



FREEBORN COUNTY

SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Thursday, October 9th, 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 Vice-Chairman Lightly at the district office located at 1400 West Main Street, Albert Lea, MN on Thursday, October 9th, 2025, at 8:30 AM.

Attendees

- In attendance: Scott Lightly (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 (Finance and Administrative Specialist), Annie Gunness (BWSR Board Conservationist).
- Absent: Curt Helland (Chairman)

2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on September 4th, 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 \$26,834.47, savings \$953,037.22, CD (Security Bank) \$250,000.00, and CD (Merchant's Bank) \$235,000.00 as of September 30th, 2025. The treasurer's report listed the Merchant's Bank CD at \$325,000 versus \$235,000. A motion was made by Kramer to amend the treasurer's report and to approve the treasurer's report and the motion was seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

4. Paid Family Medical Leave (PFML) Proposal

- Cornell brought to the board a recommendation to sign with ShelterPoint to administer the District's PFML program for 2026 and cover the premiums for all District Staff and Board Supervisors. A motion was made by Heers to approve ShelterPoint and that the district pay the full premium, motion was seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED.**
- Supervisor Kramer recommended that the personnel Committee review and discuss policy items and proposed changes, which would then be brought to the full Board for consideration. Supervisor Kramer also suggested the SWCD contribute funds to help cover a portion of the attorney fees incurred by Cottonwood's SWCD, who is sharing policy drafts including those related to Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) with Freeborn SWCD. Cottonwood SWCD is currently working with and compensating legal counsel for the development of these new policies. Additionally, Supervisor Kramer recommended that Cornell secure legal support to assist with updating and customizing the policy draft to reflect policies

specific to the Freeborn SWCD. Supervisor Heers made a motion to contribute to Cottonwood SWCD's legal costs related to PFML policy development, have the personnel committee meet and discuss the PFML personnel policy and make required changes for the district, and authorize the District Manager to secure additional legal support as needed to update and finalize our SWCD's PFML policy. Motion was seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED.**

5. Cost Share & Grant Items

I. New Request:

- Cornell presented to the board a well sealing contract.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
WBIF-SW-FREE-24-27	Well Sealing	\$1,262.50	\$1,262.50	C24-0197

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

II. RCCP Batching

- Cornell and Trnka presented three RCCP three-year contracts that ranked higher in this batching period.

Contract Number	Practice	Amount Requested	Encumbered	Fund Source
TBD	Strip Till	\$100,170	\$100,170	P26-0101
TBD	Strip Till	\$42,000	\$42,000	P26-0101
TBD	Cover Crops	\$13,482	\$12,744	P26-0101

- A motion was made by Kramer to approve three RCCP contracts presented pending landowner signatures, technical signatures, and authorizing manager Cornell to sign the contracts on behalf of the board once signatures are obtained. Seconded by Heers. Contract numbers will be assigned once signatures are secured. **MOTION CARRIED**

6. NRCS Report

- No NRCS report. NRCS is on furlough due to the federal government shutdown.

7. BWSR Update

- Annie Gunness provided reminders and a summary for four new grants including: Keep it Clean grant, Multi-Purpose Drainage Management grant, Water Quality Storage grant, and Manure Management grant.

8. Supervisor Reports

- Heers attended the Area 7 Joint Fall Meeting and Chert Quarry tour in Grand Meadow on October 2nd, 2025. Heers shared that the SEMNSWCD board approved a \$1,000 grant towards the Manager's Cohort Training for each district.
- Madson attended a virtual GBERBA meeting on September 19th. Madson hosted a field day on September 17th on roller crimping.
- Kramer attended the MASWCD Governance 101 in St. Cloud September 11-12th. Kramer attended the Area 7 Joint Fall Meeting and Chert Quarry tour in Grand Meadow on October 2nd.

- Lightly attended supervisor Madson's field day on September 17th. Lightly hosted a field day on Sunflowers on September 26th.

9. Manager Report- Previously emailed

- I. Cornell provided an update on the Medical/Dental insurance premium change for 2026.
- II. Cornell provided an update on the Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist position to the board.
- III. Cornell updated the board on the six-month CD renewal rate.

10. Staff Reports- previously emailed

- Billat provided additional updates.

11. MN Water Resource Training

- Billat requested the opportunity to attend the Minnesota Water Resources Conference October 14-15th in St. Paul. Kramer made a motion approving the expenses for registration, lodging, and meal costs and Madson seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED**

12. MASWCD Annual Convention

- Cornell presented a request for all staff and supervisors to attend the MASWCD Annual Convention December 1st – 3rd in Bloomington, MN and for the SWCD to cover registration, lodging, and meal expenses for all. Motion to approve attendance and expenses for all staff and supervisors made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**

13. Additional Items

- I. Kramer made a recommendation to consider purchasing a laptop. Cornell provided an update on this laptop that could be used and the benefits of investing in one. The board was in support of bringing them the staff's recommendation.

14. Resolution votes

- I. Cornell presented the resolution packet, previously emailed to Board Supervisors. Supervisors recorded their votes and the district will enter them on their behalf.
- II. The district will work with Board Supervisor Helland, not present, to cast their votes.

15. Adjournment

- There being no further business, motion to adjourn was made by Kramer, seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.** Next meeting Thursday, November 13th, 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, November 13th, 2025.

Respectfully submitted,



11-13-2025

Brad Kramer, Board Secretary Date