



MINUTES FROM THE MARCH 15, 2023, BOARD MEETING

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lyle Dittmann at 7:30 a.m.

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

Others Present: Wadena SWCD Liaison: Bruce Juntunen
County Commissioner: Dan Bucholz
NRCS District Conservationist: Troy Baumgart
District Manager: Darren Newville
Assistant District Manager: Anne Oldakowski
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas

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

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

Approve Board Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards, to approve the Board Meeting Minutes as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve the special meeting minutes from March 2, 2023. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt, to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented, subject to audit. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve to reinvest the maturing CD into another 12 month CD at 3.9% interest. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to take \$500,000 from savings and invest into a 6-month CD at 3.75%. 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.

IRRIGATION TECH/NITRATE GRANT

C21-9235-01; Mike Dombek; Perham Township, Section 8; is requesting a final cost share payment for his AgSense, LLC Invoice. The total cost of the invoice is \$ 175.00 with cost sharing of \$ 35.06 which is the remaining balance of his original contract. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.



C21-9235-09; Olson & Sons; Parkers Prairie Township, Section 23; is requesting a final cost share payment for his Soil Moisture Probes & Installation. The total cost of the project was \$ 4,000.00 with cost sharing of \$ 2,500.00. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

C21-9235-11; Steve Inwards; Eastern Township, Section 18; is requesting a partial cost share payment for his Soil Moisture Probe. The total cost of the project was \$ 1,915.00 with cost sharing of \$ 1,436.25, which is 75%. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Bruce Albright to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried. *Note: Steve Inwards abstained from voting.*

PRIORITY LAKE GRANT

PL19/BP; Robert & Katie Vanguilder; Pine Lake Township, Section 22; is requesting approval of a cost share assistance contract for their shoreline restoration. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ 39,600.00 with cost sharing of \$ 24,000.00 (these are the available funds). Motion made by Bruce Albright second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

STATE COST SHARE

2023-01; City of Vergas; Hobart Township, Section 19, is requesting cost share assistance for a Conservation Cover. The cost of the project is \$ 1,010.13 with the cost share amount of \$ 757.60 or 75% whichever is less. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried. *Note: Bruce Albright abstained from voting.*

WBIF FUNDS

C21-3238-22; Justin Dittmann; Homestead Township, is requesting cost share assistance for Cover Crops. The cost of the project is \$ 12,800.00 with cost sharing of \$ 9,600.00. This is a 3-year contract with the cost share amount of \$ 3,200.00 per year. Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried. *Note: Lyle Dittmann abstained from voting.*

C21-3238-17; Keith Schwichtenberg, Paddock Township, Section 32 is requesting payment for his Forest Stewardship Plan. The total cost estimate is \$ 712.00, with the cost share amount of \$ 534.00 or 75% whichever is less. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

District Conservationist's Report: Written and read by Troy Baumgart

- CRP – General signup runs Feb 27 to April 7. As of March 13th close to 60 offers have been worked on.
- CSP – Classic signup deadline was March 1 for information/maps. 7 applications have been received. Assessment/Ranking deadline is May 12th.
- CSP – Renewal application deadline was March 10th and there were 3 applications received. Assessment/Ranking deadline is Oct 13, 2023.
- CSP – IRA (Inflation Reduction) deadline for applications is March 24. Specific practices/enhancements are available.
- EQIP – EOT had a total of 6 applications pre-approved for funding, 5 applicants wanted to move forward.



- RCPP – 9 applications pre-approved for funding. Approximately \$440,000 was used in EOT. The process of getting through QAR, getting producer signatures, and moving towards approval has begun.
- Local Work Group meeting set for March 23 in Detroit Lakes.

County Commissioner's Report: Presented by Dan Bucholz

- Red Eye & Ottetail Watershed agreements have been approved.
- Attended a public listening session in Henning on Monday night. Next meeting is scheduled June 19, 2023.
- Discussed feasibility of the Extension horticulture position.

Other Agency Report: Presented by Bruce Juntunen from the Wadena SWCD board

- Noted that he will try to fill in for Nancy as liaison and talked briefly about the carbon sequestration meeting he and Bruce Albright attended.

