



**FREEBORN COUNTY**  
**SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
 MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
 Thursday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 8:30 am

**1. Call to Order**

- a. The regular meeting of the Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) was called to order by District Chairman Helland at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN, on Thursday, April 9th, 2026, at 8:30 am.

**Attendees**

- a. In attendance: Curt Helland (District Chairman), Vickie Heers (Treasurer), Brad Kramer (Secretary), Scott Lightly (District Vice-Chairman), Casey Madson (Supervisor), Chad Billat (Project Manager), Mark Trnka (Conservation Engineer), Linda Mestnik (Finance & Administrative Specialist), Senja Viktora (Outreach & Technical Specialist).
- b. Absent: Lindsey Cornell (District Manager)

**2. Approval of Minutes of March 12<sup>th</sup>**

- a. A motion to approve the minutes of the previous regular board meeting on March 12<sup>th</sup>, 2026, was made by Kramer and seconded by Lightly. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**3. Approval of Minutes of March 23<sup>rd</sup>**

- a. A motion to approve the minutes of the special board meeting on March 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2026, was made by Heers and seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Treasurer’s Report**

- a. Heers reported that the balance in the checking account was \$36,006.61, savings \$1,339,594.66, CD (Security Bank) \$250,000.00, and CD (Merchants Bank) \$235,000.00. A motion to approve the treasurer’s report and payment of bills was made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**5. Cost Share & Grant Items**

- a. Trnka presented a Cover Crop contract for 2 yrs on 109 acres for the RCPP batching period. A motion to approve the contract was made by Kramer and seconded by Lightly. **MOTION CARRIED**
- b. Viktora requested Manager Cornell the authorization for the flexibility to shift the funding source for FY23-01 if the landowner is unable to plant before the May 1<sup>st</sup> deadline on the current funding source. Lightly made a motion to authorize Manager Cornell to assign another funding source if Landowner is unable to plant before May 1<sup>st</sup>. The motion was seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**
- c. **New Requests**
  - i. Trnka presented a 1-year cover crop contract and a 1-year No-Till contract for approval. Heers made a motion to approve both contracts. Madson seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED**

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Encumbered	Fund Source
FY25-CD-07	Cover Crops	\$4,500.00	\$4,500.00	P25-0503
FY25-CD-08	No-Till	\$2,220.00	\$2,220.00	P25-0503

- ii. Trnka presented a well sealing contract. Madson made a motion to approve. Kramer seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED**

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-30	Well Sealing	\$1,262.50	\$1,262.50	C24-0197

- iii. Billat requested an amendment to contract number FY23-SH-02 to extend the expiration date to 12/1/27. Madson made a motion to approve the amendment. Kramer seconded the motion. Helland abstained from the vote. **MOTION CARRIED**
- iv. Viktora requested approval from the board for Manager Cornell to authorize conservation contract number FY26/27-CC-02 for a Windbreak pending landowner signature. Kramer made a motion to authorize Cornell to sign contract pending landowner signature. Madson seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED**

## 6. NRCS Agency Report

- a. Billat provided a brief update on NRCS staffing in our office and recent location report requests from NRCS.

## 7. BWSR Report

- a. Billat provided the board an update on Annie Gunness' leave and our go-to back-up during her leave, Jill Sackett Eberhart.

## 8. Supervisor Reports

- a. Helland attended a meeting on Monday, April 6<sup>th</sup> in Blue Earth noting that this will be the last meeting as this will now be facilitated through GBERBA.

## 9. Manager's Report

- a. Billat provided updates to the board, on behalf of Manager Cornell that included: Soil loss ordinance outreach, District equipment storage outreach, office space contingency planning outreach, MACDE area employee meeting attended, Manager's meetings and trainings attended, and Pheasants Forever interview and job offer updates.

## 10. Staff Reports

- a. Billat provided an update on the 2023 Shellbago CRP Incentives grant that we were able to use up through Manager Cornell's authorizations since we last met. We may have more CRP opportunities coming soon. Billat provided an update on his time and Manager Cornell's time at Legislative days, including who they were able to meet with and the highlights of what the discussions were focused on. More Cover Crop opportunities are opening in the Shellbago with an application deadline of June.
- b. Trnka shared with the board his recent JAA level approval and also let them know the drill rentals for 2026 have started.
- c. Viktora updated the board on her two-day Cover Crop training, working on her JAA for cover crops.
- d. Mestnik updated the board on the Area 7 Admin training in Rochester.

## 11. Buffer Law filing system materials

- a. Viktora requested authorization to purchase filing supplies, that will be more than \$500, needed to put together an organized buffer law filing system, by parcel, to ensure buffer law compliance and record efficiency. A motion to approve the materials purchase was made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**

## 12. Padfolios and 2-Pocket Folders

- a. Viktora presented customized padfolios and folders that the district would like to order. Padfolios for staff and the board members and District folders for working with landowners/public. Kramer made a motion to authorize these purchases. Lightly seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED**

### **13. Call for Resolutions**

- a. Billat asked the board if there were any resolutions they wish to submit. No resolutions were brought forward by the board for 2026.

### **14. Election Filing reminder**

- a. Opens May 19<sup>th</sup>, 2026, and closes at 5:00 pm on June 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2026.

### **15. Adjournment**

- a. There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Madson. Kramer seconded. **MOTION CARRIED**. Next meeting Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026, at 8:30 AM.

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Thursday, May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Brad Kramer, Board Secretary**

**Date**