



FREEBORN COUNTY
SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT
MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Thursday, September 4th, 2025, 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 District Chairman Helland at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN on Thursday, September 4th, 2025, at 8:30 AM.

Attendees

- In attendance: Curt Helland (District Chairman), Scott Lightly (District Vice-Chairman), Vickie Heers (Treasurer), Brad Kramer (Secretary), Casey Madson (Supervisor), Lindsey Cornell (District Manager), Chad Billat (Project Manager), Mark Trnka (Conservation Technician), Senja Viktora (District Technician), Linda Mestnik (District Finance and Administrative Specialist)

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on August 7th, 2025, was made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

3. Treasurer's Report

- Heers reported that the balance in the checking account was \$26,376.86, savings \$1,063,818.02, CD (Security Bank) \$250,000.00, and CD (Merchant's Bank) \$235,000.00 as of August 31st, 2025. Lightly made a motion to approve the treasurer's report and payment of bills seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Certificate of Deposit/Merchants Bank Renewal

- Cornell brought before the board the September 30th maturity date of the \$235,000.00 CD with Merchants Bank. Current CD interest rates were shared. Discussion was had to discuss the future of the CD and district succession plans for these funds. A motion to allow Cornell and Billat to sign for the renewal of the CD for a six-month period was made by Kramer and seconded by Lightly. Four board members affirmed the motion and one member opposed the motion. **MOTION CARRIED.**

5. Cost Share & Grant Items

- Cornell brought before the board a recommendation that Manager Cornell be authorized to approve time sensitive cost share contracts, excluding RCPP, through December 31st, 2025. A motion was made by Heers and seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Cornell brought before the board a suggestion that Manager Cornell be authorized to complete the RFI, grant agreement, and workplan for the incoming 2026 buffer grant. A motion was made by Kramer and seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- New Requests:**
 - Cornell presented to the board a 1-year cover crop contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
FY22-BUFF-02	Cover Crops	\$5,145.00	\$5,145.00	P22-6193

A motion was made by Kramer to approve and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Cornell presented three cover crop contracts.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-19	Cover Crops	\$16,800.00	\$16,800.00	C24-0197
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-23	Cover Crops	\$27,072.00	\$27,072.00	C24-0197
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-24	Cover Crops	\$59,108.00	\$9,108.00	C24-0197

A motion was made by Lightly to approve and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Trnka presented three 1-year cover crop contracts.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
FY24-CC-03	Cover Crops	\$5,418.00	\$5,418.00	P24-0243
FY24-CC-04	Cover Crops	\$3,960.00	\$3,960.00	P24-0243
FY24-CC-05	Cover Crops	\$5,748.00	\$5,748.00	P24-0243

A motion was made by Kramer to approve and seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED.**

- Cornell presented four 1-year cover crop contracts.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
FY25-CC-01	Cover Crops	\$3,924.00	\$3,924.00	P25-0114
FY25-CC-02	Cover Crops	\$3,091.50	\$3,091.50	P25-0114
FY25-CC-03	Cover Crops	\$3,006.00	\$3,006.00	P25-0114
FY25-CC-04	Cover Crops	\$3,372.00	\$3,372.00	P25-0114

A motion was made by Madson to approve and seconded by Lightly. **MOTION CARRIED**

- Trnka presented a 2-year no till/strip till contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
FY25-CD-02	No Till/Strip Till	\$3,282.00	\$3,282.00	P25-0503

A motion was made by Madson to approve and seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**

IV. RCPP Batching

- Cornell and Trnka presented two RCPP contracts that ranked higher in this batching period.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
24-1-1	Cover Crops	\$96,000.00	\$96,000.00	P26-0016
24-1-2	Cover Crops	\$49,086.00	\$49,086.00	P26-0016

A motion was made by Heers to approve the two RCPP contracts presented and seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**

6. NRCS Report

- No NRCS representative was available at the time of the meeting. Manager Cornell shared that we do have regular NCRS staff coverage at the SWCD office location.

7. BWSR Update

- No BWSR representative was present at this meeting.

8. Supervisor Reports

- Lightly attended the 2025 Strip-Till field Day/Demos on August 12th near Rose Creek.
- Madson attended an emergency policy meeting for the Le Sueur 1W1P on August 8th.

- III. Kramer attended the Shellbago 1W1P committee policy meeting on August 14th. Kramer participated in the BWSR Board Tour on August 27th in Redwood Falls.
- IV. Helland reported attending a TSA executive meeting to discuss the engineer in training position that is open for our area. Nobody was hired from the last round of applications so now the job will be posted until filled. We will continue to assist in advertising for this position.

9. Manager Report- Previously emailed

- I. Cornell provided an update on the Pheasants Forever Farm Bill position to the board.
- II. Cornell requested to attend the MN Association for Conservation District Employee's (MACDE) Manager's meeting on September 24-25th in St. Cloud. Expenses would include the \$20 registration plus the lodging and meals. A motion was made to approve by Madson and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

10. Staff Reports- previously emailed

- I. Mestnik provided an update on Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) that begins on January 1st, 2026.

11. SEMAWCD Area Meeting

- I. Cornell collected attendance for the Area Meeting on October 2nd in Grand Meadow. Kramer and Heers both plan on trying to attend.

12. Additional Items

- I. Secretary Kramer let the staff know about a recent petition filed by the Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy along with other organizations and advocacy groups regarding agricultural drainage permitting processes. There is a Drainage Work Group DWG working to protect practices in use. Manager Cornell will look forward to obtaining the copy of the petition and looking to Tom Giles at BWSR on how SWCDs can approach this.

13. Board of Supervisors Tour

- I. A field trip with all meeting attendees to tour a variety of projects took place. Staff and board members drove by and visited different sites where practices were in various stages and learned about the partnerships and work between Freeborn SWCD, Landowners, and other local, state, and government partners involved in each one.

14. Adjournment

- There being no further business, motion to adjourn was made by Lightly, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.** Next meeting Thursday, October 9th, 2025, at 8:30 AM.

These are preliminary minutes subject to board approval at the next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors on Thursday, October 9th, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Kramer, Board Secretary Date