



Minutes from the April 17, 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 7:30 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
EOT Liaison: Bruce Albright
District Manager: Darren Newville
Assistant District Manager: Anne Oldakowski

Adopt Agenda: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to adopt the agenda with no additions. Opposed: none, motion carried.

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

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Bills Paid and Bills Payable: Motion made by Ken Berg, second by Tom Schulz to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried. *Note: add Area VIII dues for \$275.00.*

Cost Share: The following policies were discussed: Irrigation practices, Rock Rip Rap Projects, and No till/Strip till. Darren will bring back information in formal writing at the next meeting for these policies.

County Commissioner's Report:

- Valuations notices went out to landowners.
- Tomorrow will be the final voting on applying to purchase TCF lands through LSOHC. The SWCD would support this application.

District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

NRCS District Conservationist's Report: Presented by Ivan Reinke

- EQIP – more money coming in and new applications.
- CSP – modifications, interviewed classic sign-up applications.

The Wadena Soil & Water Conservation District seeks to achieve and maintain the highest quality and quantity of natural resources possible through wise stewardship for now and the future of human and financial means available.



- IRA – about \$700,000 in NE area, 3 applications were ranked.
- Met with Mitchell w/SWCD on Friday to discuss potential unfunded NRCS applications that would fit our cost share program.

*Merlyn Kreklau left the meeting at 8:35 a.m.

Other Agency Reports: Bruce Albright, EOT SWCD Liaison introduced himself.

Forestry Update: Meeting on May 18th to focus on resolutions, SFIA updates, tubing for trees. Cass SWCD rejoined.

TSA 8 Report: Tom noted that the \$ 4,333 paid is our share of the state match. Darren showed the policy adopted at their last meeting. We will need to invoice for any work we do. The remaining TSA inventory will be dispersed by auction.

Meetings/Trainings: No meetings to approve with fees attached.

Long Prairie 1W1P: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Ken Berg to sign the agreement. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Shared Position: Discussed share position between OT County, U of M Extension, and potentially EOT/Wadena SWCD's. Possible upcoming meeting to discuss position and what the SWCD needs (agriculture) are. It was suggested that we invite Wadena County extension agent, Kimberly Dailey.

Public Comments:

- MASWCD put out a call for resolutions so be thinking about those.
- Question as to when the next Area VIII meeting will be.
- LiDar data for PTMApp – when will it be updated.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion made at 8:53 a.m. by Ken Berg, second by Jerry Kern to adjourn. Opposed: none, motion carried.

District Managers Report
April 2023
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – We have taken 370 tree orders and have sold over 52,000 trees. We still have a few hundred trees left in our inventory. We are hoping to have the tree pick up days May 5-6, 2023. Tanner is working with the nurseries to confirm delivery dates. Staff in both offices continue to work with landowners to get plans and cost estimates for tree planting projects. Tanner currently has 12 custom tree planting projects scheduled for 2023 that will have us planting about 19,000 trees.
- **Forest Stewardship** – Staff attended Minnesota Forest Resource Council (MFRC) West Central Landscape Committee meeting to look at potential member list. Anne has fielded several calls from landowners on the SFIA/2C programs after landowners received their property tax statements. Anne also attended the Wadena County Conservation Committee meetings that are looking at the Conservation Fund Lands. The County is considering taking ownership of the properties if funding can be secured through the LSOHC process.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** –Tanner continues working with landowners on plans and ordering seed for 2023. He has 164 acres custom seeding scheduled for 8 landowners.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – We received the final easement documents for the Eagle Point Partnership RIM easement on Star Lake. Tanner is working with them to get those signed. Staff in the EOT office are working on writing CRP plans for the MASWCD/NRCS contribution agreement to assist with CRP planning and status reviews.
- **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 have been 10 farms certified, with 13 more in the process, 6 endorsements completed with 6 more in progress and 2 cost-share grants certified and paid out since the beginning of the year. They are also making progress on processing the MDA cost-share and endorsement assessments. Alyson is setting up appointments to deliver signs and interview those who have recently been certified to enable her to write a news article. I have had weekly conversations with Jim, he is doing well and is planning on returning to work on May 1st.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Nathan is working with MDA staff on a new/amended Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) and budget for continuing this agreement. He is also working with MDA staff on the spring maintenance of the weather stations and assessing the needs for updating any of the equipment.

