

**FREEBORN COUNTY SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT  
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**July 14, 2022**

**The meeting was called to order** at 1:30 PM by Vice-Chairman Donald Kropp in our district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN.

**Those present were as follows:** Donald Kropp, Vice-Chairman, David Ausen, Treasurer, Paul Heers Jr., Board Secretary, Brenda Lageson, District Manager, Chad Billat, Private Lands Biologist, and Mark Trnka, Conservation Technician. Gary Kurer, NRCS-Team Lead 19-joined on the phone for his report. **Absent:** Christopher Dahl, Chairman, Colin Wittmer, Supervisor, Lindsey Zeitler, Resource Conservationist.

**Minutes of the Previous Meeting:**

Minutes of the June 9, 2022, regular meeting were approved as presented on a motion made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

**Treasurer's Report:**

The treasurer's balance as of June 30, 2022, was \$14,460.68 in checking and \$1,352,194.36 in savings. A motion to approve the treasurer's report as presented and pay bills was made by Heers Jr. and seconded by Ausen. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

Reviewed memo regarding IRS allowable mileage rate adjustment for the year. A motion was made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. to approve raising the IRS allowable mileage rate to .625 for the remainder of 2022. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

Reviewed request from the landlord E Family C, LLC to amend our building lease. This lease has not been updated since 2009. The new lease would be effective July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2027, at the rate of \$18.28 per sq. foot at 446 sq. feet. After some discussion a motion was made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. to amend the lease per terms above. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

Manager Lageson reported that several SWCDs in our area are hiring new staff and to be competitive requested that we increase our starting wage, with that in mind she also wanted to be fair to existing staff and requested a one time 5% inflation adjustment starting with the July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022, payroll. After some discussion a motion was made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. to grant the inflation adjustment and then ask that the personnel committee bring a recommendation to the board for a starting wage depending on candidate qualifications. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

Lageson then presented the 2023 draft budget for approval. After reviewing. Some discussion was held regarding our county appropriation request. The SWCD is still sitting good financially and therefore they decided not to ask for an increase again this year, we have been at the same funding level since 2017. A motion was made by Heers, Jr. and seconded by Ausen to approve the budget as presented and submit to the County Commissioners. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

**Grant Actions and Information:**

Discussion regarding adopting the Shell Rock-Winnebago Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan. A motion was made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. to adopt the plan. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.** (Resolution #2022-02)

Then discussed entering into a Memorandum of Agreement with Shell Rock River Watershed, Freeborn County, and the City of Albert Lea to implement the plan. A motion was made by Heers, Jr. and seconded by Ausen to enter this agreement. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

Discussed appointing Billat as the official SWCD Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) member. A motion was made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

Authorize Trnka to attend reimburse allowable expenses for Conservation Planner training in Morris, MN August 2 – 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022. A motion was made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

With personnel committee’s recommendation, grant permanent status to Trnka with applicable benefits and wage adjustments. A motion was made by Heers, Jr. and seconded by Ausen. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

**NRCS Report:**

Kurer discussed personnel changes, Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP), Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP), Conservation Reserve Program (CRP)

**Supervisor Reports:**

Kropp reported on his attendance at the LeSueur One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) meeting held in Blue Earth on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022. The main discussion occurred around governance and the potential to create a Joint Powers Board or be a collaborative effort between counties in the watershed with the possibility of Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) assisting with day to day and fiscal agent when it comes to distributing funds. GBERBA Administrator, Kay Gross gave a presentation as to the services they might offer. This agenda item took so much time the rest of the meeting will be covered at the next policy meeting in July.

**Manager Report:**

Lageson provided a report to the Board of Supervisors via email which included meetings attended and workload.

**Staff Reports:**

Staff provided a report of their activities for the past month to the Board of Supervisors via email. Billat presented drone footage of some of our projects.

**Adjournment:**

There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Ausen and seconded by Heers, Jr. Results of a roll call vote were as follows: Affirmative – Kropp, Ausen, and Heers Jr. Opposed – none. **The motion carried.**

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Thursday, July 14, 2022, at 1:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

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Paul Heers, Jr., Board Secretary

Date