



Blue Earth County

Soil & Water Conservation District

1160 South Victory Drive, Suite #3
Mankato, MN 56001
(507) 345-4744
(507) 345-6036

Approved Minutes of July, 2017

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

Staff Present: District Manager: Jerad Bach, Assistant Manager: John Billings, Conservation Specialist: Jake Conservation Technician: Holly Kalbus, Conservation Corps Apprentice: Derek Denisen

Guests: County Commissioner: Will Purvis

Proceedings: Meeting called to order by Chairman Emily Javens at 4:03 p.m.

Pledge: All present said the Pledge of Allegiance.

Housekeeping:

Agenda: Agenda was reviewed. Bach explained the addition of a New Business item, and Javens said the New Business item of NRCS Cooperative Agreement would be discussed with the District Conservationist's report.

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

Guests: Javens welcomed Purvis.

Minutes: Shanahan moved to approve the **June 8, 2017 minutes, seconded by Rollings. Motion adopted.**

Treasurer's Report: (See Attached)

Balance on hand	\$ 950,791.75
Receipts	\$ 2.39
Disbursements	\$ 34,294.35
Total	\$ 916,499.79

Billings presented the Treasurer's Report for June. **Rollings moved to file the June Treasurer's Report subject to audit, and pay Supervisors Per Diem/Expenses, seconded by Krosch. Motion adopted.**

Open Communications

New Employees:

Conservation Corps Apprentice: Denisen introduced himself, and listed his educational background. He explained that he is a Conservation Corps Apprentice and will be with the SWCD until the middle of August.

Conservation Technician: Kalbus introduced herself. She gave her degree background from Wisconsin, and gave a brief summary of her recent conservation job experiences.

Everyone introduced themselves and welcomed the two new staff members.

Guests:

County Commissioner: Purvis announced the County had voted to accept the Buffer Compliance enforcement jurisdiction. Purvis said that the DNR and Public Works are working together for improved access on Eagle Lake.

He reported the County Board is working on the 2018 budget. Krosch thanked Purvis for the Board's vote to accept Buffer Compliance Jurisdiction. Purvis said he was the one Commissioner that voted against, but it was only to make a statement to the State to fine tune the issues within the law.

District Conservationist: Liddell reported the status of EQIP and CSP contracts. He expressed his appreciation for the SWCD staff and their work on CRP projects. Liddell reviewed both the Cooperative Agreement and Operational Agreement. Liddell explained the Cooperative Agreement was a document that officially says the SWCD and NRCS will work together. Liddell said the Operational Agreement spells out services that each agency would provide to each other locally. Bach explained the main point was to document the single computer seat and services that the two offices share. Liddell said most of the Operational Agreement refers to services that our partnership locally do not participate in. **Rollings moved to approve both the Operational and Cooperative Agreements, seconded by Krosch. Motion Adopted.**

District Manager: Bach presented report (See Attached). Purvis asked if Bach thought the SWCD would need additional funds to update the water sampling instruments. Bach said replacement of probes and supplies will eventually be necessary, but recently other grant funds have been able to cover the costs. Bach expressed the equipment has been very helpful, and Purvis agreed. Purvis said to let him know as the needs arise.

New Business:

Buffer Law – Alternative Practices: Fritz reviewed the 6 alternative practices released by BWSR. The Supervisors discussed how the practices would work with the different buffers. Bach explained the 50 foot buffers will be where alternative practices are utilized, since the 16.5 foot buffers will fall under public drainage law. Javens asked if the Board would need to approve the practices. Bach wasn't sure if the Board was required to be involved in every alternative practice approval. Fritz explained there is now a waiver that landowners can submit. The waiver can be granted under one of two conditions: 1. A lack of availability for technical or financial assistance. and 2. A specific seeding plan for the land that is going to need a time extension through the spring seeding window.

NRCS CTA Funding – Letter of Support: Javens reviewed the letter that she had drafted for the support of Conservation Technical Assistance Funding which is responsible for funding major portions of the NRCS. The Board agreed that this is an important issue. **Rollings moved to support and sign the letter support with one change of "I" to "We respectfully request..."**, seconded by Gardner. **Motion Adopted**

Watowan One Watershed One Plan Funded: Bach reviewed the Watowan One Watershed One Plan boundaries. Bach explained there will be a lot of meetings coming, and the Board would need to choose a representative. Javens explained how she had taken part in the Yellow Medicine One Watershed One Plan, and she agreed there would likely be two committees and number of meetings. Shanahan said that GBERBA representatives had shared concerns of how many meetings would be required for the plan. Rollings said he would be interested in helping represent the district at the meetings.

Middle Minnesota Civic Engagement Report: Billings reviewed the summary that was submitted for inclusion into the final Middle Minnesota WRAPS Civic Engagement Report. Bach reinforce the point raised in the summary that the SWCD is not seen as regulatory, so landowners feel more comfortable meeting to discuss issues with staff. Javens agreed that you need the local staff that implements projects to do the civic engagement.

Supervisors and Chairman:

Supervisors: Rollings reported that he attended the TSA meeting and felt that Mr. Jones was potentially underpaid. After inquiring his wage Javens expressed she feels he is right in the State average for that position. **Krosch** reported there was not much from Planning and Zoning lately at the County Board Meetings. She also said she feels the County is really a leader at improving environmental issues through parks, solar arrays, and environmental concern. Krosch noted the sound system was great at the Area VI meeting. **Javens** had nothing to add. **Shanahan** thanked Rollings for attending the TSA meeting. Shanahan complimented the staff on a wonderful job with the Area VI meeting. **Gardner** apologized for not being able to attend the Area VI meeting. He said that MPI is considering starting plans on the Annual Banquet earlier to relieve the stress planning. Gardner also added that that there would be the Minnesota Outdoor Youth Day on July 22nd.

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

- * Meeting adjourned at 6:18 pm
- * Next regular meeting will be held August 10, 2017
- * Minutes submitted by John Billings, Assistant Manager

Approved Date: _____ Carol Krosch, Secretary _____

Approved Date: _____ Emily Javens, Chairman _____