



## MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 15, 2023, BOARD MEETING

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

**Members Present:** Chairperson: Lyle Dittmann  
Secretary: Terry Greenwaldt  
Treasurer: Bruce Albright  
Public Relations: Wayne Enger

**Members Absent:** Vice Chairperson: Steve Inwards

**Others Present:** County Commissioner: Dan Bucholz  
NRCS District Conservationist: Troy Baumgart  
District Manager: Darren Newville  
Ass't Manager: Anne Oldakowski  
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas

**Agenda:** Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt, to adopt the agenda with the following additions. Set a personnel Committee meeting date, and 13a. Discuss Hough contract extension. 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**

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#### PRIORITY LAKES – C20-6293

**PL20-LP;** Gary & Jackie Foley; Corliss Township, Section 30; is requesting cost share assistance for their Critical Area Planting. The estimated total cost is \$7,447.72 with cost sharing of \$ 5,585.79. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

#### IRRIGATION TECH – C21-9235

**C21-9235-22;** Daryl Zeise; Compton Township, Section 18; is requesting final payment for his Sprinkler System & Pumping Plant project. The total cost was \$66,400.00 with a final cost share payment of \$15,000. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.



## REDEYE 1W1P – C21-3238

**C21-3238-06**; Jacob Hendrickx; Butler Township; is requesting to cancel the remainder of his Cover Crop practice. The total approved was \$9,600.00 for a 3-year contract with the first-year payment of \$ 3,200.00 which was made in 2022 and cancelling the balance of \$6,400.00. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**C21-3238-23**; Scott Huwe; Blowers Township, Section 7; is requesting a partial payment for his Irrigation Water Management. The total approved was \$1,500.00 for a 3-year contract with the first-year payment of \$ 500.00. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Bruce Albright to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**C21-3238-27**; Ronald Wegscheid; Bluffton Township; is requesting final payment for his Well Sealing. The total cost of the project was \$900.00, with a final payment of \$450.00. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

## OTTER TAIL 1W1P – C23-4546

**6-C23-4546-08**; Dan Bucholz; Gorman Township, Section 25; is requesting a cost share final payment for his Ag Waste Facility Closure. The total cost of the project was \$26,000 with a cost share payment of \$15,000. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Bruce Albright to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**6-C23-4546-09**; Cecile Guck; Pine Lake Township, Section 4; is requesting cost share assistant for her Critical Area Planting. The estimated cost of the project is \$ 4,569.69 with cost sharing of \$ 3,427.27. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Bruce Albright to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**6-C23-4546-10**; Jay Martell; Pine Lake Township, Section 9; is requesting cost share assistant for his Critical Area Planting. The estimated cost of the project is \$ 3,000.00 with cost sharing of \$ 2,250.00. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Bruce Albright to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**6-C23-4546-11**; Lisa & Curt Herwers; Girard Township, Section 33; is requesting cost share assistant for their Critical Area Planting. The estimated cost of the project is \$ 739.11 with cost sharing of \$ 554.33. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, second by Wayne Enger to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

## SOIL HEALTH – P23-2716

**P23-2716-01**; Kelly Karsnia; Gorman Township, Section 25; is requesting cost share assistance for his Tree Planting. The total estimated cost of the project is \$ 2,361.50 with a cost sharing of \$ 1,771.13. Motion made by Wayne Enger, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

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

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

- CSP – Three renewals were pre-approved and in the process of getting all the documents ready for approval/obligation.
- EQIP – Continuing to certify/pay on prior year projects. FY24 applications will be the next priority as we finish up on FY23 CSP payments. Jan 19, 2024, is the ranking deadline. There are 38 applicants to date.



- CRP – Still on hold. Staff will be working on offers as Technical Assistance; however, the program needs to open to move forward. A joint FSA/SWCD/NRCS employee meeting was held on 11/14/2023 with good discussions between the agency staff. Bob G has been notified that EOT SWCD would like a contribution agreement with NRCS. Bob will be contacting Darren on this matter.
- RCPP – Certifying practices – waiting for year-end water reports from producers.

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

- Will be attending a meeting in Moorhead to tour the Solid Waste Shed.
- The county has 30 new defibrillators if anyone needs one.
- Discussion of a project/violation on Big Pine.
- Starting January 1, 2024, the county will have surveyors out surveying property lines. Look for new ordinances in the future.
- A new County extension leader has been hired.

