



# *Blue Earth County*

## *Soil & Water Conservation District*

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

Approved Minutes of February 8, 2018

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

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

**Guests:** County Commissioner: Kip Bruender, NRCS District Conservationist: Reginald Liddell, Farmbill Biologist: Jeff Potts

**Proceedings:** Meeting called to order by Chairman Emily Javens at 4:04 p.m.

**Pledge:** All present said the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Housekeeping:**

**Agenda:** Agenda was reviewed. **Krosch moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Shanahan. Motion adopted.**

**Guests:** Javens welcomed Purvis, Liddell, and Potts

**Minutes:** **Krosch moved to approve the January 11, 2018 minutes, seconded by Shanahan. Motion adopted.**

**Treasurer's Report:** (See Attached)

Balance on hand	\$ 703,566.51
Receipts	\$ 37,922.45
Disbursements	\$ 34,205.74
Total	\$ 707,283.22

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

### **Open Communications**

#### **Guests:**

**County Commissioner: Buender** apologized for missing the last meeting. Bruender announced they had received the bids for the parking ramp portion of the government building upgrade. Bruender said the County would be using the Ditch Modernization grant to update and centralize all the public drainage records. Bruender reported the Board of Commissioners voted to approve the 7.99% levee. He also said that all the community support budget items remained the same for this year.

**District Manager: Bach** presented report (see attached). Javens asked who was in attendance at the training the TSA helped with. Bach said there were staff from area NRCS and SWCD offices. Krosch asked if the Ag Expo went well. Bach said there was a lot of P.R., and is totally worth spending grant funds on. Rollings asked if there was a plan from the County to complete the septic upgrades. Bach said he didn't talk with County staff about any septic

upgrade plans.

**District Conservationist: Liddell** announced that Cathee Pullman would not be returning as the NRCS State Conservationist. Liddell said the Expo went well, and he mentioned the SWCD rain simulator was a hit. Liddell presented the Civil Rights Policies while handing out packets for Title VI, Title VII, and the Cooperative Work Agreement. All the Supervisors signed a statement acknowledging that Liddell reviewed the information. Javens asked for an update on the shooting incident with the NRCS employee door. Liddell said he hadn't heard anything. Bach said that the investigators were running ballistics.

**Farmbill Biologist: Potts** presented his report. (See Attached) Krosch asked how long the Walk In Access contracts last for during the year. Potts explained that the landowners with WIA contracts only are required to allow access during the hunting season.

**Cost-Share:**

**Rollings-FR14-7FY15: Billings** explained the timeline of the purchase of the metal structure for the Grade Control repair project and the end of the construction season due to weather. Billings requested a partial payment for the metal structure of \$16,907.63. **Shanahan moved to make the partial payment of \$16,907.63 for the John and Constance Rollings Grade Control repair contract, seconded by Krosch.** Javens started the discussion asking if BWSR was okay with the partial payment. Billings said the Board Conservationist said the payment was allowable with the grant, but the final decision lies with the Board. Javens asked if there was any certainty the contractor would finish the project. Billings said we have worked with this contractor on other projects. Rollings said the contractor moved the structure in, so it was not coming back out. **Motion adopted with Rollings abstaining.**

**New Business:**

**Officer Assignments Confirmation: Javens** reviewed that the assignments were made last month, and asked if anyone had any changes. Rollings wanted to make sure the Watonwan was on the list. Rollings asked if the Blue Earth Watershed should be on the list. Bach said Julie Conrad was monitoring the Blue Earth WRAPS process, and the meetings currently were just for informational purposes and general public input. Krosch and Rollings said they would try to go to the Blue Earth WRAPS meeting. Bach also noted the update to the meal reimbursements based on the regional Federal per diem rates.

