



## MINUTES FROM THE OCTOBER 18, 2023, BOARD MEETING

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*The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lyle Dittmann at 7:32 a.m.*

**Members Present:** Chairperson: Lyle Dittmann  
Vice Chairperson: Steve Inwards  
Secretary: Terry Greenwaldt  
Public Relations: Wayne Enger

**Members Absent:** Treasurer: Bruce Albright

**Others Present:** County Commissioner: Dan Bucholz  
OTC Land & Resource: Chris LeClair  
NRCS District Conservationist: Troy Baumgart  
District Manager: Darren Newville  
Ass't Manager: Anne Oldakowski  
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas  
District Technician: Savanna Anderson

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

### RCPP GRANT – P23-1461

**P23-1461-01;** Steve Inwards; Parkers Prairie Township, sections 11,14; is requesting final payment of a cost share assistance contract for his irrigation sprinkler system 442 – VRI zone. The total estimated cost of the project was \$82,300.00 with a final payment of \$4,860.06. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried. *Note: Steve Inwards abstained from voting.*

### IRRIGATION TECH – C21-9235

**C21-9235-08;** Austin Hovius; Thomastown Township, Section 31; is requesting a final cost share payment for his Irrigation Water Management project. The total cost of the project was \$1,800.00 with a cost share final payment of \$1,350.00. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**C21-9235-16;** Lee Ludlow; Thomastown Township, Section 31; is requesting a final cost share payment for his Irrigation Water Management project. The total cost of the project was \$1,800.00 with a cost share final payment of \$1,350.00. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.



**C21-9235-20;** Bonnie Hintzman; Butler Township, Section 28; is requesting a final cost share payment for her Irrigation Water Management project. The total cost of the project was \$127,350.00 with a cost share final payment of \$15,000.00. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**C21-9235-21;** Kenneth Sakry; Woodside Township, Section 17; is requesting a contract amendment for his Sprinkler System & Pumping Plant contract. The estimated project cost of \$70,900.00 is unchanged, NRCS paid less than estimated, so the newly amended total amount authorized would be \$8,234.90. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**C21-9235-21;** Kenneth Sakry; Woodside Township, Section 17; is requesting final payment for his Sprinkler System & Pumping Plant project. The total cost was \$70,900.00 with a final cost share payment of \$8,234.90. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

### REDEYE 1W1P – C21-3238

**C21-3237-01;** Kyle Goeller; Blowers Township; is requesting final payment for his waste storage facility. The total cost of the project was \$304,568.78, with a previous partial payment of \$7,164.42 and final payment of \$25,933.71. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

### OTTER TAIL 1W1P – C23-4546

**6-C23-4546-01;** David Cordes; Girard Township, section 24; is requesting a cost share final payment for his Shoreline planting project. The total cost of the project was \$1,975.77 with a cost share payment of \$1,318.85. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

### COVER CROP

**CC17;** Steve Kincade; Wadena Township; is requesting a cost share final payment for his 340 Cover Crop practice. The total approved was \$13,500.00 for a 3-year contract with a final cost share payment of \$3,600.00. Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**Bills Paid & Bills Payable:** Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt, to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**District Manager's Report:** Presented by Darren Newville.

**District Conservationist's Report:** Presented by Troy Baumgart

- CSP – Reviewing CSP documentation and certifying practices. 2024 renewal applications fall under Farm Bill 2018 with payment limitations.
- EQIP – Continuing to certify/pay on prior year projects. 37 FY24 applications. Goeller engineer submitted certification for the last few practices.
- CRP – has stalled now. Still working on applications until FSA systems are over to FY24. An internal meeting scheduled with FSA/SWCD/NRCS.
- RCPP – Certifying practices – waiting for year-end water reports from producers.



**County Commissioner's Report:** Presented by Dan Bucholz

- The biggest issue in the County currently is EMS. By the end of the year, they will be broke. Perham EMS had 1600 pick ups last year and got paid for 1300. West Otter Tail is in worse condition.
- A public hearing was held regarding marijuana, no one was in attendance.
- Hwy 51 should be done soon.

**Other Agency Reports:** Chris LeClair @ OT County Land and Resource

- Last Monday night at the Newton Township meeting was the discussion of the Mobile Home Park that moved in by New York Mills. The county is working on this, but it is complicated. If anyone has questions regarding the Ralph Weber property, please direct them to the Land & Resource Department in Otter Tail County.
- Septic Loan Program – The current interest rate is 0%, next year it will increase to 1.3%.