**Other Agency Reports:** None in attendance.

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**Old Business**

**TSA Update:** Nothing to update.

*8:36 a.m. Dan left the meeting.*

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**New Business**

**Meetings/Trainings:** Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Terry Greenwaldt to approve those wanting to attend the Area Meeting. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**Hough Contract:** Motion made by Bruce Albright, second by Wayne Enger to approve to extend Hough's contract on the OT Dam modifications to the next board meeting. Opposed: none, motion carried.

**OT County Hwy Dept:** The County Highway department is potentially building a Master Facility Garage in Perham with the possibility of the SWCD utilizing a portion of that building. This is very preliminary, more discussion to be held in the future.

**Public Comments:** None

**Adjourn:** Meeting was adjourned at 8:43 a.m.

**District Managers Report  
November 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 received confirmation on our 2024 orders placed and will be finalizing the 2024 order form soon. Our plan is to have the online store go live on Jan. 1<sup>st</sup>.
- **Forest Stewardship:** Anne is currently working on 4 plans. She also met with DNR staff to plan the Dec. 6 MFRC meeting in Browerville. The agenda will include speakers on climate predictions and adaptations, updates from around the area, and updates on the landscape fund availability. We submitted the quarterly invoice and report for this contract.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** – The drill was rented to 2 landowners in October. He also distributed the seed that was ordered by 9 landowners. He completed one custom seeding job for 86 acres and rototilled two sites. The equipment is put away for the winter.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Staff continue to assist with CRP workload. 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. They have been working with landowners to resolve title issues that need to be taken care of before easements can be finalized.
- **MAWQCP** – Staff continue to assist Jim with the work on the MAWQCP assessment, certifications, endorsements, and cost-share. A farm in Cass County was certified and Jim presented their sign to them in early October. Alyson continues to work with Jim on news release articles for those producers who have been certified. I have been working with MDA staff on a budget for the next round of agreements to continue this work. I hope to have the new agreement in place by the end of the year. I submitted the quarterly report and invoice for this contract.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** –Mitch has been visiting the weather stations to conduct the annual maintenance and replace components as scheduled. Mitch submitted the quarterly report and invoice for this contract.
- **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 when repayments are made.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – Some of our funded projects are completed and staff have been working on certifying those projects and getting cost-share vouchers completed for approval of payment. We continue to work with partners to get the BWSR funding pooling agreements in place. The Mille Lacs SWCD has approved one for the work with the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe (MLBO) for their micro irrigation project on an orchard they have. The Admin Committee continues to meet, and we held an all partners meeting to discuss another application in 2024 for additional funds. We will follow up on that in early 2024.

- **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) The quarterly report and invoice were submitted to MPCA. Staff will work on the final project report due by year end.
- **MDA Central Sands:** Submitted quarterly invoice, budget sheet, and report to Kim Kaiser at MDA.
- **Oak/Bluff Creek Sub-Watershed** – We held a staff meeting to discuss this grant as we are getting calls from the letters that were sent out and staff were wondering how to approach these site visits. It was stressed with the staff that we should meet with these landowners to identify the landowners' resource concerns and then figure out if there is a source of funding available for that. Not try to force a particular project because of a funding source. Pete has created a spreadsheet to track landowner contacts and what follow-up needs to be completed.
- **Red Eye Culvert Inventory** - Staff continue to field verify culvert locations and collect information. They have completed North Germany, Lyons, Meadows, and Red Eye, Rockwood, and Paddock Townships, and continued to go out a couple time a week. 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 sent out two rounds of letters to conservation easement landowner promoting the program. They are being sent out in batches to help with workload issues for the DNR Foresters. We are still waiting for the agreements from the DNR for the tree planter purchases. We will purchase the tree planters and then get reimbursed. There have been some frustrations with a BWSR/DNR staff member who seems to be trying to micromanage the work on this project. I have had a conversation with him about that and the fact that this is not our only project and while it is important, it is not the highest on our priority list. I am hopeful that this conversation will help with the issue.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The TAC met on November 6<sup>th</sup>. We reviewed where we are with the budget. 14% of the funds have been expended and partners are encumbering funds regularly. The committee also discussed a few budget adjustments, a possible request for supplemental funds, and the process of starting the next funding request. The TAC will meet again in February and have tentatively scheduled a Policy Committee meeting for the end of February to give them an update on progress and to review/approve the next WBIF funding request.

