



**FREEBORN COUNTY**  
**SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**  
 MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
 Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 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 Chairman Christopher Dahl at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN on Thursday, November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023 at 1:30 pm.

**Attendees**

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

**2. Approval of Minutes**

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting of September 14<sup>th</sup>, 2023, was made by Ausen and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.** \*October meeting was cancelled – Lack of quorum.

**3. Treasurer’s Report**

- Balance in checking account was \$7,039.18, savings \$1,108,625.93, and CD \$250,000.00 as of October 31st, 2023. A motion to approve treasurer’s report and payment of bills was made by Helland and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Board members reviewed the draft 2022 Audit as prepared by Peterson Company LTD. A motion to approve the Draft 2022 Audit was made by Kropp, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**

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

**a. Partial/Final Payment Requests**

- i. Trnka presented to the board a request for final payment for a prairie strip incentive contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-21-16	Prairie Strip	\$4,596.00	\$4,596.00	WBIF#C20-2412

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

- ii. Trnka presented to the board a request for partial payment for the second year of a three-year cover crop cost share contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Partial Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-22-01	Cover Crop	\$20,299.20	\$6,766.40	WBIF#C22-5721

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

- iii. Trnka presented to the board a request for final payment for a well sealing cost share contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Estimate	Final Payment	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-23-08	Well Sealing	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	WBIF#C23-2187

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

- iv. Payments made by Lageson in September and October as per board authorization.

Contract Number	Practice	Project Cost	Final Payment	Fund Source
FY21-02	Waterway	\$5267.00	\$50.31	FY21 State C/S & EQIP
WBIF-CW-FREE-21-15	Well Sealing	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	WBIF#C20-2412
WBIF-CW-FREE-21-18	Prairie Strips	\$7,800.00	\$7,800.00	WBIF#C20-2412
WBIF-CW-FREE-21-14	Prairie Strips	\$655.00	\$655.00	WBIF#C20-2412
WBIF-SW-FREE-23-02	Well Sealing	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	WBIF#C23-2187
WBIF-SW-FREE-23-03	Well Sealing	\$2,000.00	\$1,000.00	WBIF#C23-2187

## b. BWSR Grant & Workplans

- i. Manager Lageson reported that we need to return unspent funds from the FY2021 State Cost Share Project Grant. A project we were piggybacking with the Federal Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) paid out more than expected and left us with just \$50.31 to pay. This grant expires 12/31/23 so there is not enough time to do another project. A motion was made by Ausen to return unspent funds, seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- ii. FYI: Lageson signed the grant agreements for 2024 & 2025 Conservation Contracts (previously State Cost Share Grant), 2024 & 2025 Conservation Delivery, 2024 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Incentive Pilot Program, and 2024 Buffer Law. Lageson also submitted workplans for the CRP Pilot and Buffer Law grants as required.

## 5. NRCS Report

- NRCS District Conservationist Moreno-Santos updated the board with regular NRCS business in Kurer's absence. Discussed funding opportunities coming through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA).

## 6. Reports from Supervisors

- Helland: November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, virtually attended an SE Area 7 Technical Service Area (TSA) meeting; regular business was discussed.
- Heers: November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2023, attended the One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Cedar-Wapsipinicon Policy Meeting; regular business, reviewed budgets for both open grants and brainstormed ideas to let the public know about cost share opportunities.

## 7. Manager Report

- i. Manager Lageson presented to the board the Medical/Dental Insurance renewal for 2024/25. She stated minor changes to rates and requested to follow current policy of SWCD paying the premium for the high deductible plan and contributing \$3,000 in each employee's Health Savings Account (HSA) to help offset some of those costs. A motion was made by Ausen to approve the renewal of Medical/Dental Insurance for 2024/25 with current policy, seconded by Kropp. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- ii. Lageson discussed the new Sick & Safe time law effective 1/1/2024. She provided the board an overview of the requirements of the new law. Our current policy covers existing staff. If we hire any temporary/part time staff and they work 80 hours in a year they are eligible. They can earn one hour for every 30 hours worked up to a maximum of 48 hours per year. Policy will need to be updated and no action was taken at this time.
- iii. Lageson went over the current committee member positions. Discussed representatives for Watershed Based Implementation Funding (WBIF)-1W1P Policy boards; selected alternative representative for Blue Earth 1W1P.
- iv. Lageson informed the board of the SE Area 7 Performance Review and Assistance Program (PRAP) report has been finalized and will be presented in January 2024 at the TSA annual meeting. All SE SWCD board members are encouraged to attend.
- v. Lageson requested authorization to make cost-share payments for bills received before our next regular meeting date to keep payments timely for WBIF grants. A motion to approve Manager to make cost-share payments was made by Heers, seconded by Kropp. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 8. Staff Reports

- Staff reports previously emailed to board members.
  - a. Viktora brought before the board additional items.
    - i. Viktora presented the third quarter Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP) report for the southeast area.
    - ii. Viktora requested to run a Facebook Like & Share contest to increase Facebook followers. Suggested using a potted tree as a prize to those that participate. Helland made a motion to approve the contest with up to five (5) potted trees to be given away as prizes, Heers seconded. **MOTION CARRIED.**
    - iii. She presented the board with a proposal to have a Tree Open House in January with refreshments. Helland made a motion and Heers seconded. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 9. MASWCD Annual Convention

- Resolutions were voted on independently and submitted to MASWCD.
- The Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Convention is December 11-13<sup>th</sup> at the Double Tree Hotel in Bloomington, Minnesota. A motion was made by Ausen and seconded by Helland authorizing supervisors and staff to attend as their schedules allow. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## Adjournment

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

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Thursday, December 14<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Curt Helland, Board Secretary

Date