



Minutes from the October 16, 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 Vice Chair Tom Schulz at 7:36 a.m.

Members Present: Vice Chair: Tom Schulz (*via teams*)
Treasurer: Brett Dailey
Public Relations: Jerry Kern

Members Absent: Chair: Bruce Juntunen
Secretary: Ken Berg

Others Present: County Commissioner: Murlyn Kreklau
NRCS Team Lead: John Hanson
District Manager: Darren Newville
Assistant District Manager: Anne Oldakowski
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas
District Technician: Savanna Anderson

Adopt Agenda: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to adopt the agenda as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Approve Board Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Jerry Kern, 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.

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

COST SHARE

LCCMR Cost Share P23-2944:

07-2023; Lausch, Steven; Authorization to encumber funds for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$968.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$726.00 or 75%, whichever is less in North Germany Township, section 3. (128 acres, written by consultant) Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Brett Daily to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

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08-2023; Bormann, Corey; Authorization to encumber funds for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$1,900.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$1,425.00 or 75%, whichever is less in Wing River Township, section 3. (160 acres, written by consultant) Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

09-2023; Soderholm, Andrew; Authorization to encumber funds for a forest stewardship plan, with a total cost of \$1,100.00, cost share payment not to exceed \$825.00 or 75%, whichever is less in North Germany Township, section 36. (80 acres, written by consultant) Motion made by Tom Schulz, second by Jerry Kern to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Redeye WBIF Cost Share:

2022-RE05; Schock, Dale; requesting second year payment for cover crops. This is a three-year contract for a total flat rate in the amount of \$7,200 (\$15/acre for 160 acres) in Wadena Township, section 2 and Aldrich Township, section 24, with the second-year payment of \$2,400.00. Motion made by Jerry Kern, second by Brett Dailey to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

DC 2022 Cost Share:

DC 2018-02; Meech, Reese; requesting second year payment for cover crops. This contract was amended to a multi-species contract in August of 2023 and is a three-year contract for a total flat rate in the amount of \$8,800 (\$20/acre for 160 acres) in Orton Township, sections 14,15,16,21,22,25,36 and Lyons Township section 2, with the second-year payment of \$3,200.00. Motion made by Jerry Kern, second by Brett Dailey to approve. Opposed: none, motion carried.

County Commissioner's Report: The position for County Administrator has been posted. Attended a Potlatch land hearing.

District Manager's Report: Presented by Darren Newville.

NRCS District Conservationist's Report: Presented by Ivan Reinke

- EQIP – Working on 2024 applications and preparing for the January ranking deadline.
- CSP – starting to make 2023 payments next week.
- A position for a Grazing Specialist in the Wadena Field Office will be posted in the next couple of months.
- Ducks Unlimited will be hiring a Grazing Specialist to be located in Long Prairie and will work in surrounding counties which includes Wadena.

Other Agency Reports: No other agencies present.

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Forestry Update: Nothing to report. The next meeting will be November 16 in McGregor.

TSA 8 Report: Next board meeting October 31 in Bemidji.

Meetings/Trainings: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to approve those costs associated with sending supervisors and/or staff to the Annual Convention in Bloomington as well as those wanting to attend the Soil Management Summit in Alexandria on Dec 7-8. Opposed: none, motion carried.

JAA Approval: Motion made by Brett Dailey, second by Jerry Kern to approve Mitch Janson's JAA Approval for 442, 449, and 360 practices. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Resolutions: Resolutions were discussed. Voting is online this year and needs to be completed by November 1, 2023.

Public Comments: None

Meeting Adjourned: Adjourned at 8:36 a.m.

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District Managers Report
October 2023
Submitted by Darren Newville

- **Tree Program** – Staff continue to meet with landowners to provide technical assistance with potential projects for next year. Tanner has been working with the nurseries this past month to get our 2024 tree orders placed. We are waiting for the confirmation of tree availability before we can put the 2024 order form together.
- **Forest Stewardship Planning:** Anne is currently working on 4 plans. She has answered several questions from consulting foresters about the SWCD cost-share process. She also met with MFRC staff to discuss the upcoming December West Central Committee meeting logistics and is working on invoicing for expenses and time for the last meeting.
- **Drill Rental/Custom Seeding/Seed Sales** – The drill was rented to 5 landowners in September. Tanner is working with landowners to get seed for fall seeding. There have been 9 orders placed. He has 1 custom seeding job scheduled for this fall.
- **RIM/CREP/CRP** – Staff continue working on the CRP contribution agreement writing plans, doing site inspections, and certifying projects. They are also working with landowners on RIM applications at the various stages of the process and doing the required site inspections on easements that need them.
- **MAWQCP** – Staff continue to work with producers on the MAWQCP assessment, certifications, endorsements, and cost-share. Jim has also been working to complete the reviews of previously certified farms as required. Jim indicated that one producer has signed his final Certification forms which have been approved by the MDA staff. Alyson continues to work on news release articles for those producers who have been certified.
- **MDA NFMP/NMI Project** –Staff assisted MDA with the Perham LAT meeting held on August 20th. Nathan and I attended the meeting.
- **AgBMP Loan Program** – Both offices continue to take calls, answer questions, and aid landowners requesting information or loans. We have one Otter Tial County application in the hopper waiting for funds.
- **Irrigation RCPP** – We continue to work with the partners on this project. We also continue to work with MDA and NRCS to refine the reporting. Projects are being installed and staff have been working on certification and payment requests. There will be an all partners meeting on October 30th to discuss the possibility of a new funding request and review reporting documents.
- **Red Eye Watershed** – The TAC met on August 8th. The watershed partners continue to encumber implementation funds for priority projects. We requested a one-year extension for the first WBIF grant. BWSR has already approved the extension and I have signed the grant amendment. The next TAC meeting is scheduled for November 14th.

