



Blue Earth County

Soil & Water Conservation District

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Approved Minutes of November 10, 2016

Supervisors Present: Chairman: Emily Javens, Vice-Chairman: John Rollings, Treasurer: John Shanahan, and PR&I: William Gardner

Staff Present: District Manager: Jerad Bach, Assistant Manager: John Billings,

Guests: County Commissioner: Kip Bruender, Farmbill Biologist: Jeff Potts

Proceedings: Meeting called to order by Chairman Emily Javens at 4:00 p.m.

Pledge: All present said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Housekeeping:

Agenda: Rollings moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Shanahan. Motion adopted.

Guests: Javens recognized Bruender and Potts.

Minutes: Rollings moved to approve the October 6, 2016 minutes, seconded by Shanahan. Motion adopted.

Treasurer's Report: (See Attached)

Balance on hand	\$ 914,947.25
Receipts	\$ 94.47
Disbursements	<u>\$ 125,628.29</u>
Total	\$ 789,413.43

Billings presented the Treasurer's Report for October. Rollings moved to approve the October Treasurer's Report subject to audit, and pay Supervisors Per Diem/Expenses, seconded by Shanahan. Motion adopted.

Open Communications

Guests:

County Commissioner: Bruender congratulated everyone on winning their respective elections. Bruender said the County Board will be the same members for the next two years. Bruender reported the current levee is projected at 7.99 but will be reduced with reserves. He finished will reporting the final road projects for the year are finishing up and going well considering the weather. Rollings and Shanahan asked questions about the Highway 22 project. Bruender said construction will be in phases starting in 2017 and the roundabout will be built in 2018. Javens asked about Bruender's opinion and AMC's thoughts on SWCDs using taxing authority if ever granted. Bruender said he would be for the taxing ability of SWCDs and feels right now is the best time to start considering the ability to tax. Rollings asked about the progress of County Ditch 28. Bruender reported a new contractor was approved for the project. Bach wanted to inform Bruender of the Comprehensive Plan that the SWCD would be discussing later in the meeting, since Bruender would have to leave prior to that discussion. Bach asked Bruender what he knew of the County Water Plan being withdrawn from the BWSR approval process. Bach explained the funding issues that poses for the SWCD and potentially for the County. Bach explained that the SWCD would have to write a Comprehensive Plan by the end of year in order to be eligible for BWSR funding. Bruender said he didn't know the County Water Plan had been withdrawn, and told Bach he would look into the situation.

Gardner entered the meeting.

Farmbill Biologist: Potts presented report. (See attached)

Open Communications:

District Conservationist: Not Present

District Manager: Bach explained the PayChex login process for the Supervisors in order to view pay information. Bach reported about 9,000 conservation trees had been ordered and the digital order form would be emailed out this year. Bach noted the 35 Middle Minnesota Watershed interviews were still in progress for the WRAPS report. Bach said he had been working with Saenz to complete the TSA workplans in eLINK. Bach reported the WCA findings for the month. Bach also reported that staff were continuing buffer tracking and cost-share inspections. Bach finished by officially announcing the birth of his second daughter. Rollings asked about the status of the Rene Rollings project. Bach explained the changes that were happening with the design, the paperwork process with the GBERBA cost-share, and FSA County Committee approvals.

Cost-share:

CWF-R&G-14-07-01, Will Purvis Grade Stabilization: Billings requested final payment approval of \$5,681.07 for the completed Grade Stabilization project. **Rollings moved to approve the final payment of \$5,681.07 for the Purvis Grade Stabilization project, seconded by Shanahan. Motion adopted.**

New Business:

Area VI Meeting-Winnebago: Billings asked who would attend. Javens explained the speaker Don Wyse would be outstanding and encouraged everyone to attend. Shanahan said he would attend and Javens was unsure. Billings said he would follow up with an email.

MASWCD Annual Convention: Billings reviewed the dates and information about the convention. Billings asked who would be attending. Billings said he would send out an email to follow up and get the final attendance plans from everyone. Billings asked if the Board would like donate an auction item again this year. Billings noted Krosch was willing to purchase the auction item. **Rollings moved to purchase an auction item for the MASWCD Convention Auction with a price not to exceed \$50.00, seconded by Gardner. Motion adopted.**

General Policy Updates: Bach explained why there was a Supervisor's Handbook in their packets. Bach said that discussions with Javens had lead them to a process of reviewing and updating the SWCD's policies. Bach explained that as the new year starts he plans to have policy information to hand out to the Board to review at each Board meeting and the Supervisor's will discuss the information at the following SWCD Board meeting. Bach said he wanted to start with the Supervisor's Handbook and have each supervisor develop summaries of the committees that they are assigned, so that we can discuss them at the next meeting. Javens said this was exactly what she was hoping to accomplish.

Rollings departed from the meeting.

NACD Membership: Billings reviewed the request from NACD for an annual membership. Billings listed the amounts that the SWCD had given for membership. **Shanahan moved that the SWCD pay \$2,000 to the NACD for 2017 Membership, seconded by Gardner. Motion adopted.**

Water Plan: Bach explained the Wetland Plan issue that lead to the withdrawal of the County Water Plan from BWSR. Bach explained the options that BWSR offered to Julie Conrad, and she chose to withdraw the County Water Plan from BWSR. Bach explained the two options for the SWCD. Bach said option one was to wait for the County's plan to be approved which would mean the SWCD would be ineligible for BWSR funds until at least June 2017. Bach said option two was for the SWCD to write a Comprehensive Plan and submit it for Board Conservationist approval in December. Bach explained the Comprehensive Plan would be sort of a cross between the Water Plan and the former SWCD Annual Plan. Bach said the Comprehensive Plan would likely be a 5 year plan. Bach suggested that the Comprehensive Plan would be the plan the SWCD would follow moving forward.

Javens suggested that the plan be simple and achievable. Bach said it would be catered to what we do as an SWCD and our priorities.

Conservation Technician Probation: Bach explained the plan to extend the Conservation Technician probationary period to the end of December. Bach said this would allow him to perform annual employee reviews and all personnel decisions could be made in December. Gardner moved to extend the conservation Technician probationary period to December 31, 2016, seconded by Shanahan. Motion adopted.

Supervisors and Chairman:

Supervisors: Javens made note that she had received the Eagle Lake Wellhead Protection Plan and wondered how she should proceed. Bach said he would be reviewing the plan as well. Javens asked if she needed a motion to allow her and Jerad make comments on the behalf of the SWCD. **Shanahan moved to allow Javens and Bach to make comments on the Eagle Lake Wellhead Protection Plan, seconded by Gardner. Gardner noted he had reservations approving the motion with only three supervisors present. Motion adopted.** Javens also reported that she thought a letter submitted by the NACD in response to possible estate tax legislation was sort of odd. **Shanahan** reported he attended the GBERBA Executive meeting after receiving a call from Bucklin saying that they were short of a quorum due to harvest obligations. **Gardner** reported MPI was doing their annual road ditch clean up. Gardner said there are some parcels that are still in the works for purchase by MPI. He made an announcement that a donor had given MPI a wagon of corn for pheasant feeding this winter if needed.

Adjourn: There being no further business Javens adjourned the meeting.

- * Meeting adjourned 6:26 pm
- * Next meeting will be held December 8, 2016
- * Minutes submitted by John Billings, Assistant Manager

Approved Date: _____ Carol Krosch, Secretary _____

Approved Date: _____ Emily Javens, Chairman _____