



Minutes from the March 20, 2023, Board Meeting

The regular monthly board meeting of the Wadena Soil and Water Conservation District was held at 7:30 a.m. in person at the Sheriff's Building at the fairgrounds.

The meeting was called to order by Chair Bruce Juntunen at 7:27 a.m.

Members Present:

Chair: Bruce Juntunen
Vice Chair: Tom Schulz
Treasurer: Brett Dailey
Secretary: Ken Berg
Public Relations: Jerry Kern

Others Present:

County Commissioner: Murlyn Kreklau
NRCS District Conservationist: Ivan Reinke
District Manager: Darren Newville
Assistant District Manager: Anne Oldakowski
Administrative Assistant: Chantal Tougas

Adopt Agenda: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to adopt the agenda with the addition of a Drone Controller request. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Approve Board Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Brett Dailey to approve last month's Board Meeting Minutes. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to take \$75,000 from savings and invest in a 6-month CD at the rate of 3.75% and \$75,000 from savings and invest in a 12-month CD at the rate of 3.9%. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Bills Paid and Bills Payable: Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Jerry Kern to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

BWSR State Cost Share:

20-07; Morgan Czaia; Authorization to approve payment for a field windbreak, with a total cost of \$427.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$320.25 or 75%, whichever is less in Rockwood Township, section 31. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Jerry Kern to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

County Commissioner's Report: Presented by Murlyn Kreklau

- A county committee has been meeting to look at approximately 3300 acres that were purchased by The Conservation Fund and if the county would be interested in purchasing lands from them. If Wadena County purchases land the DNR would like access written into any agreement for lands adjacent to DNR. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to write a letter of support. Opposed: none, motion carried. The Old Wadena shelter is being rebuilt.

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District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

NRCS District Conservationist's Report: Presented by Ivan Reinke

- EQIP – Gaining signatures of approved contracts, working on obligation.
- RCPP - Gaining signatures of approved contracts, working on obligation.
- EQIP – LWG planned for April 17, 2023 @ 9 a.m.
- CSP – Currently doing sign up interviews.
- IRA – There is a pot of money coming for 2023. Sign up ends March 24. Climate Smart Ag Practices are what are eligible for this sign up.
- CRP signup is Feb 27 to April 7.

*Merlyn Kreklau left the meeting at 8:38 a.m.

Other Agency Reports: None present.

Forestry Update: Tom and Anne attended the SWCD Forestry Association meeting on March 16 remotely due to weather and bad road conditions. They did try to drive there! A presentation was given by DNR on insect and disease issues. They reviewed old resolutions that should be pushed to move forward. Still waiting for an MOU to be signed between DNR and BWSR. Tom and Bruce attended a carbon sequestration meeting.

Water Plan Update: Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Brett Dailey for Darren to sign the Red Eye Agreement for Services. Opposed: none, motion carried.

TSA 8 Report: Next meeting is March 29th. The manager's meeting is March 22nd.

Meetings/Trainings: Meetings were discussed with our board retreat being held March 28 in New York Mills beginning at 8:30 am. The Crow Wing Watershed kickoff meeting is March 29 in Park Rapids.

Drone Remote: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to purchase a remote for the drone (cost around \$310 + shipping) as staff has been using their personal cell phone. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Public Comments: None.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion made by Jerry Kern, second by Brett Dailey to adjourn. Opposed: none, motion carried.

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District Managers Report
March 2023
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – We have taken 352 tree orders and have sold over 51,000 trees. We still have about 1,600 left on our inventory. Staff in both offices continue to work with landowners to get plans and cost estimates for tree planting projects. Tanner currently has 8 custom tree planting projects scheduled for 2023 that will have us planting about 17,000 trees.
- **Forest Stewardship** – Staff attended a meeting to discuss the Minnesota Forest Resource Council (MFRC) West Central Landscape Committee and revitalizing and reorganizing it and have reached out to potential committee members. Anne received a photo of a bug from a local teacher concerned about the Emerald Ash Borer (EAB). Anne confirmed with a DNR Forest Health Specialist that it was a Wood-Boring Longhorn Beetle, not EAB.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** –Tanner continues working with landowners on plans and ordering seed for 2023.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Tanner is working on the title commitment for the Eagle Point Partnership RIM easement on Star Lake. We have approved numbers from MASWCD and NRCS for the EOT contribution agreement to assist with CRP planning and status reviews. Tanner is already working on writing plans.
- **MAWQCP** – SWCD staff continue to work with MDA staff on the work of the MAWQCP certification process. Brian Ingmire, MDA, is working closely with the staff assisting with the program. There are 3 to 4 farms that have been certified in the last month. They are also making progress on processing the MDA cost-share and endorsement assessments.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Nathan assisted MDA organizing and hosting the Local Advisory Team (LAT) for the Perham Wellhead area. The meeting was held on March 9th. 12 producers attended. He is also working with MDA and NDAWN on scheduling the spring maintenance of the weather stations. We are working with MDA on a new Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and budget for continuing this work.
- **MDA Central Sands** – Anne has been working with MDA staff and has contacted the lab to get things organized for the 2023 sampling.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – We are continuing to work with the leadership committee on any RCPP work. We have the results of the most recent signup. NRCS has allowed us to allocate all of the remaining funds to fund projects. This is only in year 2 of the 5-year project. We are exploring options with NRCS for the possibility of adding additional federal funds to the project. The EOT office has 12 total projects funded, and the Wadena office has 7 total

projects funded. Nathan has reached out to the other SWCDs to assess the need for additional cost-share for funded projects using state funds.

