



MINUTES FROM THE JULY 19, 2023, 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
Treasurer: Bruce Albright

Others Present: County Commissioner: Dan Bucholz
NRCS Team Lead: Bob Guetter
NRCS District Conservationist: Troy Baumgart
District Manager: Darren Newville
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas
Watershed Coordinator: Don Bajumpaa

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

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

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

COST SHARE

Keith Eckhoff; Henning Township, Section 3; is requesting cost share assistance for a Pit Closure. The total estimated project cost is \$14,500.00 with cost sharing of \$ 10,875.00. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

REDEYE 1W1P

C21-3238-24; Jared Huwe; Paddock Township, Section 31; is requesting cost share assistance for Irrigation Water Management. The cost share amount is \$ 1,500.00 (\$500 per year) for a 3-year contract. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

C21-3238-25; Connor Dailey; Compton Township, Section 36; is requesting cost share assistance for Prescribed Grazing. The total estimated project cost is \$ 20,546.40, with cost sharing of \$ 15,409.80. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.



RCPP

P23-1461-02; Ronald Palubicki; Leaf Lake & Ottertail townships, sections 8 & 34; is requesting a final cost share payment for his advanced pumping plant E533A. The total cost of the project was \$ 36,700.20 with the cost share amount of \$10,294.00. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

8:04 a.m. Kyle Goeller entered the meeting

District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

District Conservationist's Report: Presented by Troy Baumgart

- CSP – Continuing to work on contracting. Potentially getting additional contracts.
- EQIP – We received additional funds to obligate 4 more contracts. 3 grazing and 1 cropland. \$1.3 million being spent in EOT for applications/contracts. Working on certifying prior year projects. Application deadline for 2024-1 is October 6, 2023.
- CRP – SU60 – General has 51 accepted offers, which are split mostly between Liz and Tanner. Proactive certifications on installed projects. Status review areas are split between Liz, Tanner, and Lawrence. Assistance is also available from the DL Intern. SU59 CCRP deadline to have technical plans/paperwork in is July 30th.
- RCPP – Producers are completing projects. We are in the process of certifying variable rate, soil moisture sensors, and low-pressure conversions.
- 2 Soil Conservationist hires in Fergus Falls. Olivia Mickelson will eventually be placed in the Perham office.
- Mitch Neitge has accepted the job offer with the Grand Rapids NRCS office, his last day will be August 17th.

County Commissioner's Report: Presented by Dan Bucholz

- The Ottertail County Fair starts tomorrow.
- Today at 6:30 pm there is a meeting at City Hall to address issues. The meeting will begin with the Gettysburg Express.
- A City Engineer was hired.
- Hwy 51 should be done by freeze up.
- There are several meetings going on regarding drainage ditches with water not flowing.

Public Comments: Kyle Goeller brough his issue to the table for discussion regarding the lagoon on his property. This project needs to be completed soon as the grant ends in October.

8:40 a.m Kyle Goeller left the meeting

Old Business

TSA Update: Thing have been going well.



Watershed Implementation Fund: Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to approve Darren & Don to request authorization from BWSR to shift funds from one work activity to another. Opposed: none, motion carried.

New Business

Meetings/Trainings: none to approve at this time.

SWCD Aid Resolution: Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve signing of the Aid Resolution which spells out the 2024 funding and how we plan to use it. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Budget: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve the preliminary budget to be presented to the County. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Personnel Update: Nathan and Nicole are leaving the district. Mitch Jason from Wadena SWCD has been hired to replace Nathan. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve Nicole's resignation. Opposed: none, motion carried.

MASWCD Awards: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to nominate Steve Misegades for Conservation Cooperator for the Convention in December. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Adjourn: Meeting was adjourned at 9:04 a.m.

District Managers Report
July 2023
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – Staff have been meeting with landowners to provide technical assistance with potential projects for next year.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** – Tanner custom seeded a total of 258 acres. We had to replace tires on the rental drill and make repairs to the dew drop seeder. The rental drill was rented by 14 different landowners in June.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Staff continue to work with landowners on submitting applications and attending RIM committee meetings.
- **MAWQCP** – Staff continue to work with producers on the MAWQCP assessment, certifications, endorsements, and cost-share. Both SWCDs have been promoting the program on our social media accounts. Alyson is working with certified producers to present them with their signs and take pictures.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Nathan has worked with MDA staff to update them on progress and assisted with the Perham Wellhead LAT.
- **MDA Central Sands** –Anne continues to keep in contact with the lab. We should be receiving an invoice and report on the spring sampling soon.
- **AgBMP Loan Program** – Both offices are answering questions from landowners and lenders on the program and application process. The Otter Tail County funds currently have a \$0 balance. Liz has requested an additional \$65,000 to cover an application we have that is waiting for funds. More funds will become available in October when repayments are made to the state.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – We continue to work with the partners on this project. The committee has planned and scheduled a technical training session on July 17-18 to be held at the CLC Staples campus.
- **MDH Groundwater Grant** – Five nitrate testing clinics are planned in July: WOT Fair on 7/20, EOT Fair on 7/21, Wadena SWCD on 7/25, Becker County Fair on 7/27 and Ottertail City on 7/31. The nitrate testing clinics are being promoted through local newspapers and on partner web and social media sites.
- **Red Eye Watershed** – EOT/Wadena SWCD staff continue to coordinate a culvert inventory and feedlot survey with funds from MPCA. Alyson and Nicole will be working on this. Alyson and Nicole are also working with our NRCS partners on education and outreach for the Bluff/Oak Creek EPA 319 project. Plans are underway to hold a workshop/event in the watershed. We will keep you posted as this develops.

