



MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 19, 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
Treasurer: Bruce Albright

Others Present: County Commissioner: Dan Bucholz
OTC Land & Resource: Chris LeClair
NRCS District Conservationist: Troy Baumgart
County Executive Director: Julie Welter
Engineer: Mike Yrjo
District Manager: Darren Newville
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas
Irrigation/Nutrient Mgmt Specialist: Nathan Wiese
Watershed Coordinator: Don Bajumpaa
Ass't Shoreland Specialist: Pete Guck

Agenda: Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Steve Inwards, to adopt the agenda with the addition of BOTF Donation under public comments. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Approve Board Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Lyle Dittmann, second by Wayne Enger, to approve the Board Meeting Minutes as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Wayne Enger, 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 Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger, to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

7:38 a.m. Nathan Wiese and Pete Guck entered the meeting.

Three Cost Share policies were discussed at this meeting and voted on.

- Irrigation Practices – received a no vote from the board.
- Rock Rip Rap – Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Bruce Albright to approve a \$ 7,500 cap or 50%. Opposed none, motion carried.
- No Till/Strip Till – some agreement, however, would like more information. Tabled for next meeting.

Mike Yrjo gave a short presentation on the completion of the Little Pine Lake Grade Stabilization (rock riprap) Projects on Little Pine Loop that were completed in the last month. Mike showed appreciation for the actions of



the board and staff to get this project done in a very short period of time. Darren shared a short video that Kristi created for this project.

Darren shared the Little Pine Dam modification project video that Kristi created and posted on the EOT SWCD YouTube channel. The link is: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KXlety1Rh7Y>

PRIORITY LAKE GRANT

PL13/LP; Linda Reinhart; Gorman Township, Section 35; is requesting a cost share payment for her shoreline restoration. The total cost of the project was \$ 18,375.00 with cost sharing of \$ 11,063.59. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

PL14/LP; Janet Brown; Gorman Township, Section 35; has an amendment to her original contract. The original estimated cost was \$ 18,125.00 has increased to \$ 20,625.00. This will change the cost share amount from \$ 10,921.06 to \$ 12,421.06. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

PL14/LP; Janet Brown; Gorman Township, Section 35; is requesting a cost share payment for her shoreline restoration. The total cost of the project was \$ 20,625.00 with cost sharing of \$ 12,421.06. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

PL15/LP; Lesa Melbostad; Gorman Township, Section 35; is requesting a cost share payment for her shoreline restoration. The total cost of the project was \$ 20,000.00 with cost sharing of \$ 12,046.06. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

PL16/LP; Wayne Johnson; Gorman Township, Section 35; is requesting a cost share payment for his shoreline restoration. The total cost of the project was \$ 20,625.00 with cost sharing of \$ 12,421.06. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

PL17/LP; Kelly Hagel; Gorman Township, Section 35; is requesting a cost share payment for his shoreline restoration. The total cost of the project was \$ 20,750.00 with cost sharing of \$ 12,496.06. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

BWSR IRRIGATION RCPP

P23-1461-01; Steve Inwards; Parkers Prairie Township, Section 11 & 14; is requesting cost share assistance for his Sprinkler System. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ 82,300.00 with cost sharing of \$ 4,860.06. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried. *Please note that Steve Inwards abstained from voting.*

P23-1461-02; Ronald Palubicki; Leaf Lake & Ottertail Township, Section 8 & 34; is requesting cost share assistance for his Advanced Pumping Plant. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ 36,100.00 with cost sharing of \$ 10,294.64. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

COST SHARE

P21-2734-01; William McKinney; Dead Lake Township, Section 12; is requesting cost share assistance for his Shoreline Protection. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ 21,516.03 with cost sharing of \$ 16,137.02.



Funding for this project will come from 3 different pots of money. Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

COVER CROP DEMO GRANT

C20-8413-20; Ronald Sakry; Deer Creek Township, Section 15; is requesting cost share assistance for his Cover Crop Demo Plot. The cost share amount is \$ 3,500.00. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inward to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

DNR Dam MODIFICATION PROJECT

Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Steve Inwards to approve payment of the OT Dam Modification project on Little Pine for \$ 221,848.75. Opposed, none: motion carried. This is a reimbursable expense, and we will be billing the DNR & USFWS.

District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

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

- CRP – April 7, 2023, end date.
- CSP –7 applications have been received.
- EQIP – \$ 8 million available, \$5 million set aside for Wildlife
- New employee starting May 21, Lawrence.

