



BLUE EARTH SOIL & WATER

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Approved Minutes of February 4, 2021

Supervisors Present: Chairman: Carol Krosch, Vice Chairman: John Rollings, Treasurer: John Shanahan, Secretary: Chris Hughes, PR&I: William Gardner
Staff Present: District Manager: Jerad Bach, Conservation Specialist: Jake Fritz, Administrative Specialist: Jillian Kuduk, District Conservationist: Ciara Ahrens
Guests: County Commissioner: Kevin Paap, County Commissioner: Kip Bruender, FarmBill Biologist: Jeff Potts

Proceedings: Meeting called to order by Chairman Krosch at 4:00 p.m. via virtual Webex platform and roll call was taken.

Pledge: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

HOUSEKEEPING

Agenda: Agenda was reviewed, Hughes moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Shanahan. Rollings – Aye, Hughes – Aye, Shanahan – Aye, Gardner – Aye, Krosch – Aye, **Motion adopted.**

Minutes: Minutes were reviewed, Rollings moved to approve the January 7, 2021 minutes, seconded by Hughes.

Rollings – Aye, Hughes – Aye, Shanahan – Aye, Gardner – Aye, Krosch – Aye, **Motion adopted.**

Treasurer's Report: (see attached)

Balance on hand	\$ 848,088.95
Receipts	\$ 119,840.10
Disbursements	\$ 45,292.33
Total	\$ 922,636.72

Kuduk presented the Treasurer's Report for January and requested to pay the Supervisor per diems, which were read by each Supervisor. Gardner moved to file the January Treasurer's Report subject to audit and pay Supervisor per diems as read, seconded by Shanahan.

Rollings – Aye, Hughes – Aye, Shanahan – Aye, Gardner – Aye, Krosch – Aye, **Motion adopted.**

OPEN COMMUNICATIONS

County Commissioner: Paap appreciated the opportunity to attend and participate these meetings. He was not able to attend the GBERBA meeting that took place on January 22. Board members and staff welcomed Paap to the SWCD committee.

FarmBill Biologist: Potts gave the Pheasants Forever report (see attached). Ahrens gave overview of Conservation Assessment & Ranking Tool (CART).

District Conservationist: Ahrens gave the District Conservationist report. The ranking system questions have been created based on the Local Work Group resource concerns. CSP is currently open to taking applications with the deadline towards the end of March. Reenrollment checks have been completed for CRP. The SWCD will no longer be required to sign conservation plans. The remodel of the Mankato office has been completed. NRCS did have a new staff member start

recently and applications are still being accepted for their open positions. She met with the Crystal Waters Project regarding interest in doing some projects over in the Crystal Lake watershed. She also is looking to apply for some additional funding through the MRBI national initiative.

District Manager: Bach presented the District Manager report. Appreciated the office staff keeping things going while he was away on paternity leave. He passed along to the board the news that Conservation Technician, Blomberg, will be leaving the district as of February 12 to move back to Wisconsin. ELink reporting has been completed and will be discussed under new business. The Watonwan 1W1P steering team has been working on the work plan to send to BWSR so that the grant agreement can be received in March. The design process has begun for projects that were surveyed in the fall and we'll have a request for a cover crop cost share contract later on in the meeting. The tree program has been doing well and we are double the number of orders and trees sold for what we would normally have at this time in the year. The AgBMP annual report and additional funding request has been submitted. He's also been working with Le Sueur SWCD on landowner outreach within the Washington Lake watershed to promote our partnered grant which will help cost share best management practices for those residents. The board congratulated Bach on the newest addition to his family.

COST SHARE CONTRACTS:

319-TMDL-16-07-12 Hubmer (Cover Crops)

Fritz requested to encumber \$5,118.71 for the planting of 255 acres of cover crops, with an estimated total cost of \$10,237.42. Shanahan moved to encumber \$5,118.71 for the 319-TMDL-16-07-12 (Hubmer) contract to be paid by the GBERBA 319-TMDL implementation grant, seconded by Rollings.

Rollings – Aye, Hughes – Aye, Shanahan – Aye, Gardner – Aye, Krosch – Aye, **Motion adopted.**

NEW BUSINESS:

2020 AgBMP Loan Report

Kuduk reviewed the 2020 Ag BMP loan report and stated the 2021 funding needs report was submitted earlier this week. There are currently 3 applications pending from last fall that were not able to be completed due to weather.

eLink Report Update:

Bach presented the eLink report update to the board. The SWCD currently has 16 grants they are responsible for tracking and reporting purposes which cover staff time, projects and equipment. Being the host district for the South Central TSA, the SWCD is also responsible for tracking and reporting on their 8 grants.

FY20 Audit:

Kuduk reminded the board of the financial reporting requirements set by BWSR which requires an audit every year. It was requested that the board approve Peterson Company's bid of \$2,900.00 to complete the FY20 audit. Gardner moved to approve Peterson Company's bid to complete the SWCD's FY20 Audit, seconded by Shanahan.

Rollings – Aye, Hughes – Aye, Shanahan – Aye, Gardner – Aye, Krosch – Aye, **Motion adopted.**

SWCD Rent:

Bach updated the board on the SWCD’s rental lease agreement and options available for us to move forward with. The board discussed pros and cons of renewing the lease and staying in the current location versus looking to move to other building/office spaces. The board requested that Bach finalize the new lease agreement with the current landlord and bring it to next month’s board meeting for review.

MASWCD Legislative Briefing Day:

Kuduk informed the board of the upcoming MASWCD Legislative Briefing Day. Registration is open and the deadline to register is March 12. Supervisors were encouraged to contact legislatures to setup virtual meetings to discuss SWCD needs. An email will be sent out in the next week or two to take registrations from Supervisors.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

Rollings – No report.

Hughes – Encourages his counterparts to setup meetings with their local legislators to discuss the priorities that were included in this month’s packet. Gave a brief summary of the Minnesota Erosion Control Association’s Annual Conference that he attended.

Shanahan – Gave an update on the GBERBA Exec meeting he attended on Jan 22 and reported that they had lost 3 members from the board due to retirements.

Gardner – Updated the board on the last MPI meeting he attended which included options for their upcoming banquet, land they are looking to purchase and moving forward with discussions with the MNDNR regarding their Area 451.

Krosch – Thanked the staff for all their hard work throughout the pandemic. Presented the idea of collecting input or comments from landowners on their experiences of doing projects with the SWCD.

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

- * Meeting adjourned 5:47 pm
- * Next regular meeting will be held March 4, 2021
- * Minutes submitted by Jillian Kuduk, Administrative Specialist

Approved Date: _____ Chris Hughes, Secretary _____

Approved Date: _____ Carol Krosch, Chairman _____