Old Business

Water Plan/Watershed Plan update:

- Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Bruce Albright, to approve for Darren to sign the MPCA Grant Agreement when it arrives. Opposed: none, motion carried.
- Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt, to approve Darren's signature on the LGU pooling agreements for the Red Eye WBIF, Otter Tail WBIF & Irrigation RCPP CWF Grants. Opposed: none, motion carried.

8:47 a.m. Dan left the meeting.

TSA Update: There is a by-law vote coming up. One district wants the wording of "unanimous" voting (which is the way it is currently stated) or they will not sign. "Super majority" would be what the rest are suggesting.

New Business

Meetings/Trainings:

- Joint Board/Staff retreat is scheduled for March 28th from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
- Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve the fee for Nicole to attend the Women in Agriculture Leadership Conference. Opposed: none, motion carried.
- Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve those wishing to attend the Area meeting next week. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Education: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Bruce Albright to approve a donation of \$500 for the Envirothon. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Lyle: Requests for Conservation Days donation should be made by March 23 to the Dark House.

Public Comments: none

Adjourn: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to adjourn. Opposed: none, motion carried. Meeting was adjourned at 9:17 a.m.

District Managers Report
March 2023
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – We have taken 352 tree orders and have sold over 51,000 trees. We still have about 1,600 left on our inventory. Staff in both offices continue to work with landowners to get plans and cost estimates for tree planting projects. Tanner currently has 8 custom tree planting projects scheduled for 2023 that will have us planting about 17,000 trees.
- **Forest Stewardship** – Staff attended a meeting to discuss the Minnesota Forest Resource Council (MFRC) West Central Landscape Committee and revitalizing and reorganizing it and have reached out to potential committee members. Anne received a photo of a bug from a local teacher concerned about the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Anne confirmed with a DNR Forest Health Specialist that it was a Wood-Boring Longhorn Beetle, not EAB.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** –Tanner continues working with landowners on plans and ordering seed for 2023.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Tanner is working on the title commitment for the Eagle Point Partnership RIM easement on Star Lake. We have approved numbers from MASWCD and NRCS for the EOT contribution agreement to assist with CRP planning and status reviews. Tanner is already working on writing plans.
- **MAWQCP** – SWCD staff continue to work with MDA staff on the work of the MAWQCP certification process. Brian Ingmire, MDA, is working closely with the staff assisting with the program. There are 3 to 4 farms that have been certified in the last month. They are also making progress on processing the MDA cost-share and endorsement assessments.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Nathan assisted MDA organizing and hosting the Local Advisory Team (LAT) for the Perham Wellhead area. The meeting was held on March 9th. 12 producers attended. He is also working with MDA and NDAWN on scheduling the spring maintenance of the weather stations. We are working with MDA on a new Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and budget for continuing this work.
- **MDA Central Sands** – Anne has been working with MDA staff and has contacted the lab to get things organized for the 2023 sampling.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – We are continuing to work with the leadership committee on any RCPP work. We have the results of the most recent signup. NRCS has allowed us to allocate all of the remaining funds to fund projects. This is only in year 2 of the 5-year project. We are exploring options with NRCS for the possibility of adding additional federal funds to the project. The EOT office has 12 total projects funded, and the Wadena office has 7 total

projects funded. Nathan has reached out to the other SWCDs to assess the need for additional cost-share for funded projects using state funds.

