** –Travis Schauer.

**Treasurer** –Tony Beck.

**Public Relations** –Gene Pavelko.

**Motion (Schauer/Ballard) that the officers remain as stated above for 2025. All in favor, motion carried.**

**Committee Appointments**

Personnel Committee - Travis Schauer & Michelle Andresen

Budget Committee - Tony Beck & Gene Pavelko

TSA Committee - Gene Pavelko & Curt Ballard as Alternate  
1W1P Ottertail Policy Committee - Michelle Andresen  
1W1P Redeye Policy Committee - Tony Beck  
1W1P Wild Rice Marsh Policy Committee - Travis Schauer & Curt Ballard as Alternate  
1W1P Buffalo Red Policy Committee - Gene Pavelko  
1W1P Crow Wing Policy Committee – Tony Beck  
MASWCD Forestry Association – Michelle Andresen & Travis Schauer  
**Chair Andresen appointed the same committee assignments for 2025.**

Authorized Representative & Signature Authority

**Motion (Ballard, Beck) to appoint Bryan Malone, as authorized representative for grant agreements. Bryan Malone, Jamie Bischoff and Ed Clem with financial signature authority along with Tony Beck as Treasurer. All in favor, motion carried.**

Official Financial Institution

**Motion (Beck, Ballard) to continue using Bremer Bank for daily checking and savings transactions and Midwest Bank for CDs and other savings investments. All in favor, motion carried.**

Official News Publication

**Motion (Pavelko, Schauer) that the DL Tribune remain the Official News Publisher for legal public notices and conservation announcements. Monthly meetings notices are posted to the SWCD website and on the SWCD office door in the USDA building. All in favor, motion carried.**

Financial

Treasurers Report and Bills for Approval

Bischoff presented the Treasurers Report and Bills for Approval.

**Motion (Pavelko, Ballard) to approve the December 2024 Treasurer's Report and January bills to pay. All in favor, motion carried.**

Mileage Rate

As of January 1, 2025, the IRS mileage rate is 70.0 cents per mile.

**Motion (Schauer, Ballard) to follow the IRS rate for mileage reimbursement in 2025. All in favor, motion carried.**

FY2024 Audit Agreement

Tabled until February's meeting as the Agreement has not been received from the Auditor yet.

Ag in the Classroom Donation

A \$250 donation was requested for Ag in the Classroom.

**Motion (Schauer, Ballard) to donate \$250 towards Ag in the Classroom. All in favor, motion carried.**

Becker County Almanac Ad

Malone explained the opportunity for a full page SWCD ad in the Becker County Almanac.

**Motion (Pavelko, Ballard) to approve submitting a full-page ad for publication in the Becker County Almanac. All in favor, motion carried.**

2024 AgBMP Loan Program

Malone gave an update on the loan program activity in 2024. Although 5 applications were received to replace septic systems, none of them followed through. Only one loan was processed for a no-till drill at \$125,000.

Watershed Based Implementation Cancellation

1W1P-02-RE RoGe - The Grazing Plan received a partial payment of \$8,380.00 for the installation of a well and water tank. The use exclusion from the Redeye River and the rotational grazing paddocks

have not been installed. The contract has been extended twice and the Redeye River FY21 grant expired at the end of December.

**Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to offer three options for cancellation; 1. Payback the full amount; 2. Finish the plans to specs with a new contract, or; 3. If a decision is not rendered to the SWCD by the date determined by Malone, 150% payback will be applied. All in favor, motion carried.**

1W1P-16-BR DeSc, WASCBS - This project was fully funded by EQIP, therefore our state funds are not needed.

**Motion (Ballard, Beck) to cancel contract 1W1P-16-BR due to project being fully funded through EQIP. All in favor, motion carried.**

### Clean Water Fund Cancellation

CWF-05-FFBC BaVi, Cover Crop – The Producer is no longer operating the land and did not install the practice.

**Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to cancel contract CWF-05-FFBC. All in favor, motion carried.**

### Board Retreat

The retreat will be held at the Detroit Lakes Holiday Inn, February 19, 2025 starting with the Board meeting at 8:30. Jamie will develop a Jeopardy Game to review our activities of 2024. That will begin about 10:30. Following Jeopardy, Jeff Hrubes, BWSR Clean Water Specialist will lead us in an exercise to determine Becker SWCD's Core Values.

### Policy

#### PRAP Grant Policy Handbook

There was a BWSR Academy Session involving a SWCD that hired a consultant to review and update their Personnel Policy Handbook. A BWSR PRAP grant was used to help offset the cost. Malone suggested that it would be reassuring for Becker SWCD to do the same.