- **SWAG** (Surface Water Assessment Grant) Don and Alyson completed water sampling for the season at 8 locations in the Redeye River Watershed. Anne will be completing the final project report for submission to MPCA.
- **Oak/Bluff Creek Sub-Watershed** – Staff are targeting landowners in the Bluff/Oak Creek watersheds promoting best management practices to address E. coli bacteria. We have had a few landowners contact us. Two landowners/producers took advantage of the scholarships to attend the grazing school.
- **Red Eye Culvert Inventory** - Staff continue to field verify culvert locations and collect information. They have completed North Germany, Lyons, Meadows, and Red Eye Townships, and have started on Rockwood. They will continue to do the field inventory at least one day a week until weather conditions don't allow it.
- **LCCMR Tree Planting Pilot Program** – Staff have sent out targeted letters to promote the program. BWSR continues to work on the program details for the RIM portion of the pilot. Once these details are known staff will reach out to landowners to promote RIM in the watershed. Our goal will be to submit RIM applications to BWSR by the end of December. DNR also updated its plans to purchase tree planters for project partners. DNR's original plan was to purchase the tree planters and gift them to the district partners. Now DNR wants districts to purchase the tree planters and have each SWCD partner request reimbursement from DNR. Agreements from DNR, outlining the process and availability of funds are being developed and will be sent to SWCD partners in the future (*hopefully we will have them in hand for the board meeting so the board can approve*). The next Local Forestry Committee meeting will be held on October 26th. Chantal, Anne, and I have been working on the reporting and invoicing for this project.
- **Otter Tail River Watershed** – The TAC met on August 7th. The watershed partners have begun to encumber implementation funds for priority projects. Staff continue to respond to landowners from the Paul Lake watershed. The letters promoted best management practices to improve priority water and land resources. The next TAC meeting is scheduled for November 6th.
- **Crow Wing Watershed** – A Steering Committee meeting was held on September 1st to prepare for the upcoming TAC and the Policy Committee meetings.

The TAC meeting was held on October 4th. The committee reviewed the draft Issue Prioritization & the Land and Water Resources Narrative

The Policy Committee will meet on October 30th. Items to be addressed at that meeting include the approval of priority issues, approve Land and Water Resource Narrative, work on visioning and review priority resources.

- **Long Prairie Watershed** – The Steering Committee met on August 31st. The implementation tracking tool has been completed and is like the one we developed for the Otter Tail River 1W1P. The planning grant has been completed and the group is now encumbering implementation funds for priority projects in the watershed. Next meeting is October 6th.
- **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 pulled the last gauges in late September and performed the tedious task of washing them. They will now be working on completing the end of year reports and working with Chantal to bill those using the service.
- **Shoreland Program** – Staff conducted 26 site visits in September and are working on designs. A few of the sites have been sent over to the joint engineering staff to look at, which Mike and Wes are getting to when they have time. Liz has indicated that they have met on site with 70 landowners since April. Staff have also conducted site inspections on an additional 16 previous projects this past month. Liz and Pete guided the OTC COLA shoreland project tour on September 12, there were about 50 people who attended. I have heard nothing but good comments about the tour.
- **Feedlots** – Mitch has completed the required number of feedlot inspections for 2023. He will still need to enter the data into the MPCA online program (TEMPO). He will work with Savanna on that process.
- **County Ag Inspector** – With the change in seasons there are a lot less complaints and calls coming in. Alyson proctored 6 pesticide tests this past month.
- **Engineering Assistance** – Our joint engineering staff continue to help support us with projects needing engineering assistance. At the suggestion of the OTC Planning Commission and the request of a landowner we had Wes assist us with looking at a shoreland ordinance violation and made recommendations on restoring the site. These recommendations were shared with the landowner and his engineer and will be shared with the planning commission. Pete put together the vegetative restoration recommendations. They also surveyed several stream sites in Wadena County in early October.
- **Extension Educator Position** – We will be interviewing 2 candidates for the position on Monday, October 16th.
- **Education and Outreach** – Staff held the Wadena SWCD Conservation Days the first week of October. Kristi continues to work with 3Plains on the new Wadena SWCD website and completed and submitted the applications for the Conservation Cooperator Awards for each SWCD.
- **Otter Tail Dam Modifications** – Through communications with HEI, I have been told that Hough Inc. is planning on starting the Rush Lake project in the next week or so. We will monitor progress and continue to take photos and video of the projects as they are being

completed. We are still hopeful that the projects will be completed by the end of November. We have billed the USF&WS for their portions of the project and have expended all their funding. We have also billed the DNR for the projects.

- **Administration** – Staff continue to do the day-to-day tasks needed to keep the SWCDs running smoothly. Chantal and Kristi continue to work on the process of tracking all our grants and agreement financial information. Kristi is inputting project information into eLINK. Chantal, Anne, & I did a quick review of every grant and where we are with each of them. Staff are working on quarterly reports and invoices for several of our agreements.
- **Training and Meetings** – Staff continue to take training courses as needed to develop their JAA. Training attended includes the following topics: Leadership Training, Becker Soil Health field day. Most of the staff will be attending the BWSR Academy training later this month.
- **Staffing** – The Personnel Committee conducted interviews on Friday, September 15th for the position in Wadena. Savanna Anderson was selected and started on October 2nd. Mitchell Janson has transitioned to the Perham office. The Watershed Planner/Coordinator position is posted with the closing being on October 20th. Mitchell has worked with NRCS engineering staff and has been approved for JAA for Irrigation Practices and Ag Waste Pit Closures.