



FREEBORN COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
 Thursday, September 14th, 2023, at 1:00 pm

1. Call to Order

- The regular meeting of the Freeborn County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) was called to order by Chairman Christopher Dahl at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN on Thursday, September 14th, 2023 at 1:00 pm.

Attendees

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

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting of August 10th, 2023, was made by Ausen and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Treasurer’s Report

- Balance in checking account was \$11,136.17, savings \$1,078,788.15, and CD \$250,000 as of August 31st, 2023. A motion to approve treasurer’s report and payment of bills was made by Helland and seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Grant Programs actions and/or information

- A resolution (#2023-02) to adopt the LeSueur River Watershed Management Plan was brought before the board. Helland made a motion to adopt the LeSueur River Watershed Management Plan, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- The LeSueur River Watershed Collaboration Joint Powers Agreement was brought before the board for discussion. A motion was made by Helland to approve the LeSueur River Watershed Collaboration Joint Powers Agreement, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- The LeSueur River Watershed Partnership By-Laws was brought before the board for discussion. A motion was made by Helland to approve and adopt the LeSueur River Watershed Partnership By-Laws, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Discussion was had before the board regarding granting Manager Lageson authorization to approve and sign and/or pay out contracts in case a quorum is unable to be assembled in October due to the harvest season. A motion was made by Ausen to authorize Manager Lageson to approve and sign, and/or pay out contracts in the event a regular board meeting is unable to be held, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Lageson notified the board of the approval of a grant extension for the 21 Buffer Law grant. A one year extension was granted and the grant now ends on 12/31/2024.
- Lageson notified the board that she accepted and signed on behalf of the board a grant agreement for 24 CRP Incentives Pilot Program in the Shell Rock/Winnebago Watershed for \$16,000, and the 2024 Buffer Law Grant for \$25,000.
- New Cost Share Request – Trnka presented to the board a request for a Prairie Strip project for cost share.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-21-16	Prairie Strips	\$4,596.00	\$4,596.00	C20-2412

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

- New Cost Share Request –Trnka presented to the board a request for a Well Sealing project for cost share.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-21-17	Well Sealing	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	C20-2412

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

- New Cost Share Request – Trnka presented to the board a request for cover crop cost share.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-22-03	Cover Crops	\$4,176.00	\$4,176.00	C22-5721

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

5. NRCS Report

- No NRCS representative present for meeting; Kurer provided written report with updates for the Team #19.

6. Manager Report

- Manager Lageson previously emailed her report to the board.
- a. Lageson requested authorization to attend a joint SWCD Manager/Watershed Administrators meeting in Baxter, on September 27-28th. A motion was made by Ausen to authorize Lageson to attend and reimburse eligible expenses, a second was made by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- b. Lageson brought before the board discussions she had with BWSR and the County Attorney regarding the usage of electronic signature option for contracts. Reported both found no legal reason against electronic signatures. A motion was made by Heers to allow an electronic signature option for our contracts, a second was made by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

7. Staff Reports

- Staff reports previously emailed to board members.

8. Equipment purchase

- Trnka brought two (2) bids (a third bid was not returned) before the board for a new truck to replace current 2012 GMC truck. A motion was made by Ausen to accept the bid from Wuerflein Chevrolet GMC – Albert Lea and approve the purchase of a 2023 Chevy Silverado truck, a second was made by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

9. Personnel Discussion

- The meeting was closed to discuss employee performance for Viktora and Trnka. Lageson recommended a wage increase to both newer employees. Viktora has successfully completed her one-year probation and with an increase it seemed suitable to increase Trnka's wage also. A motion was made by Ausen to increase Viktora and Trnka's wage by two (2) steps on the wage scale, a second was made by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Adjournment

- There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Ausen and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Thursday, October 12th at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Curt Helland, Board Secretary

Date