



BLUE EARTH SOIL & WATER

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Approved Minutes of April 8, 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: Kip Bruender & Kevin Paap, NRCS: Rick Berscheid, FarmBill Biologist: Jeff Potts

Proceedings: Meeting called to order by Chairman Krosch at 4:05 p.m. via virtual Webex platform and roll call was taken.

Pledge: All present recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

HOUSEKEEPING

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

Minutes: Minutes were reviewed, Shanahan moved to approve the March 4, 2021 minutes, seconded by Rollings.

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

Treasurer's Report: (see attached)

Balance on hand	\$ 919,416.15
Receipts	\$ 2,567.93
Disbursements	\$ 28,557.02
Total	\$ 893,428.42

Kuduk presented the Treasurer's Report for March and requested to pay the Supervisor per diems, which were read by each Supervisor. Rollings moved to file the March 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: Bruender presented the County Commissioner's report (see attached). Commissioner Paap seconded Bruender's comments on the Covid-19 vaccine rollout and is appreciative of the work all staff have done during the pandemic. The courthouse and government buildings are now open to the public.

FarmBill Biologist: Potts gave the Pheasants Forever report (see attached).

District Conservationist: Ahrens gave the District Conservationist report. The USDA has updated their Covid-19 policy to allow office access to the public by appointment only. NRCS will continue with their current policy by keeping their offices closed to the public and staff working from home. The Soil Conservationist who was recently hired last month has resigned. Rankings are in progress for all CSP applications. Eighteen EQIP applications have been funded with the majority of the

funding taking place in Blue Earth County. 200+ site checks for CRP are set to take place this spring/summer. The LGU is scheduled to take place on June 15th at 4:30 pm. After some discussion the board feels it would be best to hold the event virtually based on the SWCD's current Covid-19 policy.

District Manager: Bach presented the District Manager report. The SCTSA held their last meeting on March 16th and Ellickson completed his probation period. The second Civil Engineering Technician position is still in the hiring process. Grant reporting has been completed for all SWCD and SCTSA grants, which have been submitted and approved by BWSR. LeSueur River 1W1P is working on putting together the RFP to send to the consultants and there will be a public kickoff event coming soon. BWSR held a Spring Training on March 30th that District staff attended. The Conservation Technician interviews were scheduled this week and hope to wrap up tomorrow. The District's tree planter was rented out once so far this season and we are looking at options to either refurbish our current planter or upgrade with some equipment funding we have available. Customer tree pickup will take place the week of April 19th with 9,525 trees arriving from Schumacher's. Any extra stock we have, will be available for purchase online the week of pickup. The Blue Earth County Fairground staff have been very accommodating hosts and we look forward to working with them again this year. Equipment and vehicles have been in for maintenance in preparation for field season. We have a full workload for the upcoming seeding season and look forward to warm weather.

Hughes disconnected from the meeting 5:05 pm

COST SHARE CONTRACTS:

Duncanson – MAWQCP Assessment Incentive Payment

Bach presented the request for a \$300 payment to Duncanson as an incentive for completing the MN Ag Water Quality Certification Program Assessment. Rollings moved to encumber \$300 to be paid by the GBERBA MAWQCP grant for the Duncanson MAWQCP Assessment, seconded by Shanahan.

Hughes reconnected to the meeting 5:07 pm

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

NEW BUSINESS:

MASWCD Resolutions:

Bach informed the board that we should be receiving information from MASWCD which will explain the resolution process. This information will be sent to the board when it arrives and in years past resolutions are usually brought before the board at the May meeting.

Hughes disconnected from the meeting 5:10 pm

In-Person Meeting Transition:

Bach opened the discussion of bringing back the SWCD board meetings to in-person and what that transition could look like. After some discussion, the consensus was to continue virtual meetings to monitor the situation and revisit at a future meeting.

Hughes reconnected to the meeting 5:11 pm

SUPERVISOR REPORTS

Rollings – No report.

Hughes – Gave a legislative update he received on March 26th. The Prairie Enthusiasts group is continuing work on their spring burns.

Shanahan – Gave an update on last month's LeSueur 1W1P meeting.

Rollings left the meeting at 5:27 pm

Gardner – MPI held their spring banquet virtually and it went over so well that they may hold a second one in the fall. Their ditch cleanup is scheduled for next week. They’ve scheduled their 2022 Spring banquet for April 8th.

Krosch – Gave an update on the Legislative Briefing that took place last month. The Clean Water Fund is looking to be the best option for SWCD funding at this time. The Area VI Chairs meeting took place on March 26th and there were seven counties represented. The decision was made to have an area meeting in New Ulm in September and the officers will take care of planning this time around. The current officers have been on the board for some time and they are looking to step down so if we have recommendations for possible candidates, we should send them over to Schnobrich. We should be coming up with some ideas on how we can create a bigger community presence to “toot our own horns”. Hughes seconded this idea and suggested bringing this as a discussion topic to the next meeting.

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

- * Meeting adjourned 5:46 pm
- * Next regular meeting will be held May 6, 2021
- * Minutes submitted by Jillian Kuduk, Administrative Specialist

Approved Date: _____ Chris Hughes, Secretary _____

Approved Date: _____ Carol Krosch, Chairman _____