**Motion (Schauer, Beck) to approve a BWSR PRAP grant application to review and revise the Personnel Policy Handbook . All in favor, motion carried.**

#### Management Teams

Brett Arne may be able to assist us in designing an organizational chart for our agency. He is taking an Organizational Development class where they are required to complete a project. Our goal for developing management teams may be a good fit for his project. We will wait to see if he can help before moving forward with ideas.

#### Soil Health Practice Incorporation

Currently, 90% cost-share is allowed to contract holders that implement all conservation practices on that tract of land. Discussion was held on revising that policy to require the implementation of a soil health practice. Malone will draft a policy for the Board to review in the future.

#### Single Year Soil Health

State policy requiring three consecutive years of soil health practices on a tract of land has changed, allowing a single-year contract. Seeing a benefit to entice new producers to try something new, Malone will draft a policy for the Board to review in the future.

#### MASWCD Legislative Priorities

Malone went through the information provided by MASWCD regarding the increase in SWCD Aid from the proposed \$12 million for 2026 to \$22 million. The day at the capital will be held March 4<sup>th</sup>.

## **NRCS – Ed Musielewicz**

### **Civil Rights Responsibilities for Partners**

Ed reviewed the civil rights responsibilities for partners with the board. Each of the Board members needed to sign an acknowledgment of these responsibilities.

### **Use Agreement**

The Cooperative Agreement with NRCS needs to be updated again. This will be brought to the Board at a future meeting.

### **Open Forum**

Chair Andresen attended the MASWCD Forestry Association meeting. One of the more interesting topics included the 2023 legislative change in how Tax Forfeit Land sales is handled. Sales from these lands was determined by a lawsuit that the previous landowner was entitled to the payment. This is a large loss of revenue for the County for lands that do not match their management goals.

### **Reports**

#### **District Administrator - Bryan Malone**

**1W1P** – The County Board approved the MOA for Implementation of the Crow Wing River CWMP on December 17<sup>th</sup> and the SWCD Board on the 18<sup>th</sup>. The plan was presented to the North Region BWSR committee on January 6<sup>th</sup> and they will recommend approval to the BWSR Board on January 22<sup>nd</sup>. The planning team met to finalize the By-Laws for the policy committee to approve at the February 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. They will also approve the elink workplan budget. If everything goes as planned, we should have funding for implementing projects this summer. The FY21 grants expired December 31<sup>st</sup> for the Wild Rice, Redeye, and Buffalo-Red and all funds were expended for those grants. Now we will work on invoicing for the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2024, getting reimbursed for those project expenses and calculating pollution reduction numbers for elink reporting. Created the FY25 Wild Rice WBIF grant log for tracking grant expenditures. Phil edited and posted on google sheets for the WD to also utilize.

**Projects** – Completed the AgBMP Low interest loan program annual report and request for 2025 funds. Those announcements are usually made in March. Also updated the AgBMP Loan tracking spreadsheet. We should have over \$300,000 available for projects that benefit water quality. Met with Lukas Steffl, Terry Kohler and Todd Andresen on potential projects in 2025. Created the workplan in elink for the new competitive Clean Water Fund Grant we received of \$800,000 for the Buffalo Watershed Lakes and Mainstem Region Improvement project to install structural practices. These grant funds could be available for the 2025 construction season if needed. Owen has been contacting landowners with possible ag waste pit closures in the Toad River. There are a handful interested.

**Personnel** – Created the 2025 timesheets for everyone. Working with Jeff Hrubes, BWSR Clean Water Specialist on our Core Values exercise at the February Board Retreat.

**Meetings and Other** – Met with Ed M, Adam and Claire on the Soil Health Bus Tour and the Soil Health round table in March. We are working with Hubbard and Wadena SWCDs on an event for the eastern Becker County producers. Updated our contract/project spreadsheet and met with Ed M and Claire to determine what projects may need funding in 2025. At first glance, EQIP will not be funding many projects. This was the case last year also but a few months later, many projects were funded. NACD has created a new reporting system for their grants so Jamie and I attended a webinar training session on that process.

**TSA** – The south pod managers met in Fergus Falls to discuss our Engineering Services agreement that expired the end of 2024. All participants are happy with how the arrangement is going and a new agreement will be brought before the Board in February. Fourth quarter reports for expenditures of TSA grant funds will be coming in this week.

**Adjourn**

Seeing no further business, Chair Andresen adjourned the meeting at 10:42 a.m.

  
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Board Secretary

  
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District Administrator

19 Feb 2025  
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Date

2/19/2025  
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Date