(Surface Water Assessment Grant – SWAG Monitoring)

Don and Alyson have completed 3 rounds of water sampling at 8 locations in the Redeye River Watershed. Samples collected are analyzed for temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, conductivity, total suspended solids, and e coli bacteria. Lab reports from RMB show elevated e coli levels this spring at various locations.

(LCCMR Tree Planting Pilot Program)

Our local forestry team will meet again on July 27th. Don has developed a service provider directory and is gathering information for the capacity assessment part of the grant. This information will document what forestry work is getting done in the watersheds and help us plan for future needs.

Redeye TAC will meet on July 18th. Project partners will review WBIF grants, provide project updates and consider budget and workplan revisions to meet watershed project needs.

- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – Don has been working with Houston Engineering to develop implementation tracking tools. The planning grant expired on June 30th. Project partners have begun to submit Implementation funding requests. Next scheduled TAC meeting is August 7th.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – The Steering committee met on June 5th and June 15th to work on planning activities. The steering committee developed a watershed survey that was distributed to LGUs, community stakeholders and the public. The survey was mailed to 15 Newspapers and to 20 special interest groups. It was also posted on several local planning partner websites and social meeting sites. As of June 30th, we received 144 responses to the survey. This survey will be used to help us develop goals and issues statements for the watershed. The next Steering committee meeting will be held on July 3rd.

The first Policy Committee meeting was held on May 31st. The policy committee elected a Chair and Vice Chair, approved the Technical Advisory Committee, reviewed a list of individuals who may potentially serve on the Citizen's Advisory Committee, reviewed draft planning bylaws, provided input on public kickoff meetings and a watershed tour.

The Policy Committee met again on June 28th. The committee approved the Crow Wing 1w1p logo, approved the planning by-laws, and approved a list of citizens to serve on the Citizen's Advisory Committee.

The Technical Advisory Committee held its first meeting on June 15th. The committee heard presentations from some of the state and local partners and conducted a brainstorming exercise on watershed issues. Next TAC meeting is scheduled for August 2nd.

Two public kickoff meetings were held in Nisswa on 6/27 and in Park Rapids on 6/28. A total of 34 people attended these events and provided input on watershed issues.

A watershed tour for Policy Committee and Technical Advisory Committee members is being planned for July 26th.

- **Long Prairie Watershed** – The Steering Committee met on June 2nd and July 7th. The partners reviewed the implementation tracking spreadsheet, planning grant budget, and project requests.
- **Other Watersheds** – Don continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds, discussing quarterly work and implementation.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – Staff continue to run weekly routes.
- **Shoreland Program** – Staff installed 5 sites across Otter Tail County with the help of the CCM crew. They installed over 5,820 square feet of native grasses and forbs on 5 different lakes. They helped Otter Tail County install a native planting outside their office building. Liz & Pete have been making site visits to potential project sites and will be starting on cost share site inspections in July. Liz is working with Chantal to finish the billing for the last few projects. Staff have also been involved in the monitoring of the construction of a few rip rap projects.
- **Cover Crop Grant** – Staff continue planning for the Soil Health Field Day that will be held August 8 near Deer Creek. 2,400 flyers have been distributed to 5 local Coops and agribusinesses as they have agreed to send them out with their monthly statement mailings. Staff have seeded cover crop plots on the site.
- **Buffer Law** – The EOT SWCD has one landowner that we have not been able to contact on getting a buffer established. We may need to send this one on to the county for their process.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – Staff continue to take calls and make site visits as needed. We continue to respond when called.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch is continuing to work with a Wadena County producer and MPCA to increase the number of animal units on the site. He is waiting for a manure management plan. He completed the mid-year review and will be going over that with a representative from MPCA soon.
- **County Ag Inspector** – Staff are responding to complaints about weeds. We will continue to work with the township weed inspector and county Hwy Depts on these complaints. A few staff will be attending the County Ag Inspector Annual Meeting and Training this week. Alyson proctored one pesticide test.
- **Engineering Assistance** – Our joint engineering staff have visited sites in both SWCDs over the past month to do inventory and evaluation as well as some surveying. They are also providing support for construction inspections as needed.
- **Extension Educator Position** – Interviews were conducted last week. 3 candidates were interviewed, and a top candidate was selected. The U of MN Extension is working through their HR process to make an offer. We hope to hear later this week about a potential starting date.

- **Education and Outreach** – Staff have been making a better effort to get photos of work being done. Anne, Don, and I met to discuss ed & outreach priorities and we have discussed that with that working group. They have been assigned tasks to complete in the next two weeks.
- **The Otter’s Tail** –Chris LeClair, OTC, and I facilitated another group discussion focused on brainstorming solutions for the issues landowners are having with the channel. We have two more meetings scheduled for July.
- **Otter Tail Dam Modifications:** The contractor moved in and started work on the Big Pine Dam last week. This project will take at least 4 weeks to complete.
- **Administration** – We continue to work on the process of tracking all our grants and agreement financial information. Kristi is inputting project information into eLINK.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff continue to take training courses as needed to develop their JAA. Training attended includes the following topics: DNR Rip Rap standards, Ag 101 Farm Equipment, plant identification, Forest Plan Writing, and AIS.