



Minutes from the May 15, 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 7:31 a.m.

Members Present:

Chair: Bruce Juntunen
Vice Chair: Tom Schulz
Treasurer: Brett Dailey

Others Present:

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

Members Absent:

Secretary: Ken Berg
Public Relations: Jerry Kern

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 Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to approve last month's Board Meeting Minutes. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to renew the current CD that matures on 5/18/2023 for 12 months at 4.15% interest or current interest rate. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Bills Paid and Bills Payable: Motion made by Brett Dailey, 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: Rock Rip Rap Projects, and No till/Strip till policy changes as recommended by the staff cost-share work group were discussed. Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to approve the Rip Rap policy as presented. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to approve the No till/Strip till policy as presented. Opposed: none, both motions carried.

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LCCMR Cost Share:

01-2023; Cottrell, Clesson; Authorization to encumber funds for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$1,020.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$765.00 or 75%, whichever is less in Bullard Township, section 9. Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

02-2023; Dailey, Brett; Authorization to encumber funds for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$1,362.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$1,021.50 or 75%, whichever is less in Leaf River Township, section 13. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Bruce Juntunen to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

RE WBIF Cost Share:

2022-RE08; Ament, Jason & Nikki; authorization to approve payment for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$1,051.50, cost share payment not to exceed \$788.63 or 75%, whichever is less in Rockwood Township, section 15. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

County Commissioner's Report: Quite a few issues being discussed in the county with long agendas, specifically property valuations, tax abatements, and encouraging growth economically.

District Manager's Report: Presented by Anne Oldakowski.

NRCS District Conservationist's Report: Presented by Ivan Reinke

- EQIP – 3 more applications were pre-approved so working on their contracts.
- CSP – Interviews have been completed and application ranking is in the process.
- IRA – Climate Smart Ag Practices are eligible for this sign up. Still waiting for pre-approvals.

*Merlyn Kreklau left the meeting at 8:24 a.m.

Other Agency Reports: none.

Forestry Update: Tom and Anne will be attending the meeting this week.

TSA 8 Report: Most of their equipment has been sold via bids.

Meetings/Trainings: See list. Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to approve those wanting to attend the Area VIII meeting on June 23, 2023. Opposed: none, motion carried.

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Shared Extension Educator Position: Darren updated the board on the shared Agriculture/Horticulture Extension Educator Position that has been proposed and previously discussed. This position would be shared by Otter Tail County (50%), EOT SWCD (25%) and Wadena SWCD (25%). Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to approve moving forward with this shared position. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Job Approval Authority: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to concur with NRCS recommendation for Job Approval Authority for Mitchell Janson. Opposed: none, motion carried.

DNR MN Forest Resource Council: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to approve the grant agreement. Opposed: none, motion carried.

LCCMR Forestry Pilot: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to approve the pooling agreements with the EOT SWCD and Todd SWCD. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Long Prairie Watershed: Nothing to discuss. This was approved last month.

MASWCD Resolutions: Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Dailey to submit a forestry resolution at the Area VIII meeting. Resolution: advocating federal funding for forest land protection. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Public Comments: Nancy Benson called and asked for updated minutes on the website. Kristi was asked to complete this.

Meeting Adjourned: Motion made at 8:50 a.m. by Brett Dailey, second by Tom Schulz to adjourn. Opposed: none, motion carried.

District Managers Report
May 2023
Submitted by Assistant Manager Anne Oldakowski

- **Tree Program** – Trees from Schumacher’s and DNR arrived May 8 and bundling of trees began that day. Took quite a few calls about tree pick-up. Tree pick-up days were May 12-13 in Perham. We sold over 51,000 trees with 380 orders. Tanner currently has fourteen custom tree planting projects for about 22,000 trees. Tree planting will begin May 15.
- **Forest Stewardship** – Completed 1 stewardship plan for the 2C deadline. Still taking numerous calls from landowners about high taxes in the county. Assisted two landowners with SFIA ownership transfer. Finalized a contract between the DNR and Wadena SWCD for \$5,000 for administrative work for the West Central Landscape Committee. All The Conservation Fund lands have been inventoried. The county board approved submitting a LSOHC application for purchase of the lands.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** –Tanner continues working with landowners on plans and ordering seed for 2023. He has 196 acres custom seeding scheduled for twelve landowners. Pete assisted two producers with pickup/drop-off and with maintenance on the drill. Twenty-four rentals for May-June.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Both offices provided numbers for the BWSR easement survey asking for approximate hours it takes to do the steps for an easement and inspections. Staff assisted NRCS with status reviews. The Eagle Point Partnership RIM easement agreement was recently signed.
- **MAWQCP** – 4 more assessments and five endorsements in progress. Jim has returned from leave. SWCD staff continue to assist with the certification process, spreadsheet for tracking, and attending monthly meetings. Alyson has been delivering signs and writing news articles for those newly certified. She has been following up with other producers on future articles. Completed quarterly report for the contract.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** – Nathan completed spring maintenance of the weather stations.
- **MDA Central Sands** – Kits were mailed out to participants the first week of May with a deadline to return to RMB Lab by May 31.
- **AgBMP Loan Program** – Both offices are answering questions from landowners and lenders on the program and application process.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – Staff continue to assess RCPP applications. Darren submitted the quarterly report and invoice after compiling information from all the partnering SWCDs.
- **MDH Groundwater Grant** – Our grant application for an additional \$50,000 in funding for staff time and nitrate clinics was approved.
- **Red Eye Watershed** – Staff continue to work with landowners to plan and install projects. We received a \$50,000 grant through MPCA for inventorying culverts and feedlots and pastures in the watershed. Alyson and Nicole have been tasked with this project. We are beginning the seasonal stream monitoring this month.

