



FREEBORN COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
 MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
 Thursday, September 12th, 2024, 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 Vice-Chairman Donald Kropp at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN on Thursday, September 12th, 2024, at 8:30 am.

Attendees

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

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on August 8th, 2024, was made by Ausen and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Treasurer’s Report

Balance in checking account was \$44,065.40, savings \$1,060,961.58 and CD (10 month) \$250,000.00 as of August 31st, 2024. A motion to approve treasurer’s report and payment of bills was made by Heers and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- A motion to approve the 2023 Audit completed by Peterson Company LTD was made by Ausen, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Lageson notified the board of MCIT dividend notice of \$714.
- Lageson notified the board of MCIT estimated contribution of \$8,562 for 2025.

4. Cost Share & Grant Items

- Lageson brought before the board a discussion regarding a shared Farm Bill position between Freeborn SWCD, Mower SWCD, and Pheasants Forever to work on Conservation Reserve Program workload. A motion was made by Ausen to contribute \$3,250 for two years for our portion to fund the position, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Billat presented to the board draft Conservation Contracts Non-Structural and Structural policies. A motion to approve policies for the Conservation Contracts was made by Ausen, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- A motion to authorize Manager Lageson to approve, sign, and/or pay out contracts if quorum is not met for the regular board meeting in October 2024 was made by Helland, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- New Cost Share**
 - Viktora presented to the board a new request for a three-year cover crop cost share contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-24-01	Cover Crops	\$19,995.00	\$19,995.00	C24-0179

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

- Billat presented to the board a new request for a one-year cover crop cost share contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Encumbered	Fund Source
FY22-02	Cover Crops	\$9,000.00	\$9,000.00	P22-5683

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

e. Partial/Final Payments

- Viktora presented to the board a request for a final payment on a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Cost	Final Payment	Fund Source
FY22-01	Cover Crops	\$ 9,000.00	\$ 9,000.00	P22-5683

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

- ii. Billat presented to the board a request for a final payment on a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Cost	Final Payment	Fund Source
FY21-BUFF-02	Cover Crops	\$ 4,340.00	\$ 4,340.00	P21-2793

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

- iii. Viktora presented to the board a request for a final payment on well sealing contracts.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Cost	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-02	Well Sealing	\$ 14,300.00	\$ 10,000.00	C24-0197
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-04	Well Sealing	\$ 2,475.00	\$1,237.50	C24-0197

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

- iv. Billat presented to the board a request for a final payment for a cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Cost	Final Payment	Fund Source
FY23-SH-02	Cover Crops	\$ 7,200.00	\$ 7,200.00	P23-2685

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

- v. Billat presented to the board requests for final payment for prairie strip incentive.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Cost	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-07	Prairie Strip	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	C24-0197
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-08	Prairie Strip	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 8,000.00	C24-0197

A motion was made by Heers to approve final payment pending landowner signature on contract WBIF-SW-FREE-24-07, motion seconded by Helland. Ausen abstained. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- vi. Billat presented to the board a request for a final payment for a prairie strip incentive.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Cost	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-22-09	Prairie Strip	\$ 8,436.00	\$ 8,436.00	C22-5721

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

f. Contract Cancellation

- i. A cancellation of contract WBIF-SW-FREE-24-10 was requested from the contract holder, no work or funds had been used towards the contract. A motion was made by Ausen to cancel contract WBIF-SW-FREE-24-10, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- g. Lageson notified the board that guidance from the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) does not require motions for individual contract payments and that they can be treated as an accounts payable and approved with payment of the monthly bills. The board would be fine to switching to this method of contract payments.

5. NRCS Report

- Kurer presented a written report for the board, staffing changes, Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), & Conservation Reserve Program (CRP).

6. Supervisor Reports

- Ausen, Helland & Heers reported attending the Cover Crop Seeding Equipment Showcase in Blooming Prairie, MN on September 4th, 2024. They reported there was lots of good demonstrations.

7. Manager Report

- Lageson notified the board of new credit card obtained with the Freeborn SWCD tax ID number instead of her social security number.
- Lageson brought before the board an opportunity to add funds to a CD at another bank. A motion was made by Ausen to place \$250,000 from the districts savings account into a CD at Merchant's Bank, NA – Lanesboro, MN, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Lageson notified the board of a meeting with the Steele County SWCD regarding administrative help once she retires. Steele SWCD would be open to temporary assistance with administrative duties but not long term. Lageson suggested to the board that it would be beneficial to hire an Administrative Assistant for the Freeborn SWCD before her retirement date. The board would like her to move forward with the process of hiring an Administrative Assistant.

8. Staff Reports

- a. Viktora notified the board of the Albert Lea High School Career Fair that she will be attending on October 25th, 2024, to represent the Freeborn SWCD.
- b. Viktora brought before the board for consideration purchasing additional promotional items and embroidered shirts for staff. A motion was made by Helland for the Freeborn SWCD to purchase promotional items and embroidered shirts, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**

9. Area 7 SWCD Supervisors & Employee Fall Meeting

- a. Notified the board the Area 7 SWCD Supervisors & Employee Fall Meeting will take place on October 22nd at the Hormel Nature Center in Austin, MN. A motion to approve staff and supervisors to attend the Fall Meeting was made by Ausen, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

10. Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts Annual Convention

- a. The MASWCD annual convention is on December 2-4th at the Double Tree Hotel in Bloomington, MN. A motion was made by Helland to approve staff and supervisors to attend the Annual Convention, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**

11. Expired Equipment

- a. There is several old computers and other equipment belonging to the Freeborn SWCD that needs to be disposed of. A motion was made by Ausen to dispose of old equipment, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

12. Adjournment

- There being no further business, adjournment was called by Ausen, seconded by Helland.

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on October 10th, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Curtis Helland, Board Secretary

Date