County Commissioner's Report: Presented by Dan Bucholz

- A meeting is scheduled on Friday with the County, SWCD, and the U of M regarding the Horticulture position.
- There is a new extension educator starting in May.
- County Road 8 should be starting soon.
- County Road 51 is not open for bid yet.
- June 19, 2023 the County will be holding a meeting (open to the public) in Perham at the City Hall. 7 p.m. time is tentative.

Other Agency Report:

OTC Land & Resource – Tuesday, April 25th at 1 p.m. there is a Public Hearing on the Septic Ordinance.

FSA – Julie Welter

- CRP – 78 Expiring Contracts, enrolled 51.
- Emergency Grain Storage – Financial Assistance or Cost Share available to establish grain storage bins. 85 applications so far. Funding for \$ 20 million, which was gone in the first hour.

9:16 a.m. Chris LeClair left the meeting.

9:22 a.m. Julie Welter and Troy Baumgart left the meeting.

Old Business



TSA Update: Discussed the amendment to the joint powers agreement and new bylaws. There is concern about needing a unanimous vote for chances to the agreement. The Mahnomens SWCD has voted it will not approve the JPA without the unanimous vote for changes. Tabled to the next meeting.

9:29 a.m. Mike Yrjo and Pete Guck left the meeting.

New Business

Meetings/Trainings: None to approve at this time.

MN SWCD Forestry Association: Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Wayne Enger to approve the request/invitation of membership. The Membership fee is \$60. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Long Prairie 1W1P WBIF Contract: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Bruce Albright to sign the agreement. Opposed: none, motion carried.

9:45 a.m. Nathan Wiese left the meeting.

Shared Position: EOT Extension Educator. This position would go to Wadena SWCD as well. We need to decide what we would expect from this new hire if we were to participate in the funding of the position. This was for discussion only, no vote needed at this time. Meeting schedule with County and other partners on Friday to discuss further.

Fair Booth: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to sponsor the DNR animal building as well as setting up a booth. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Parking Lot/Sidewalks: After reviewing bids a motion was made to accept the quote from Pettow Construction to replace the sidewalks before replacing the parking lot this spring by Steve Inwards, second by Bruce Albright. Opposed, none: motion carried.

BOTF Donation: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to donate \$600 to BOTF (Breakfast on the Farm). Opposed: none, motion carried.

Public Comments: none

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 10:04 a.m.

District Managers Report
April 2023
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – We have taken 370 tree orders and have sold over 52,000 trees. We still have a few hundred trees left in our inventory. We are hoping to have the tree pick up days May 5-6, 2023. Tanner is working with the nurseries to confirm delivery dates. Staff in both offices continue to work with landowners to get plans and cost estimates for tree planting projects. Tanner currently has 12 custom tree planting projects scheduled for 2023 that will have us planting about 19,000 trees.
- **Forest Stewardship** – Staff attended Minnesota Forest Resource Council (MFRC) West Central Landscape Committee meeting to look at potential member list. Anne has fielded several calls from landowners on the SFIA/2C programs after landowners received their property tax statements. Anne also attended the Wadena County Conservation Committee meetings that are looking at the Conservation Fund Lands. The County is considering taking ownership of the properties if funding can be secured through the LSOHC process.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** –Tanner continues working with landowners on plans and ordering seed for 2023. He has 164 acres custom seeding scheduled for 8 landowners.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – We received the final easement documents for the Eagle Point Partnership RIM easement on Star Lake. Tanner is working with them to get those signed. Staff in the EOT office are working on writing CRP plans for the MASWCD/NRCS contribution agreement to assist with CRP planning and status reviews.
- **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 have been 10 farms certified, with 13 more in the process, 6 endorsements completed with 6 more in progress and 2 cost-share grants certified and paid out since the beginning of the year. They are also making progress on processing the MDA cost-share and endorsement assessments. Alyson is setting up appointments to deliver signs and interview those who have recently been certified to enable her to write a news article. I have had weekly conversations with Jim, he is doing well and is planning on returning to work on May 1st.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Nathan is working with MDA staff on a new/amended Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and budget for continuing this agreement. He is also working with MDA staff on the spring maintenance of the weather stations and assessing the needs for updating any of the equipment.

