



MINUTES FROM THE JANUARY 17, 2024, BOARD MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lyle Dittmann at 7:29 a.m.

Members Present: Chairperson: Lyle Dittmann
Vice Chairperson: Steve Inwards
Secretary: Terry Greenwaldt
Public Relations: Wayne Enger (via Teams)*
New Member: Bruce Albright

Others Present: County Commissioner: Dan Bucholz
NRCS District Conservationist: Troy Baumgart
District Manager: Darren Newville
Administrative Assistant: Chantal Tougas
Water Planner: Nicole Lundeen

**Wayne Enger abstained from voting at this meeting as he was not present in person.*

Oath of Office: not needed this year.

Reorganization: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to continue with current organization of board appointments and committee appointments. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Agenda: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to adopt the agenda as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Approve Board Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve the Board Meeting Minutes as presented with the addition of the word doesn't in the meetings/training section. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Steve Inwards, to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented, subject to audit. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Bills Paid & Bills Payable: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards, to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Bruce Albright, to approve the yearly dues as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

IRRIGATION TECH – C21-9235

C21-9235-03; Wehking Farm; Parkers Prairie Township, Section 13; contract cancellation. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.



C21-9235-06; Roberts Dairy; Butler Township, Section 17; contract cancellation. Partial payment of \$1,312.50 was made 7/20/2022. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

C21-9235-07; Leaderbrand Brothers; Newton Township, Section 36; contract cancellation. Partial payment of \$2,250.00 was made 6/20/2023. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

C21-9235-17; Farm Boys LLC; Eastern Township, Section 28; contract cancellation. Partial payment of \$2,250.00 was made 8/17/2022. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

C21-9235-19; Carlson Turkey Farms; Parkers Prairie Township, Section 17; contract cancellation. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

OTTER TAIL WBIF – C23-4546

6-C23-4546-13; Graydon and Jovinae Bohn; Rush Lake Township, Section 34; is requesting cost share assistance for a shoreline Critical Area Planting. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ 4,945.00 with cost sharing of \$ 3,708.75 or 75%, whichever is less. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

COUNTY COST SHARE – P21-2734

P21-2734-2; Nick Leonard; Dora Township, Section 33; is requesting cost share assistance for a tree and shrub establishment. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ 15,597.00 with cost sharing of \$ 11,697.75 or 75%, whichever is less. Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

District Conservationist's Report:

- CSP – Classic application deadline was January 12, 2024. Application and CSP questionnaire needed to be completed, those who didn't respond had their applications cancelled.
- EQIP – Applications are the bulk of the work currently. 32 SU-1 applications to date. 3 High Tunnels and 1 Energy Efficient Improvement applications preapproved under the ACT Now fund pool. Ranking deadline for SU-1 is January 19, 2024. 18 new applications since the Oct 6th deadline and 13 of those are Irrigation related.
- CRP – SU61 has been opened for CCRP. Implementing batching periods which ends on March 15, 2024.
- RCPP – Continuing to certify practices and that should wrap up this month. MAWQCP ranking deadline is January 19, 2024, and there are 3 applications to rank.
- Other – Bob will be looking for a SWCD to host the LWG meeting. It will be like last year. Also waiting on a Soil Con panel. DC positions are being advertised throughout MN.



County Commissioner's Report:

- The county is meeting with local Surveyors to discuss permits.
- Bomb scares and shooting threats are not coming from local kids not wanting to go to school. They are IT people from Kentucky generating these. Schools still need to take these seriously.
- There was an open meeting regarding Ottertail County EMS (7 Counties). 5 Representatives were present. Media should have been there to cover this, there were none.
- Ottertail County is getting grant funding to purchase electric vehicles.

Other Agency Reports: none

Old Business

TSA Update: The next meeting is February 29, 2024.

Staffing: Pete has moved into Liz's position. Two open positions have been posted. There has already been some email interest. Some job titles have/will change.

Meetings/Trainings: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve staff and supervisors to attend upcoming meetings that require registration fees and/or hotel fees. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Mileage Rate: Federal mileage rate has increased to .655 from .625 for 2024.

Per Diem: Per diem for 2024 is currently \$125.00.

Official Newspaper: Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt to keep the Perham Focus as the official District newspaper. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Official Financial Institution: Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Bruce Albright to keep Bremer Bank as the official District financial institution. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Peterson engagement letter: As of the board meeting, we have not received this yet.

Pricing of Service: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to increase the price of Irrigation Scheduler to \$500/field and \$400/field for contracts with multiple fields. Pricing effective 1/1/2024. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Public Comments: none

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 8:59 a.m.