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**Old Business**

**TSA Update:** Nothing to update. Next board meeting in February with a possible manager's meeting in January.

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**New Business**

**Meetings/Trainings:** Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Steve Inwards to approve those wanting to attend the Annual Convention in Bloomington. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Steve Inwards to approve those wanting to attend the Soil Management Summit in Alexandria. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**JAA Approval:** Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Wayne Enger to approve Mitch Janson's JAA Approval for 442, 449, and 360 practices. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**Redeye Watershed Plan Progress Tracking Spreadsheet:** Motion made by Steve Inwards, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve Houston Engineering for \$12,000 for development of a Tracking Spreadsheet. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**Resolutions:** Resolutions were discussed, some cast their ballots, others will complete theirs later. Deadline is November 1, 2023.

**Public Comments:** None

**Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 8:46 a.m.

**District Managers Report**  
**October 2023**  
**Submitted by Darren Newville**

- **Tree Program** – Staff continue to meet with landowners to provide technical assistance with potential projects for next year. Tanner has been working with the nurseries this past month to get our 2024 tree orders placed. We are waiting for the confirmation of tree availability before we can put the 2024 order form together.
- **Forest Stewardship Planning:** Anne is currently working on 4 plans. She has answered several questions from consulting foresters about the SWCD cost-share process. She also met with MFRC staff to discuss the upcoming December West Central Committee meeting logistics and is working on invoicing for expenses and time for the last meeting.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** – The drill was rented to 5 landowners in September. Tanner is working with landowners to get seed for fall seeding. There have been 9 orders placed. He has 1 custom seeding job scheduled for this fall.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Staff continue working on the CRP contribution agreement writing plans, doing site inspections, and certifying projects. They are also working with landowners on RIM applications at the various stages of the process and doing the required site inspections on easements that need them.
- **MAWQCP** – Staff continue to work with producers on the MAWQCP assessment, certifications, endorsements, and cost-share. Jim has also been working to complete the reviews of previously certified farms as required. Jim indicated that one producer has signed his final Certification forms which have been approved by the MDA staff. Alyson continues to work on news release articles for those producers who have been certified.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** –Staff assisted MDA with the Perham LAT meeting held on August 20<sup>th</sup>. Nathan and I attended the meeting.
- **AgBMP Loan Program** – Both offices continue to take calls, answer questions, and aid landowners requesting information or loans. We have one Otter Tial County application in the hopper waiting for funds.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – We continue to work with the partners on this project. We also continue to work with MDA and NRCS to refine the reporting. Projects are being installed and staff have been working on certification and payment requests. There will be an all partners meeting on October 30<sup>th</sup> to discuss the possibility of a new funding request and review reporting documents.
- **Red Eye Watershed** – The TAC met on August 8<sup>th</sup>. The watershed partners continue to encumber implementation funds for priority projects. We requested a one-year extension for the first WBIF grant. BWSR has already approved the extension and I have signed the grant amendment. The next TAC meeting is scheduled for November 14<sup>th</sup>.

- **SWAG** (Surface Water Assessment Grant) Don and Alyson completed water sampling for the season at 8 locations in the Redeye River Watershed. Anne will be completing the final project report for submission to MPCA.
- **Oak/Bluff Creek Sub-Watershed** – Staff are targeting landowners in the Bluff/Oak Creek watersheds promoting best management practices to address E. coli bacteria. We have had a few landowners contact us. Two landowners/producers took advantage of the scholarships to attend the grazing school.
- **Red Eye Culvert Inventory** - Staff continue to field verify culvert locations and collect information. They have completed North Germany, Lyons, Meadows, and Red Eye Townships, and have started on Rockwood. They will continue to do the field inventory at least one day a week until weather conditions don't allow it.
- **LCCMR Tree Planting Pilot Program** – Staff have sent out targeted letters to promote the program. BWSR continues to work on the program details for the RIM portion of the pilot. Once these details are known staff will reach out to landowners to promote RIM in the watershed. Our goal will be to submit RIM applications to BWSR by the end of December. DNR also updated its plans to purchase tree planters for project partners. DNR's original plan was to purchase the tree planters and gift them to the district partners. Now DNR wants districts to purchase the tree planters and have each SWCD partner request reimbursement from DNR. Agreements from DNR, outlining the process and availability of funds are being developed and will be sent to SWCD partners in the future (*hopefully we will have them in hand for the board meeting so the board can approve*). The next Local Forestry Committee meeting will be held on October 26<sup>th</sup>. Chantal, Anne, and I have been working on the reporting and invoicing for this project.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The TAC met on August 7<sup>th</sup>. The watershed partners have begun to encumber implementation funds for priority projects. Staff continue to respond to landowners from the Paul Lake watershed. The letters promoted best management practices to improve priority water and land resources. The next TAC meeting is scheduled for November 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – A Steering Committee meeting was held on September 1<sup>st</sup> to prepare for the upcoming TAC and the Policy Committee meetings.