- **LCCMR Forestry Pilot Program** – The local forestry team members in Long Prairie and Redeye discussed workplan activities. Don will coordinate pilot projects in these two watersheds.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – We are encumbering the funds for projects in the watershed. Houston Engineering is developing an Implementation Tracking spreadsheet.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – Surveys have been sent out for stakeholder input on what plan goals and issue statements should be. The first policy meeting will be on May 31. Public kickoff meetings will be held this summer.
- **Long Prairie Watershed** – Next Policy meeting is May 19 and steering meeting is June 2nd. They are also working on a tracking tool and reviewing project requests.
- **Other Watersheds** – Don continues to be involved with the Chippewa, Pomme de Terre, Buffalo-Red, and Mustinka/Bois de Sioux Watersheds, discussing quarterly work and implementation.
- **Irrigation Scheduling Program** – Staff are signing up producers for the 2023 irrigation season. They are planning routes and setting up checkbooks.
- **Shoreland Program** – Liz and Pete continue to do designs and work with landowners interested in projects on Lida, Marion, Rice, Long, Ethel, and Wall Lakes.
- **Cover Crop Grant** – A Soil Health Field Day will be held August 8 near Deer Creek. Staff have visited some cover crop sites to see how they fared the winter and surprisingly look good. Drone footage was filmed on some sites also.
- **Buffer Law** – Both SWCDs are working on their annual buffer compliance reviews. Ten letters of non-compliance are being sent in EOT.
- **Wetland Conservation Act** – Mitchell has been completing site visits this spring and fielding questions on ditch maintenance and other various projects. Darren visited five sites during the TEP meeting. Lining up additional site visits. The Perham Sportsman’s Club is looking to do a building project with possible wetland impacts.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch is continuing to work with a Wadena County producer and MPCA to increase the number of animal units on the site. The runoff violation has been resolved. Another producer has requested to increase animal units also. Visited a farm for a potential ag waste pit closure.
- **County Ag Inspector** – Alyson met with MDA to do seed sampling at Professional Ag Services. The annual weed notice was published in the Verndale Sun. She has proctored two pesticide tests.
- **Extension Educator Position** – Darren met with OT County and MN Extension to discuss a possible shared position. Provided Extension staff with needs of the SWCD and consulted with BWSR about tracking and reporting.
- **Legislative Update** – Darren attended a committee update and has been contacting local legislators and tax committee members to fully fund the SWCD Aid legislation.

- **A.I.S.** – Alyson delivered tubs and tablets for the upcoming season to the inspectors. Alyson completed the inspector modules as a refresher and will attend an in-person training in June.
- **Education and Outreach** – Staff attended the Ag in the Classroom in New York Mills and Otter Tail County Conservation Days. Both SWCDs participated in the Area Envirothon. We met with Dain Erickson, Red Canoe Cre8tive to go over our plans and review what he has available. Breakfast on the Farm will be August 5 near Perham.
- **Otter Tail River Dam Modification Projects** – Darren and Chantal completed reimbursement requests from DNR and USFWS. Requested additional funds for engineering. Looking at final cleanup needs at the Little Pine site. Drone footage was taken.
- **The Otter's Tail** – OTC Land & Resource Management and EOT met with property owners to talk about a June meeting. Waiting to see what role the DNR will play.
- **Administration** – On top of the normal day to day administrative tasks, Chantal submitted billing for the OT Dam modification project, completed payroll, quarterly reports, preparation for board meetings, and submitted a RIM easement reimbursement to BWSR. She also printed tree tags for tree pickup days and is working on the parking lot/sidewalk replacement project in Perham for this summer.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff have attended quite a few meetings and training in the last month.
- **Staff/Focus Teams** – The staff focus teams continue to meet and we have implemented some of those suggestions coming from these teams.