



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

Attendees

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

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on July 11th, 2024 was made by Helland and seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Treasurer’s Report

- Balance in checking account was \$53,849.35, savings \$1,066,826.42 and CD (10 month) \$250,000.00 as of July 31st, 2024. A motion to approve treasurer’s report and payment of bills was made by Kropp and seconded by Helland. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Cost Share & Grant Items

- Lageson presented a workplan for the 2025 Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) Incentives Grant for approval. This grant is available for landowners in the Shell Rock and Winnebago watersheds. After some discussion a motion was made by Ausen to submit the workplan to the Board of Soil & Water Resources (BWSR), seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Lageson also informed the board that the 2025 Soil Health Grant is available and a workplan will be created and presented to the board during Septembers regular meeting.
- Zeitler presented a draft Structural/Non-Structural Conservation Contracts Policy for review and input. After some discussion it was decided that staff will make some changes and bring back to the board during Septembers regular meeting.

d. New Cost Share

Zeitler presented to the board a new request for cost share for a well sealing.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| WBIF-SW-FREE-24-09 | Well Sealing | \$1,500.00 | \$1,500.00 | WBIF C24-0197 |

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

Zeitler presented to the board a new request for cost share for a well sealing.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| WBIF-SW-FREE-24-10 | Well Sealing | \$1,500.00 | \$1,500.00 | WBIF C24-0197 |

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

Zeitler presented to the board a new request for cost share for well sealing.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| WBIF-SW-FREE-24-11 | Well Sealing | \$1,500.00 | \$1,500.00 | WBIF C24-0197 |

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

Zeitler presented to the board new requests for cost share for well sealings.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| WBIF-CW-FREE-22-12 | Well Sealing | \$1,500.00 | \$1,500.00 | WBIF C22-5721 |
| WBIF-CW-FREE-22-13 | Well Sealing | \$1,500.00 | \$1,500.00 | WBIF C22-5721 |

A motion was made by Heers to approve these contracts for funding, motion seconded by Kropp. **MOTION CARRIED.**

Zeitler presented to the board a new request for a three-year cost share contract for cover crops.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| FY22-01 | COVER CROPS | \$9,000.00 | \$9,000.00 | P22-5683 |

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

Zeitler presented to the board a new request for cost share for a cover crops.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|-----------------|-------------|------------------|------------|-------------|
| FY21-BUFF-02 | COVER CROPS | \$4,340.00 | \$4,340.00 | P21-2793 |

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

Billat presented to the board new requests for cost share for a CRP incentives.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|--------------------|----------------|------------------|------------|---------------|
| WBIF-CW-FREE-22-14 | CRP Incentives | \$8,484.00 | \$8,484.00 | WBIF C22-5721 |
| WBIF-CW-FREE-22-15 | CRP Incentives | \$7,500.00 | \$7,500.00 | WBIF C22-5721 |

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

e. Partial/Final Payments

Zeitler presented to the board a request for a final payment on a well sealing cost share contract.

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Final Payment | Fund Source |
|--------------------|--------------|------------------|---------------|---------------|
| WBIF-SW-FREE-24-01 | Well Sealing | \$ 1,500.00 | \$1,237.50 | WBIF C23-2187 |

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

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- reported attending a Le Sueur One Watershed One Plan (1W1P) Policy meeting on July 26th, 2024 in Albert Lea. He noted approval of a special project, and adjusted budget categories to cost share more septic projects as more requests came in than what funds were set aside for them.
- Helland- reported attending the Blue Earth 1W1P Policy Meeting on July 15th, 2024 in Blue Earth, the draft land and water resources narrative was discussed and approved (formerly known as the primer). Discussed and approved issue statements. He also reported attending the Technical Service Area (TSA) meeting on July 18th, 2024 in Oronoco, regular business, moving fiscal year to calendar year, staff as well as agency reports. Staff showed a nice presentation and the Policy committee commented that they would like to see a tour of practices planned in the future.
- Heers- reported attending the Cedar/Wapsipinicon River Watershed Tour/Policy meeting on August 7th, 2024, visited project sites in the Cedar watershed and returned for the regular business meeting. Reviewed the grant budgets for the grants that we’ve received, cost-share program changes for the Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) incentive, partnering with the Alliance for the Greater Zumbro (WAGZ) on outreach.

7. Manager Report

- Manager report was emailed prior to meeting.
- Lageson informed the board of MCIT coverage changes for 2025; their lowest deductible will be \$1,000.00.
- Lageson also informed the board the need for change of the SWCD credit card, since current card is tied to her social security number. A motion to authorize Lageson to apply for a new SWCD credit card not tied to a SSN was made by Heers, seconded by Ausen. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Discussion on filling manager position was tabled until after today’s meeting with board members on the personnel committee.

8. Staff Reports

- Staff reports were emailed prior to meeting. Additional activities reported; Viktora reported on the SWCDs fairbooth and then names were drawn for the tree giveaway, Zeitler shared an event the Freeborn SWCD is helping to host. On September 4th, an in-field demonstration of soil health equipment is taking place.

9. Training Request

- The BWSR 2024 Academy is October 29-31 at Cragun’s in Brainerd, MN. After some discussion a motion was made by Ausen authorizing all staff to attend as their schedules allow, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- b. Staff reports were emailed prior to meeting. Additional activities reported; Viktora reported on the SWCDs fairbooth and then names were drawn for the tree giveaway, Zeitler shared an event the Freeborn Area Soil Health team is hosting. On September 4th, an in-field demonstration of soil health equipment is taking place.

10. Other items of interest

- ✓ Board members were given a written quarterly update for the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program for the southeast area.
- ✓ Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation Districts State Convention will be held on December 2-4th, 2024, at the Double Tree by Hilton in Bloomington, MN. Registration starts next month.

12. Adjournment

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

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on September 12th, 2024, at 8:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Curtis Helland, Board Secretary

Date