



**FREEBORN COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Thursday, November 13th, 2025, at 8:30 am**

1. Call to Order

- 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, November 13th, 2025, at 8:30 am,

Attendees

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

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on October 9th, 2025, was made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**.

3. Treasurer's Report

- Heers reported that the balance in the checking account was \$27,341.68, savings \$1,132,651.15, CD (Security Bank) \$250,000.00, and CD (Merchants Bank) \$235,000.00. A motion to approve treasurer's report and payment of bills was made by Kramer and seconded by Lightly. **MOTION CARRIED**.

4. District Laptop Proposal

- Mestnik requested approval for the purchase of a laptop for the District, ArcGIS subscription, and a video editing design program. A motion was made by Kramer to approve up to \$1,500 to purchase laptop and programs and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**

5. Pheasants Forever Partner Agreement

- Billat shared information about the partner agreement, District benefits of this partnership, and the support we are receiving. Additionally, Billat shared a brief bio from our supporting Pheasants Forever partner in this role. Heers made a motion to approve the agreement, and the motion was seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**

6. Cost Share & Grant Items

- Trnka presented to the board a well sealing project.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-27	Well Sealing	\$1,262.50	\$1,262.50	C24-0197

- A motion was made by Lightly to approve and seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**

7. NRCS Report

- No NRCS representative available at time of meeting, today being the first day back after the government shutdown.

8. BWSR Update

- Annie Gunness, Board Conservationist for the Board of Water and Soil Resources, was unavailable to attend due to a Watershed Alliance for Greater Zumbro meeting in Oronoco.

9. Medical/Dental Renewal 2026

- Mestnik presented the medical/dental plan cost increase for 2026. A motion to approve and continue to cover the increased premiums was made by Heers and seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**
- Mestnik reviewed the eligibility requirements with the Board regarding a potential revised policy that would allow Board Supervisors and part-time employees to purchase Medical and Dental insurance through the District's group plan under the Public Employees Insurance Program (PEIP). The plan requires 75% participation among eligible members. Several Supervisors and our part-time employee expressed interest. Mestnik will discuss the matter further with Cornell upon her return to the office and provide a follow-up email to Supervisors and the part-time employee during the week of November 17th.

10. MASWCD Convention Reminders

- Mestnik provided updates and reminders for the December MASWCD Convention.

11. Supervisor Reports

- Lightly attended a Le Sueur 1W1P meeting on October 24th virtually.
- Kramer previously spoke with Manager Cornell with a suggestion to consider Stephanie Haedt with Peterson, Kolker, Haedt & Benda Ltd. who may be a good legal partner to consider for updating the Employee Handbook and policy updates.
- Helland attended a TSA meeting on October 24th. TSA has hired a new engineer.

12. Manager Report

- Previously emailed to supervisors.

13. Staff Reports- previously emailed

- Viktora provided a staff update on the District tree sale that opened on-line.
- Viktora participated in the ALHS annual college and career exploration fair on October 24th which included 900 student attendees from surrounding area high schools.
- Mestnik provided an update on the Bear Track trailer and the MCIT insurance claim status.
- Mestnik provided a PFML equivalent plan policy and registration update.
- Billat provided an update on the MPCA drainage petition ruling.
- Trnka presented an RCPP grant update.
- Billat provided a 1W1P Cedar mid-point plan assessment update.

14. Adjournment

- There being no further business, motion to adjourn was made by Lightly. Kramer seconded. **MOTION CARRIED.** Next meeting Thursday, December 11th, 2025, 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, December 11th, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Kramer, Board Secretary

Date