District Managers Report
January 2024
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – The tree store went online on January 1st. Staff sent out postcards, emails and have done some social media posts promoting the program. As of the morning of 1/16 we had received 256 orders for over 36,300 trees. Staff in both offices continue to work with landowners to get plans and cost estimates for tree planting projects.
- **Forest Stewardship** –Anne delivered 2 plans and is working on 1 more. We have contracts in place with the DNR to purchase new tree planters for both SWCDs through the LCCMR Forestry Pilot project. Tanner is working on getting them ordered. We hope to have them available for the 2024 planting season. Anne will be organizing and holding another Local Forestry Team meeting in the next month or so.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** –Tanner continues working with landowners on plans and ordering seed for 2024.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Staff continue to work on RIM easement workload. The Nolte easement has been recorded and sent to BWSR's for payment. We have not received notice of a payment yet. Anne also submitted the application for the Crow Wing RIM and is still waiting to hear if it has been funded.
- **MAWQCP** – Staff continue to work on the process of completing assessments to get farms certified. Staff also contacted 35-40 producers to discuss the MAWQCP RCPP sign-up. They provided 16 affidavits and associated information to NRCS for those producers who signed up. They took several inquiries from new producers interested in the program.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Mitch has received the harvest data back from the NMI plots and is working with MDA to get it evaluated.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – Mitchell continues to work with the producers who have received funding on documentation for completed projects. We have an all-partners meeting scheduled for February 6th to discuss a future application. We will need to decide to ask for a renewal of if we will submit a whole new application. There are pros and cons to each scenario. I am still working on getting the invoicing information for the Tech Assistance funding. I have asked Mitchell to reach out to the SWCD that have state funding commitments to see how it is going and we will be looking at how to get the rest of the funding allocated.
- **MDA Groundwater Grant** – We continue to follow the workplan for this grant.

- **Red Eye Watershed** – Partnering LGU’s continue to work on implementing the work plan. We worked with Pete Waller to adjust the eLINK work plan on the initial WBIF grant to match what the funding has been spent on. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be meeting on February 13th to discuss the budget for the next WBIF application that will be submitted this spring. We are planning a Policy Committee meeting on March 11th. Nicole has been working on inputting completed project information into the plan tacking tool that was developed by HEI.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – Partnering LGU’s continue to work on implementing the work plan. We submitted a request for supplemental WBIF funds on behalf of the watershed implementation team. The Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) will be meeting on February 8th to discuss the budget for the next WBIF application that will be submitted this spring. We are planning a Policy Committee meeting for February 22nd. Nicole has been working on inputting completed project information into the plan tacking tool that was developed by HEI.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – We continue participating in the 1W1P planning process for the Crow Wing Watershed. Things are going smoothly. There is a Policy Committee meeting scheduled for January 24th. We hope to have a completed plan by the end of the year.
- **Long Prairie Watershed** – Partnering LGU’s continue to work on implementing the work plan.
- **Other Watersheds** –Nicole continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – The 2024 Winter Irrigation and Nutrient Management producer workshop is scheduled for March 5th. It will be held at Thumper Pond in Ottertail. Staff are working on finalizing the agenda. We will be focusing on getting the producers signed up for the 2024 growing season.
- **Shoreland Program** –Staff continue to work on project designs and cost-estimates. We submitted the application for a Conservation Corps Crew assistance for the summer of 2024. We are arranging a check-in meeting with the staff from WOT. With several staffing changes between the two SWCDs we just want to make sure we are on the same page.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – Staff are working on year-end reports. We continue to get a few calls on WCA issues in each office. The Wadena office is working with the County on some concerns with a Judicial Ditch in Leaf River Township. This is more a Public Drainage Authority issue than it is a WCA issue.

- **Feedlots** – Staff will be working on the 2023 reporting soon. MPCA staff has changed over the last few months and the Wadena office is waiting to find out who they will be working with.
- **County Ag Inspector** – We are slowly getting the 2023 Township and City Annual Reports returned to our offices. Staff will be planning for the 2024 Annual Local Weed inspector meetings soon.
- **Education and Outreach** – We continue to post on our social media accounts. Staff will begin working on the 2023 year in review documents soon.
- **Administration** – On top of the normal day to day administrative tasks, Chantal and Kristi continue the process of updating grants in eLINK monthly for both SWCDs. Chantal and I continue working on an updated timesheet that will help staff with tracking their time allocated to various grants better. We are also working on finalizing the eLINK reports before the Feb. 1st deadline. Chantal has been working on the year-end items, W-2's, 1099s and all things grant related.