- **Crow Wing Watershed** – The Policy Committee will meet on October 30<sup>th</sup>. There was not a quorum present at the meeting. They reviewed priority issues, the land and water resource narrative, work on visioning and review priority resources. The committee also requested that there be language added to the plan about the vast amount of recreation that happens in the watershed with a focus on promoting responsible recreation to help protect the water resources.

The Steering Committee is still meeting monthly to plan the Policy and Technical Committee meetings.

The TAC met on November 1<sup>st</sup> and reviewed and discussed prioritizing the focus lakes and stream stretches in the Watershed. It was a productive meeting. They will be meeting again December 6<sup>th</sup>.

- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – Staff completed and sent out the end of year reports and invoices. They are now working on planning the winter producer meeting.
- **Shoreland Program** – Liz and Pete continue to work with landowners to review plans and get projects approved for installation in 2024. Liz indicated that they have completed 20 designs so far this year after visiting 73 sites. They continue to do site inspection on past projects.
- **A.I.S.** – Alyson picked up the finished AIS high viz-vests that we ordered. She picked up our tubs at the end of the season. Alyson also coordinated the completed the end of season reports for the DNR and compiled the data for this season’s surveys to create a summary report. This report has been uploaded to Wadena’s website page.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch has been working with Savanna in the process of bringing her up to speed on the program. They are working on inputting the 2023 inspection data into the MPCA online program (TEMPO).
- **County Ag Inspector** – We received one complaint about thistles in the last month. We reached out to the township, and they took care of the issue. Alyson proctored 4 pesticide tests this past month.
- **Engineering Assistance** – Our joint engineering staff continue to help support us with projects needing engineering assistance. They assisted with surveying several stream sites in Wadena County in early October.
- **Extension Educator Position** – We conducted interviews for the position on Monday, October 16<sup>th</sup>. Olivia Olson will start in this position on November 20<sup>th</sup>. We will start working with her as soon as she gets settled in and through the U of M onboarding process.
- **Education and Outreach** – The Wadena Conservation days were held Oct 3-4 at Old Wadena Campground. 338 students and 30 teachers/paras attended. We received many

thank you notes and cards from schools. Kristi has continued to work on the update of the Wadena SWCD webpage and managing our social media posts. I attended the Leaf Lakes Association meeting on October 26<sup>th</sup>, as requested to talk about lake levels.

- **Otter Tail River Dam Modifications** – The Rush Lake Dam will likely be completed before the board meetings and Hough is planning to move right to the Otter Tail Lake Dam the week of November 13<sup>th</sup>. These projects should be completed by the end of November to early December. While our staff have not been on site at the Rush Lake project a lot, while we have been there, we (including the DNR staff) have had very positive conversations with people stopping by to watch the project.
- **Administration** – Staff continue to do the important work of the day-to-day tasks needed to keep the SWCDs running smoothly. Chantal is processing the quarterly invoices from our watershed partners and tracking the grant expenditures. Staff also completed and submitted the quarterly reports and invoices for several of our agreements.
- **Training and Meetings** – Most of the staff attended at least parts of the BWSR Academy October 24<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup>. I presented on Shared Services for one of the sessions.
- **Staffing** – Savanna Anderson was selected for the Technician Position in the Wadena office and started on October 2<sup>nd</sup>. She has been busy trying to get up to speed on programs and doing a lot of online training and asking a lot of questions. Mitchell Janson has transitioned to the Perham office. Interviews were conducted for the Watershed Planner/Coordinator position on November 3<sup>rd</sup>. Nicole Lundeen was offered and accepted the position and will start on December 4<sup>th</sup>. Nicole has a Bachelors in Natural Resources Management from the University of Wisconsin - Stevens Point. She has several years of experience in various watershed based, or county-based positions. She worked for Crow Wing County in the Land Services Department leading their A.I.S. program and representing the county at the 1W1P TAC meetings before relocating to the Frazee area. Her current position is with RMB Labs as a project Manager.