**Watonwan Watershed MOA: Billings and Rollings** reviewed the budget, draft bylaws, and the Memorandum of Agreement for the Watonwan One Watershed One Plan. Bach noted Billings would be the Authorized Representative listed in the MOA. **Rollings moved to approve and sign the Watonwan Watershed Planning Project Memorandum of Agreement, seconded by Krosch. Motion adopted.**

**2017 Ag BMP Report: Bach** reviewed the report of Ag BMP loan funding for 2017 (See Attached)

**eLink Report Update: Bach** reviewed the list of grants with completed reports submitted to eLink. (See Attached)

**Native Grass Drill: Bach** reviewed the quotes for the Great Plains No-Till Drill (See Attached) to be purchased under the 2017 Local Capacity grant. Bach explained the equipment specifications. Rollings asked about a 15 foot drill. Bach explained that the 12 foot size will work much better for road travel. **Rollings moved to purchase the 2018 Great Plains 12 Foot Drill from Lano Equipment with the 2017 Local Capacity grant funds, seconded by Krosch. Motion adopted.**

**Levos Easement Alteration: Billings** presented a letter written to the SWCD Board from Bruce Levos asking for approval of a 2 to 1 acre swap of land from the current CREP easement boundary to an area that is currently in CRP. Billings explained the SWCD would have to approve of the plan, and the DNR has to approve that the change would be a benefit for habitat. After both recommendations are made then BWSR makes the final decision to accept or deny the easement boundary changes. Billings reviewed the map included with the letter that outlines the current boundaries of the CREP and CRP. Javens said she should prefer to see the exact proposed boundary changes, and said she isn't convinced this is a real swap because the land that would become CREP is already protected by CRP. Everyone agreed that the minimum 2 to 1 minimum acre swap would not be good enough because the area that

would become CREP is already CRP. **Rollings moved to table the issue until the March SWCD Board meeting so that more information can be presented, seconded by Gardner. Motion adopted.**

**MPI Banquet donation:** Billings reviewed what the SWCD donated to the MPI banquet last year. Gardner said that it was a great donation and the MPI appreciates the donations. **Rollings moved to donate a one packet of Pollinator Seed Mix and one Bundle of trees to the MPI banquet, seconded by Krosch. Motion adopted with Gardner abstaining.**

**MASWCD Legislative Briefing & Day at the Capitol:** Billings reviewed the dates and asked who would like to attend. Shanahan said he would attend and would like a hotel room. Rollings said he would look into the possibility of attending.

**Area 6 Chairman's Meeting:** Billings reviewed the date of the meeting and asked who would be able to attend. Javens said she would be unable to attend. Rollings said he would try to attend. Everyone else had prior engagements.

**Supervisors and Chairman:**

**Supervisors:** Rollings reviewed the Progressive Farmer article about the unintended consequences on CRP from the new tax law (See Attached. Rollings announced Purvis has access to a pot of funds for LED lights that might open up to private property owners because of the low demand from business owners. He said he would like to see if farmers are eligible business owners for the funds. **Krosch** reported that she went to Israel and noted how she saw a lot of things on her tours that related back to Soil and Water. She said she didn't have any other County business to report beyond Bruender's report. **Javens** reported that Ramsey SWCD has a lot of fighting amongst its Board members even though their staff is top notch. She said the SWCD has voted to be put on the next ballot to be dissolved. Javens said she may not be back in time for the next meeting. **Shanahan** reported that he attended the Ag Expo and Ag Outlook meeting. He said a number of people were still quite negative about the buffer legislation. Shanahan said the law has been in place for almost three years now, and its time to focus efforts on other things than buffer fighting. **Gardner** said he didn't make the buffer meeting last month. He said that the coalition of local conservation groups might still happen. Gardner announced the MPI banquet is on April 6 and Laura Schara will be the speaker. He also said that MPI has a new website up and running that is very professional.

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

- \* Meeting adjourned at 6:29 pm
- \* Next regular meeting will be held March 8, 2018
- \* Minutes submitted by John Billings, Assistant Manager

Approved Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Carol Krosch, Secretary \_\_\_\_\_

Approved Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Emily Javens, Chairman \_\_\_\_\_