- **MDA Central Sands** – Anne continues to work to get things organized for the 2023 sampling. She has completed and submitted the quarterly report and invoice.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – Staff continue to work with the leadership committee on any RCPP work. With all the NRCS funding being allocated in only year 2 of the 5-year project we are exploring options with NRCS for the possibility of adding additional federal funds. Nathan is working to allocate the state funds to the other SWCDs to fill in the gap needed for additional cost-share for those projects that were not funded at the 75% level. I am in the process of collecting quarterly reports and invoices from the other SWCDs in our area and will submit that report and invoice by the end of the month. We held an all-partner meeting on April 10th where we updated everyone on the project. Nathan & I presented at the meeting.
- **MDH Groundwater Grant** – We submitted the final report and invoice for this agreement. We submitted another grant application for an additional \$50,000 in funding. We hope to hear back on this application soon.
- **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. We held a Technical Advisory Committee meeting on April 11th to review the budget and discuss projects with the other LGUs. 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 developing and reviewing 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 20th from 9am until noon. Local forestry team members will discuss and coordinate workplan activities.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The grant agreement and WBIF workplan have been approved by BWSR. The agreements for services contracts have been executed and are in place with all our watershed partners and we can all now begin encumbering the funds. We continue to work with Houston Engineering to develop the Implementation Tracking spreadsheet. The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be held on May 1st.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – We met with local planning partners on March 29th. Items discussed included: introductions from planning consultants, steering, technical and advisory committee member updates, future meeting locations/options, potential citizen

advisory committee membership, public input and kickoff meetings, PTMapp updates, Landscape Stewardship plans update and planning logo options for consideration. The Steering committee also met on April 7th. The committee coordinated getting a mailing list prepared so we can start the 60-day planning notification process. The group worked on logistics and timelines related to public kickoff meetings (planned in early June), a watershed survey for public input (distribute in mid-April), a watershed tour for Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee members (late July), and upcoming TAC and PC meetings.

- **Long Prairie Watershed** – The Policy Committee met on March 16th. Items discussed included Fiscal Agent Agreement and WBIF tracking options. Next Policy Committee is scheduled for June 15th if needed.
- **Other Watersheds** –Don continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – Staff mailed contracts out to past participants and are working on signing up producers for the 2023 irrigation season. We posted the recordings of the presentation from our winter clinic on YouTube and Nicole sent the link out to 42 individuals asking for that.
- **Shoreland Program** –Liz and Pete worked with our joint engineering staff to monitor the rock rip rap bluff protection project the is being installed on 6 properties on Little Pine Lake. The project has been completed and certified by our engineering staff. Liz and Pete continue to do designs and work with landowners interested in projects. Staff prepared a draft SWCD cost-share policy for rip rap projects that will be discussed at the SWCD Board meetings.
- **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 79 of the 9 townships for this year and have 21 sites identified for field reviews this spring. Wadena SWCD staff are working on their annual buffer review.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – We have started to receive a few more calls for wetland issues. Once field conditions allow, we will get out to visit the sites.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch is working with a Wadena County producer and MPCA to increase the number of animal units on their site. This is an after-the-fact issue which makes it more

complicated. We were notified by MPCA about a spring melt runoff event from a feedlot into an Otter Tail County Lake. MPCA is working with that producer to correct the issue.

- **County Ag Inspector** – Both offices held their annual Local Weed Inspector meetings with a decent turnout. Alyson has proctored 2 pesticide tests.
- **A.I.S.** – Alyson conducted tub inventories one last time and readied the tablets for the upcoming season. She also verified that the necessary paperwork was received by DNR personnel. Alyson attended the final 2 AIS meetings scheduled by the DNR in preparation for the upcoming season.
- **Education and Outreach** – Liz and Pete presented at the EOT Horticulture Days. Nathan and Nicole presented the ground water model to Doug Salo's 5th grade classroom in New York Mills. Staff are also preparing for the Ag in the Classroom in New York Mills and the Otter Tail County Conservation Days. We continue to make posts on our social media accounts. I am trying to schedule a meeting with Dain Erickson, Red Canoe Creative, and our staff to go over our ed and outreach plans and review the materials he has available.
- **Otter Tail River Dam Modification Projects** – The Little Pine Lake project was completed by the end of March. With videos and pictures taken by several staff, Kristi put together a nice video of the project which has been posted on the EOT SWCD YouTube Channel and shared on our social media accounts.
- **The Otter's Tail** – Chris LeClaire, OTC Land & Resource Management, and I are working with the landowners along the Otter's Tail Channel on Otter Tail Lake to discuss possible solutions to some of their issues. We will be facilitating a meeting of the various landowners and groups in early June.
- **Administration** – On top of the normal day to day administrative tasks, Chantal is working on the documentation we need for the various quarterly reports and invoices for our different agreements. She completed the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFE), and risk assessment reports for both SWCDs.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff have attended many meetings and training in the last month and have many more scheduled for the next month.
- **Staff/Focus Teams** – The staff focus teams continue to meet and we have implemented some of the suggestions coming from these teams.