



**1. Call to Order**

- The regular meeting of the Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) was called to order by Vice-Chairman Donald Kropp at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN on Thursday, December 14th, 2023 at 1:30 pm.

**Attendees**

- In attendance: Donald Kropp (Vice-Chairman), Curt Helland (Board Secretary), Vickie Heers (Supervisor), Brenda Lageson (District Manager), Chad Billat (Private Lands Biologist), Lindsey Zeitler (Resource Conservationist), Mark Trnka (Conservation Technician), Senja Viktora (District Technician), Jill Sackett-Eberhart (Board Conservationist-BWSR). Absent Christopher Dahl (Chairman), David Ausen (Treasurer).

**2. Approval of Minutes**

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting of November 9th, 2023, was made by Helland and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**3. Treasurer’s Report**

- Balance in checking account was \$18,313.81, savings \$1,079,208.46, and CD (10 month) \$250,000.00 as of November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023. A motion to approve treasurer’s report and payment of bills was made by Heers and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- A motion was made by the board to approve Lageson to make year-end payments, budget adjustments and sign final financial reports for BWSR grants by Helland, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

**4. Grant Programs actions and/or information**

**a. New Requests**

- Zeitler presented to the board a request for new cost share well sealing project.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Request	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-22-05	Well Sealing	\$3,000.00	50% up to \$1,500.00	WBIF#C22-5721

A motion was made by Heers to approve this contract for funding, motion seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Cost share request for a grassed waterway was tabled for next meeting.

**b. Partial/Final Payment Requests**

- Billat brought before the board a request for partial payment for 1<sup>st</sup> year payment of a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Partial Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-23-07	COVER CROP	\$28,800.00	\$28,800.00	WBIF#C23-2187

A motion was made by Helland to approve contract for partial payment, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Trnka brought before the board a request for partial payment for 1<sup>st</sup> year payment of a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Partial Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-22-03	COVER CROP	\$1,392.00	\$1,392.00	WBIF#C22-5721

A motion was made by Heers to approve contract for partial payment, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Zeitler brought before the board a request for final payment for a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-20-02	COVER CROP	\$6,301.21	\$6,301.21	WBIF#C20-2412

A motion was made by Helland to approve contract for final payment, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Zeitler brought before the board a request for final payment for a well sealing contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-23-04	WELL SEALING	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	WBIF#C23-2187

A motion was made by Heers to approve contract for final payment, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Zeitler brought before the board a request for final payment for a well sealing contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-21-17	WELL SEALING	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	WBIF#C20-2412

A motion was made by Helland to approve contract for final payment, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- vi. Zeitler brought before the board a request for final payment for a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-20-04	COVER CROP	\$6,597.24	\$6,597.24	WBIF#C20-2412

A motion was made by Heers to approve contract for final payment, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- vii. Zeitler brought before the board a request for final payment for a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-20-03	COVER CROP	\$6,258.92	\$6,258.92	WBIF#C20-2412

A motion was made by Heers to approve contract for final payment, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 5. NRCS Report

- No Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) was present; a written report was provided.

## 6. BWSR Report

- Sackett-Eberhart reported via Zoom on added funds for existing & new easement programs, two (2) Soil Health Grants open for competitive applications, and Clean Water Fund applications approved (None in our area).

## 7. Supervisor Reports

- Helland & Heers reported attending the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) Annual convention on December 11-13, 2024 in Bloomington, MN. Found sessions offered informative and were glad to learn about the resolutions process and vote.

## 8. Manager Report

- Manager Report previously emailed.
  - Lageson suggested including the new Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) policy to the SWCD Employee Handbook. A motion was made by Heers and seconded by Helland to include the ESST in the Freeborn SWCD's Employee Handbook. **MOTION CARRIED.**
  - Lageson also suggested including the Juneteenth Holiday in the SWCD Employee Handbook. A motion was made by Helland and seconded by Heers to include the Juneteenth Holiday in the Freeborn SWCD's Employee Handbook. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 9. Staff Reports

- Staff reports previously emailed to board members.
  - Viktora presented to the board a flyer for the 2024 Soil Health Winter Workshop: HWY 14 Tour Stop, Owatonna, MN. The topic of the event is Maximizing Profitability with Carbon, Small Grains, Manure, and More. Event is planned for February 22, 2024, from 8:30am-2:30pm at Torey's Restaurant in Owatonna, MN.
  - Viktora presented to the board a summary from our 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary event. This included a summary of the day's events as well as a table listing expenses.

## 10. Personnel Committee-Wage Adjustments

- Personnel committee presented a recommendation to move all staff up a step on the SWCD wage scale. After some discussion a motion was made by Heers to accept this recommendation and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 11. Adjournment

- Discussion was had regarding moving the January 2024, board meeting to January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024. A motion to change the January 11<sup>th</sup> Regular Board Meeting to January 4<sup>th</sup> was made by Helland and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- There being no further business, adjournment was made by Helland and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2024, at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Curt Helland, Board Secretary

Date