



FREEBORN COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Thursday, August 10th, 2023, at 1:30 pm

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, August 10th, 2023 at 1:30 pm.

Attendees

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

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting of July 13th, 2023, was made by Helland and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Treasurer's Report

- Balance in checking account was \$2,021.71 and savings \$1,094,462.83 as of July 31st, 2023. A motion to approve treasurer's report and payment of bills was made by Kropp and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Grant Programs actions and/or information

- A Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) for the Blue Earth River Watershed-One Watershed, One Plan (1W1P) was brought before the board. Helland made a motion to approve the Blue Earth River Watershed-1W1P Memorandum of Agreement, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Discussion was held regarding Freeborn County SWCD representation on the Blue Earth 1W1P and Cedar River 1W1P policy boards. A decision was made to appoint Helland as the Freeborn SWCD representative for the Blue Earth 1W1P and Heers as the Freeborn SWCD representative for the Cedar River 1W1P.
- Lageson stated that the Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) is sending out grant agreements for a Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) incentive grant.
- New Cost Share Request – Zeitler presented to the board a request for a Well Sealing project for cost share.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| WBIF-SW-FREE-23-08 | Well Sealing | \$2,000.00 | \$1,000.00 | C23-21-87 |

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

5. NRCS Report

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

6. Supervisor Reports

- Helland reported attending a Technical Service Area (TSA) meeting on July 18th in Rochester. He noted regular business was discussed, budget was reviewed and changing the dates of the TSA's fiscal year to line up with SWCD's fiscal year, and that he was appointed to Vice-Chair on TSA board.
- Kropp reported attending a Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) Technical and Policy meeting on July 14th in Mankato. He noted regular business was discussed, along with special presentations by BWSR Chief Engineer and a report from Ryan Fischer regarding a software program.
- Heers reported attending a Cedar/Waspi River Watershed Tour on August 2nd in Austin, she reported visiting Akkerman Project and others. Policy Board meeting followed the tour. Regular business was discussed, and budgets were talked about for both open grants.

7. Custom Signage

- Viktora presented quotes to the board for portable signage to place at projects under construction. Signage would be a good way to inform public on what type of practice was being installed. Helland made a motion to move forward and order 5-6 signs and 8-10 riders, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

8. Manager Report

- Manager Lageson previously emailed her report to the board.
- Lageson then announced accomplishments achieved by two staff members:
 - Billat is now a Level III Conservation Planner.
 - Zeitler graduated from the Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation District (MASWCD) Leadership Institute.

9. Staff Reports

- Staff reports previously emailed to board members.
- Zeitler reported on her graduation from the MASWCD Leadership Institute and mentioned upcoming Soil Health Events in the area.
- Viktora updated the board on our 75th Anniversary planning; informed the board on the price of charter buses, picnic table rental, swag items for handing out, embroidered shirts have been ordered, and post cards will be sent out to public.

10. Outstanding Conservationist

- Staff presented to the board a list of candidates for consideration of the Freeborn County SWCD's Outstanding Conservationist. Board members reviewed and discussed each candidate. All were excellent choices and that didn't make the decision easy. A motion was made by Heers to award Robert & Darlene Muilenburg as the Freeborn County SWCD's Outstanding Conservationist for 2023, motion was seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

11. Training Request

- A request from Lageson was made for staff to attend the BWSR Academy in Brainerd, MN on October 24-26th. A motion was made by Helland to authorize all staff to attend BWSR Academy, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

12. SE Area 7 Fall Meeting

- The SE Area 7 Fall combined supervisor and staff meeting is being held on September 19th in Northfield, MN. A motion was made by Helland to authorize staff and supervisors to attend the SE Area 7 Fall meeting as their schedules allow, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Adjournment

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

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Thursday, September 14th at 1:00 p.m. (Note: time change to one-half hour earlier to accommodate the Anniversary Tour starting at 4 p.m.).

Respectfully submitted,

Curt Helland, Board Secretary

Date