



FREEBORN COUNTY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Thursday, August 7th, 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, August 7th, 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 July 10th, 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 \$10,977.53, savings \$943,330.95, CD (10 month) \$250,000.00, and CD (10 month) \$235,000.00 as of July 31st, 2025. A motion to approve treasurer's report and payment of bills was made by Lightly and seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Finalize 2024 Audit

- Cornell brought before the board the 2024 audit from Peterson Company Ltd with a request for the audit to be finalized. A motion to finalize the 2024 audit was made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

5. Authorization for QuickBooks change of administrator

- Cornell brought before the board a request for approval to change the QuickBooks primary administrator to Linda Mestnik (Finance and Administrative Specialist). A motion was made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

6. Establish a maximum purchase price limit for expenses before board approval is needed

- Cornell brought before the board a request for expense spending approval up to \$300 without requiring board approval. The board suggested raising the limit to \$500 for expenses without requiring pre-approval by the board. A motion was made by Lightly and seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED.**

7. Temporary Position Status for Christensen

- Cornell brought before the board a request to extend the temporary position status for Christensen. A motion to extend the temporary position to Christensen through December 31st, 2025 was made by Kramer and seconded by Lightly. **MOTION CARRIED**

8. Cost Share & Grant Items

a. Cost-Share Policy Updates

- i. Cornell brought before the board suggesting that Manager Cornell be authorized to approve sensitive cover crop contracts that cannot wait for September's board meeting. A motion to allow Manager Cornell to approve time sensitive cover crop contracts was made by Madson and seconded by Kramer **MOTION CARRIED.**

b. New Cost Share

i. Trnka presented to the board requests for two 1-year Cover Crop cost-share contracts.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-20	Cover Crops	\$37,650.00	\$37,650.00	C24-0197
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-21	Cover Crops	\$22,464.00	\$22,464.00	C24-0197

A motion was made by Kramer to approve the contracts for funding, motion seconded by Madson. MOTION CARRIED.

ii. Cornell presented to the board a request for a 1-year Cover Crop cost-share contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-18	Cover Crops	\$6,125.00	\$6,125.00	C24-0197

A motion was made by Kramer to approve the contract for funding, motion seconded by Madson. MOTION CARRIED.

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

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-25	Well Sealing	\$1,500.00	\$1,500.00	C24-0197

A motion was made by Kramer to approve the contract for funding, motion seconded by Madson. MOTION CARRIED.

iv. Cornell presented two requests for a well-sealings to the board for cost share.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-CW-FREE-24-03	Well Sealing	\$1,262.50	\$1,262.50	C24-0179
WBIF-CW-FREE-24-04	Well Sealing	\$1,262.50	\$1,262.50	C24-0179

A motion was made by Kramer to approve the contract for funding, motion seconded by Madson. MOTION CARRIED.

v. Trnka presented to the board a request for a diversion and waterway cost-share contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-25	Diversion & Waterway	\$27,108.80	\$27,108.80	C24-0197

A motion was made by Kramer to approve the contract for funding, motion seconded by Madson. MOTION CARRIED.

9. Greater Blue Earth River Basin Alliance (GBERBA) update

- Cornell brought before the board an update on GBERBA and advised that Freeborn County has opted out of GBERBA and that there is a six month phase out process.

10. NRCS Report

- i. No NRCS representative was available at the time of the meeting.

11. BWSR Update

- i. No BWSR representative was available at the time of the meeting.

12. Supervisor Reports

- i. Heers reported attending a CedarWaspi One watershed One Plan (1W1P) policy meeting on August 6th and shared input about the tracking system being created and the midpoint assessment process taking place with Houston Engineering working on streamlining the list of 110 tasks the plan covers.
- ii. Lightly reported attending the 2025 Minnesota Soil Health Coalition (MSHC) Premier Soil Health School in Redwood Falls July 29-30. There were demonstrations, farmer takeaways, messaging on crop rotation and, most notably crop diversity. Lightly also attended a Le Sueur River Watershed (LSRW) 1W1P policy meeting virtually on July 25th and reported that there were not enough attendees to have a quorum required to vote. The next LSRW policy meeting was discussed and it was confirmed that Lightly was not required to attend as Supervisor Madson is assigned to the LeSueur committee.
- iii. Kramer reported attending the 2025 MSHC Premier Soil Health School in Redwood Falls July 29-30. Kramer shared information, dates, and logistics for upcoming events that he's registered and set to attend. Kramer requested per diem to attend the upcoming BWSR Board Tour. A motion was made by Madson to approve Kramer's request for per diem to attend the BWSR Board Tour, seconded by Lightly. MOTION CARRIED
- iv. Madson confirmed that he would be able to attend the LSRW policy meeting on August 8th. Madson inquired with the board and staff regarding any insight they had on the value of learning at the annual two-day Field School for Ag professionals which is held annually at the end of July.
- v. Helland reported attending a Joint Powers Board/Technical Service Area meeting on July 17th where there were discussions regarding the posting(s) for Engineering job opening (s). Helland also attended Blue earth 1W1P policy meeting on July 21st and noted that the public hearing will be held in Faribault county in October.

13. Manager Report- Previously emailed

- i. Cornell provided an update on the RCPP grant agreement which was signed. Details of the project ranking system and funding was also shared.

14. Staff Reports- previously emailed

- i. Viktora requested to attend the Minnesota Agroforestry Institute September 23rd-25th in Baxter, MN. A motion was made by Kramer for Viktora to attend the Minnesota Agroforestry Institute training, seconded by Heers. MOTION CARRIED
- ii. Mestnik requested to purchase the QuickBooks Learner virtual training program . A motion was made by Kramer to purchase the QuickBooks training, seconded by Lightly. MOTION CARRIED.
- iii. Viktora provided a Fair Booth update.

15. Training Request for BWSR Academy

- i. Cornell requested approval for SWCD staff to attend BWSR Academy October 21st-23rd in Brainerd, MN and depart one day prior on October 20th. A motion was made by Lightly to approve staff attending BWSR and seconded by Kramer. MOTION CARRIED.

16. Reminder: Stewardship Summit: SWCD Governance & Leadership Essentials

- i. Cornell provided a reminder of the August 22nd registration deadline for the September 10th-11th

Stewardship Summit in St. Cloud. Kramer is planning to attend and Lightly hopes to attend.

17. Southeast Minnesota Association of Soil & Water Conservation District (SE MASWCD) & Southeast Minnesota Association of Conservation District Employees (SE MACDE) Joint Fall Meeting

- i. Cornell provided details of the October 2nd joint fall meeting in Grand Meadow, MN with a registration deadline of September 17th. Cornell will register staff members and any board members interested in attending. Registration fee is \$20 per attendee.

18. FYI - MASWCD Annual Convention

- i. Cornell reminded the board of the December 2nd-3rd annual convention in Bloomington, MN. All board members are welcome to attend.

19. Raffle Ticket Draw from 2025 Freeborn County Fair

- i. Six raffle ticket winners were drawn from fair booth entries to win a 2 gallon tree.

20. Adjournment

- There being no further business, motion to adjourn was made by Lightly, seconded by Madson.
MOTION CARRIED. Next meeting Thursday, September 4th, 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, September 4th, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Brad Kramer, Board Secretary Date