- **MDH Groundwater Grant** – We continue to follow the workplan for this grant and will be looking at submitting an RFP for additional funding.
- **Red Eye Watershed** – Staff continue to work with landowners to plan and install projects with the WBIF grant funds. We are also working with our other LGU partners to make sure they are invoicing us for their staff time and projects that are completed. Don is working on an agreement with MPCA to get some funding for inventorying culverts and feedlots and pastures in the watershed. This will bring about \$50,000 in for staff time to complete these tasks. We are also working with MPCA to get organized for the 2023 e. Coli sampling in the watershed.
- **LCCMR Forestry Pilot Program** – Staff have started outreach efforts and recently developed a mailing list. We are working on a letter that will be sent to landowners in priority locations. A local forestry team meeting will be held jointly with the Redeye and Long Prairie pilot watersheds. The meeting will be held in Long Prairie on April 4th from 9am until noon. Local forestry team members will discuss and coordinate workplan activities.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The WBIF budget request was approved by BWSR. We have received and signed the grant agreement. The WBIF workplan was submitted last week. Once the workplan is approved, we should get the executed grant agreement back from BWSR at which time we will be able to start encumbering and spending funds. Agreement for services contracts have been prepared and distributed to our watershed partners. We will sign them after the grant agreement has been formally executed.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – BWSR has approved the workplan and the Hubbard SWCD has an executed grant agreement for the planning grant. This will allow us to start the planning process. They are hosting a kickoff meeting on March 29th in Park Rapids. Don has been assisting Hubbard SWCD staff in the process.
- **Long Prairie Watershed** – Steering Committee met on March 3rd. The group considered additional planning options for unspent planning budget funds. All LGUs have resigned the revised MOA. The WBIF budget request was reviewed and submitted to BWSR for approval. Next steering committee meeting is April 14th.
- **Other Watersheds** – Don continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – The 2023 Winter Irrigation and Nutrient Management producer workshop was held March 2nd in New York Mills. Nathan and Nicole did a great job planning and organizing the event. We had 60 people in attendance. We did record video of

the presentations and they will be posted on the District YouTube Channel and website. Staff are working on signing up producers for the 2023 irrigation season.

- **Shoreland Program** –Liz and Pete continue to work our joint engineering staff to monitor the rock rip rap bluff protection project the is being installed on Little Pine Lake. This project cover 6 properties on Little Pine Loop. We have been notified that we will be able to use the Conservation Corps Crew again this year in June to assist with shoreline project installations. Liz and Pete continue to do designs and work with landowners interested in projects.
- **Cover Crop Grant** – Staff have been working with partners to plan for a Soil Health Field Day this coming summer. We have an initial plan and a site located for the event. The event will likely be held in early August.
- **Buffer Law** – EOT staff have started the process of reviewing aerial imagery to identify potential properties that may not be in compliance with the Buffer Law. They have reviewed 7 of the 9 townships for this year and have 19 sites identified for field reviews this spring.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – A few requests have come in and we will be looking at them once the field conditional allow.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch completed the annual review of the feedlot program with MPCA staff and will be getting that to the county commissioners for approval. He is also working with one producer who would like to increase the number of animal units on his permit.
- **County Ag Inspector** – Liz has the EOT Local Weed Inspector (LWI) meetings scheduled for March 20th and 21st and Alyson has the Wadena LWI meetings scheduled for March 30th. Alyson has proctored 2 pesticide tests and has assisted Jeff Sira, MDA, with seed sampling.
- **A.I.S.** – Alyson completed the AIS management course through the U of M. She also attended two DNR AIS trainings to get prepared for the 2023 season.
- **Education and Outreach** – We continue to post on our social media accounts. Several staff are working on story maps for specific projects. Staff have completed the 2022 year-in-review, and we will be getting those printed.
- **Otter Tail River Dam Modification Projects** – The contractor started the Little Pine Lake Project and gave us an updated timeline for the completion of the other 3 projects. I also worked to get a signed temporary access agreement in place for the Rush Lake project.

- **Administration** – On top of the normal day to day administrative tasks, Chantal and I completed the 2022 Census of Government surveys. We have implemented new timesheets that will help us better track time being charged to specific grants. Chantal and Kristi are also working with Tanner to make sure the tree invoices and deposits are completed and numbers match.
- **MASWCD Legislative Days** – Lyle, Jerry, Anne, Mitch, Tanner, & I attended the legislative update and reception on March 7th. We then split up and met with our legislators on March 8th. We were able to connect with all our legislators to discuss the SWCD Aid and other legislative issues for the SWCDs statewide.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff have attended many meetings and training through the last month and have many more scheduled in the next month.
- **Staff/Focus Teams** – The staff focus teams continue to meet and we have already implemented some of the suggestions coming from these teams. We will continue to work with each team to better define roles and work items.