- **MDH Groundwater Grant** – We continue to follow the workplan for this grant and will be looking at submitting an RFP for additional funding.
- **Red Eye Watershed** – Staff continue to work with landowners to plan and install projects with the WBIF grant funds. We are also working with our other LGU partners to make sure they are invoicing us for their staff time and projects that are completed. Don is working on an agreement with MPCA to get some funding for inventorying culverts and feedlots and pastures in the watershed. This will bring about \$50,000 in for staff time to complete these tasks. We are also working with MPCA to get organized for the 2023 e. Coli sampling in the watershed.
- **LCCMR Forestry Pilot Program** – Staff have started outreach efforts and recently developed a mailing list. We are working on a letter that will be sent to landowners in priority locations. A local forestry team meeting will be held jointly with the Redeye and Long Prairie pilot watersheds. The meeting will be held in Long Prairie on April 4th from 9am until noon. Local forestry team members will discuss and coordinate workplan activities.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The WBIF budget request was approved by BWSR. We have received and signed the grant agreement. The WBIF workplan was submitted last week. Once the workplan is approved, we should get the executed grant agreement back from BWSR at which time we will be able to start encumbering and spending funds. Agreement for services contracts have been prepared and distributed to our watershed partners. We will sign them after the grant agreement has been formally executed.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – BWSR has approved the workplan and the Hubbard SWCD has an executed grant agreement for the planning grant. This will allow us to start the planning process. They are hosting a kickoff meeting on March 29th in Park Rapids. Don has been assisting Hubbard SWCD staff in the process.
- **Long Prairie Watershed** – Steering Committee met on March 3rd. The group considered additional planning options for unspent planning budget funds. All LGUs have resigned the revised MOA. The WBIF budget request was reviewed and submitted to BWSR for approval. Next steering committee meeting is April 14th.
- **Other Watersheds** –Don continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – The 2023 Winter Irrigation and Nutrient Management producer workshop was held March 2nd in New York Mills. Nathan and Nicole did a great job planning and organizing the event. We had 60 people in attendance. We did record video of

the presentations and they will be posted on the District YouTube Channel and website. Staff are working on signing up producers for the 2023 irrigation season.

- **Shoreland Program** –Liz and Pete continue to work our joint engineering staff to monitor the rock rip rap bluff protection project the is being installed on Little Pine Lake. This project cover 6 properties on Little Pine Loop. We have been notified that we will be able to use the Conservation Corps Crew again this year in June to assist with shoreline project installations. Liz and Pete continue to do designs and work with landowners interested in projects.
- **Cover Crop Grant** – Staff have been working with partners to plan for a Soil Health Field Day this coming summer. We have an initial plan and a site located for the event. The event will likely be held in early August.
- **Buffer Law** – EOT staff have started the process of reviewing aerial imagery to identify potential properties that may not be in compliance with the Buffer Law. They have reviewed 7 of the 9 townships for this year and have 19 sites identified for field reviews this spring.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – A few requests have come in and we will be looking at them once the field conditional allow.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch completed the annual review of the feedlot program with MPCA staff and will be getting that to the county commissioners for approval. He is also working with one producer who would like to increase the number of animal units on his permit.
- **County Ag Inspector** – Liz has the EOT Local Weed Inspector (LWI) meetings scheduled for March 20th and 21st and Alyson has the Wadena LWI meetings scheduled for March 30th. Alyson has proctored 2 pesticide tests and has assisted Jeff Sira, MDA, with seed sampling.
- **A.I.S.** – Alyson completed the AIS management course through the U of M. She also attended two DNR AIS trainings to get prepared for the 2023 season.
- **Education and Outreach** – We continue to post on our social media accounts. Several staff are working on story maps for specific projects. Staff have completed the 2022 year-in-review, and we will be getting those printed.
- **Otter Tail River Dam Modification Projects** – The contractor started the Little Pine Lake Project and gave us an updated timeline for the completion of the other 3 projects. I also worked to get a signed temporary access agreement in place for the Rush Lake project.

- **Administration** – On top of the normal day to day administrative tasks, Chantal and I completed the 2022 Census of Government surveys. We have implemented new timesheets that will help us better track time being charged to specific grants. Chantal and Kristi are also working with Tanner to make sure the tree invoices and deposits are completed and numbers match.
- **MASWCD Legislative Days** – Lyle, Jerry, Anne, Mitch, Tanner, & I attended the legislative update and reception on March 7th. We then split up and met with our legislators on March 8th. We were able to connect with all our legislators to discuss the SWCD Aid and other legislative issues for the SWCDs statewide.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff have attended many meetings and training through the last month and have many more scheduled in the next month.
- **Staff/Focus Teams** – The staff focus teams continue to meet and we have already implemented some of the suggestions coming from these teams. We will continue to work with each team to better define roles and work items.