The TAC meeting was held on October 4<sup>th</sup>. The committee reviewed the draft Issue Prioritization & the Land and Water Resources Narrative

The Policy Committee will meet on October 30<sup>th</sup>. Items to be addressed at that meeting include the approval of priority issues, approve Land and Water Resource Narrative, work on visioning and review priority resources.

- **Long Prairie Watershed** – The Steering Committee met on August 31<sup>st</sup>. The implementation tracking tool has been completed and is like the one we developed for the Otter Tail River 1W1P. The planning grant has been completed and the group is now encumbering implementation funds for priority projects in the watershed. Next meeting is October 6<sup>th</sup>.
- **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 pulled the last gauges in late September and performed the tedious task of washing them. They will now be working on completing the end of year reports and working with Chantal to bill those using the service.
- **Shoreland Program** – Staff conducted 26 site visits in September and are working on designs. A few of the sites have been sent over to the joint engineering staff to look at, which Mike and Wes are getting to when they have time. Liz has indicated that they have met on site with 70 landowners since April. Staff have also conducted site inspections on an additional 16 previous projects this past month. Liz and Pete guided the OTC COLA shoreland project tour on September 12, there were about 50 people who attended. I have heard nothing but good comments about the tour.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch has completed the required number of feedlot inspections for 2023. He will still need to enter the data into the MPCA online program (TEMPO). He will work with Savanna on that process.
- **County Ag Inspector** – With the change in seasons there are a lot less complaints and calls coming in. Alyson proctored 6 pesticide tests this past month.
- **Engineering Assistance** – Our joint engineering staff continue to help support us with projects needing engineering assistance. At the suggestion of the OTC Planning Commission and the request of a landowner we had Wes assist us with looking at a shoreland ordinance violation and made recommendations on restoring the site. These recommendations were shared with the landowner and his engineer and will be shared with the planning commission. Pete put together the vegetative restoration recommendations. They also surveyed several stream sites in Wadena County in early October.
- **Extension Educator Position** – We will be interviewing 2 candidates for the position on Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>.
- **Education and Outreach** – Staff held the Wadena SWCD Conservation Days the first week of October. Kristi continues to work with 3Plains on the new Wadena SWCD website and completed and submitted the applications for the Conservation Cooperator Awards for each SWCD.
- **Otter Tail Dam Modifications** – Through communications with HEI, I have been told that Hough Inc. is planning on starting the Rush Lake project in the next week or so. We will monitor progress and continue to take photos and video of the projects as they are being

completed. We are still hopeful that the projects will be completed by the end of November. We have billed the USF&WS for their portions of the project and have expended all their funding. We have also billed the DNR for the projects.

- **Administration** – Staff continue to do the day-to-day tasks needed to keep the SWCDs running smoothly. Chantal and Kristi continue to work on the process of tracking all our grants and agreement financial information. Kristi is inputting project information into eLINK. Chantal, Anne, & I did a quick review of every grant and where we are with each of them. Staff are working on quarterly reports and invoices for several of our agreements.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff continue to take training courses as needed to develop their JAA. Training attended includes the following topics: Leadership Training, Becker Soil Health field day. Most of the staff will be attending the BWSR Academy training later this month.
- **Staffing** – The Personnel Committee conducted interviews on Friday, September 15<sup>th</sup> for the position in Wadena. Savanna Anderson was selected and started on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. Mitchell Janson has transitioned to the Perham office. The Watershed Planner/Coordinator position is posted with the closing being on October 20<sup>th</sup>. Mitchell has worked with NRCS engineering staff and has been approved for JAA for Irrigation Practices and Ag Waste Pit Closures.