# FREEBORN COUNTY
# SOIL & WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES OF REGULAR MEETING OF BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
Thursday, February 12th, 2026, 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, February 12th, 2026, at 8:30 am.

### Attendees

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

## 2. Approval of Minutes

- A motion to approve the minutes of the previous meeting on January 6th, 2026, was made by Heers and seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 3. Treasurer's Report

- Heers reported that the balance in the checking account was $62,064.27, savings $1,055,949.05, CD (Security Bank) $250,000.00, and CD (Merchants Bank) $235,000.00. A motion to approve the treasurer's report and payment of bills was made by Kramer and seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 4. Peterson Company LTD letter of engagement for 2025 audit

- A motion was made by Kramer to authorize Vice-Chairman Lightly to sign the Peterson Company LTD letter of engagement for the 2025 audit. The motion was seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 5. Premium Deduction correction

- Mestnik presented to the board a discovery that staff Trnka has overpaid $120.25 in dental premiums through payroll deductions since he became eligible for coverage. A motion was made by Kramer to issue payment in the amount of $120.35 to Trnka. Heers seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED.**

## 6. Pheasants Forever – Position Update

- Billat provided an update on the open Pheasants Forever position coverage area. A request was made to contribute an additional $750 towards the Pheasants Forever position. Heers made the motion to approve the $750 contribution, which was seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**

## 7. Cost Share & Grant Items

a. New Cost Share
   i. Trnka presented a request for a Cover Crop & Strip Till/No Till contract for 2 years. Motion to approve was made by Heers and seconded by Kramer. **MOTION CARRIED**

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| FY25-CD-05 | Cover Crops & Strip Till/No Till | $5,526.00 | $5,526.00 | P25-0503 |

**ii.** Trnka presented a 15-year Windbreak contract and requested that the contract amount be amended to $1,725.00. A motion was made by Kramer to amend the contract amount to $1,725.00 and approve the contract as amended. The motion was seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED**

| Contract Number | Practice | Project Estimate | Encumbered | Fund Source |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| FY25-CD-06 | Windbreak | $2,300.00 | $1,725.00 | P25-0503 |

## 8. Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP)

a. Contract Changes

i. Trnka requested approval to update the land occupier information on previously approved Contract #24-1-2. A motion was made by Kramer to approve the update to the land occupier information on the contract. The motion was seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**

**ii.** Trnka requested approval to update the land occupier and lower the contract acres/value on previously approved Contract #24-2-1. A motion to update the land occupier and amend the acres and contract value was made by Kramer and seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**

**b.** RCPP Batching

**i.** Trnka presented a three-year cover crop contract on 793 acres for a contract value of $142,776. A motion to approve the contract was made by Heers and seconded by Kramer. Madson abstained from the vote. **MOTION CARRIED**

## 9. Authorize payments of easement expenses that are reimbursable

- Billat requested authorization for payment of reimbursable easement expenses. A motion was made by Kramer to authorize payment of reimbursable easement expenses. The motion was seconded by Heers. **MOTION CARRIED**

## 10. Election Filing

- Billat provided a reminder to the board members of the election filing requirement and offered to send additional information as needed by the supervisors.

## 11. NRCS Report

- No NRCS representative was available at the time of the meeting. Billat provided an update on the current NRCS staff assisting the office.

## 12. BWSR Report

- Billat provided updates to the board from a report provided by Annie Gunness (BWSR South Region Board Conservationist).

## 13. Supervisor Reports – meetings attended in the past month

- Lightly attended the I-90 tour event on Reducing Tillage for Input Savings & Soil Health in Wells on February 4th. Lightly also attended the Carmelina informational event the week of February 2nd.

- Heers attended the Cedar Waspi policy committee meeting in Austin on February 4th, where the mid-plan assessment was discussed.

- Madson attended a U of M Outreach meeting on Disease and Crop Management in Waseca, MN on Thursday, January 8th.

- Kramer asked the board if they would like an update on the Channel Restoration project and shared with the board watershed updates from the Shellrock.

## 14. Manager's Report

- Manager Cornell was unable to attend the board meeting due to scheduling conflicts.

## 15. Staff Reports

- Billat updated the board on new RIM wetlands/peatland easement approved for funding and a brief overview of the engineering plan.

## 16. February 17th Hwy-14 Tour Owatonna Event – Reminder

## 17. Legislative Day (March 17-18): Approve Staff & Supervisors to Attend

- Billat requested approval for two staff members to attend Legislative Day, as well as any interested board members who wished to participate. Kramer made a motion to approve travel, lodging, and meal expenses for staff and board members attending Legislative Day. The motion was seconded by Madson. **MOTION CARRIED**

## 18. Area 7 Employee Spring Meeting

- Mestnik requested approval to register staff for the Area 7 employee meeting on March 24th. Heers made a motion to approve registration costs for staff to attend. Madson seconded the motion. **MOTION CARRIED**

## 19. Adjournment

- There being no further business, a motion to adjourn was made by Madson. Kramer seconded. **MOTION CARRIED**. Next meeting Thursday, March 12th, 2026, 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, March 12th, 2026.

Respectfully submitted,

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**Brad Kramer, Board Secretary** **Date**