- **MDA Central Sands** – Anne continues to work to get things organized for the 2023 sampling. She has completed and submitted the quarterly report and invoice.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – Staff continue to work with the leadership committee on any RCPP work. With all the NRCS funding being allocated in only year 2 of the 5-year project we are exploring options with NRCS for the possibility of adding additional federal funds. Nathan is working to allocate the state funds to the other SWCDs to fill in the gap needed for additional cost-share for those projects that were not funded at the 75% level. I am in the process of collecting quarterly reports and invoices from the other SWCDs in our area and will submit that report and invoice by the end of the month. We held an all-partner meeting on April 10th where we updated everyone on the project. Nathan & I presented at the meeting.
- **MDH Groundwater Grant** – We submitted the final report and invoice for this agreement. We submitted another grant application for an additional \$50,000 in funding. We hope to hear back on this application soon.
- **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. We held a Technical Advisory Committee meeting on April 11th to review the budget and discuss projects with the other LGUs. 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 developing and reviewing 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 20th from 9am until noon. Local forestry team members will discuss and coordinate workplan activities.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The grant agreement and WBIF workplan have been approved by BWSR. The agreements for services contracts have been executed and are in place with all our watershed partners and we can all now begin encumbering the funds. We continue to work with Houston Engineering to develop the Implementation Tracking spreadsheet. The next Technical Advisory Committee meeting will be held on May 1st.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – We met with local planning partners on March 29th. Items discussed included: introductions from planning consultants, steering, technical and advisory committee member updates, future meeting locations/options, potential citizen

advisory committee membership, public input and kickoff meetings, PTMapp updates, Landscape Stewardship plans update and planning logo options for consideration. The Steering committee also met on April 7th. The committee coordinated getting a mailing list prepared so we can start the 60-day planning notification process. The group worked on logistics and timelines related to public kickoff meetings (planned in early June), a watershed survey for public input (distribute in mid-April), a watershed tour for Technical Advisory Committee and Policy Committee members (late July), and upcoming TAC and PC meetings.

- **Long Prairie Watershed** – The Policy Committee met on March 16th. Items discussed included Fiscal Agent Agreement and WBIF tracking options. Next Policy Committee is scheduled for June 15th if needed.
- **Other Watersheds** –Don continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – Staff mailed contracts out to past participants and are working on signing up producers for the 2023 irrigation season. We posted the recordings of the presentation from our winter clinic on YouTube and Nicole sent the link out to 42 individuals asking for that.
- **Shoreland Program** –Liz and Pete worked with our joint engineering staff to monitor the rock rip rap bluff protection project that is being installed on 6 properties on Little Pine Lake. The project has been completed and certified by our engineering staff. Liz and Pete continue to do designs and work with landowners interested in projects. Staff prepared a draft SWCD cost-share policy for rip rap projects that will be discussed at the SWCD Board meetings.
- **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 79 of the 9 townships for this year and have 21 sites identified for field reviews this spring. Wadena SWCD staff are working on their annual buffer review.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – We have started to receive a few more calls for wetland issues. Once field conditions allow, we will get out to visit the sites.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch is working with a Wadena County producer and MPCA to increase the number of animal units on their site. This is an after-the-fact issue which makes it more

complicated. We were notified by MPCA about a spring melt runoff event from a feedlot into an Otter Tail County Lake. MPCA is working with that producer to correct the issue.

- **County Ag Inspector** – Both offices held their annual Local Weed Inspector meetings with a decent turnout. Alyson has proctored 2 pesticide tests.
- **A.I.S.** – Alyson conducted tub inventories one last time and readied the tablets for the upcoming season. She also verified that the necessary paperwork was received by DNR personnel. Alyson attended the final 2 AIS meetings scheduled by the DNR in preparation for the upcoming season.
- **Education and Outreach** – Liz and Pete presented at the EOT Horticulture Days. Nathan and Nicole presented the ground water model to Doug Salo's 5th grade classroom in New York Mills. Staff are also preparing for the Ag in the Classroom in New York Mills and the Otter Tail County Conservation Days. We continue to make posts on our social media accounts. I am trying to schedule a meeting with Dain Erickson, Red Canoe Creative, and our staff to go over our ed and outreach plans and review the materials he has available.
- **Otter Tail River Dam Modification Projects** – The Little Pine Lake project was completed by the end of March. With videos and pictures taken by several staff, Kristi put together a nice video of the project which has been posted on the EOT SWCD YouTube Channel and shared on our social media accounts.
- **The Otter's Tail** – Chris LeClaire, OTC Land & Resource Management, and I are working with the landowners along the Otter's Tail Channel on Otter Tail Lake to discuss possible solutions to some of their issues. We will be facilitating a meeting of the various landowners and groups in early June.
- **Administration** – On top of the normal day to day administrative tasks, Chantal is working on the documentation we need for the various quarterly reports and invoices for our different agreements. She completed the State Auditor's Form Entry System (SAFE), and risk assessment reports for both SWCDs.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff have attended many meetings and training in the last month and have many more scheduled for the next month.
- **Staff/Focus Teams** – The staff focus teams continue to meet and we have implemented some of the suggestions coming from these teams.