

Benton SWCD
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
USDA Service Center Foley, MN
February 24th, 2010

Attendance: Supervisors - Wade Bastian, Joe Jordan, Phil Grosland, Bernie Thole and Chuck Rau.
Others: Gerry Maciej, Pat Gehling (NRCS), DeAnna Doran (Sherburne SWCD Manager), Jason Weinerman (BWSR Board Conservationist)

I. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order by Bastian at 8:30 A.M.

II. Pledge of Allegiance - Recited

III. Approve Agenda

Maciej asked to add the following items: X Information Items, B. New Business, 5. Road right of Way Buffers 6. Mississippi River – St. Cloud Watershed Intensive Watershed Monitoring program update 7. Elk River Watershed Coordinator 2010 budget. Motion by Jordan second by Thole to approve the agenda with the additions. All were in favor. The motion passed.

IV. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Motion by Rau, second by Thole to approve the minutes from the January 13, 2010 regular board meeting as presented. All were in favor. The motion passed.

V. Treasurers' Report

Maciej presented the Money Market Account Report, Account Quick Report and January Program Summary Report. Motion by Grosland, second by Jordan to approve the reports. All were in favor. The motion passed. Maciej presented the Accounts Payable report. Motion by Grosland, second by Thole to approve the accounts payable report and pay bills. All were in favor. The motion passed.

VI. Conservation Plans

A. Up to 11 Conservation Stewardship Program conservation plans – Gehling reported the practices that have been or will be installed by 10 participants in this program. Motion by Grosland, second by Thole to approve all 10 conservation plans as presented. All were in favor. Then motion passed.

VII. Action Items

A. New Business

1) Resource Training and Solutions Joint Powers Agreement

Motion by Rau, second by Thole to approve the Joint Powers Agreement and authorize the chair to sign. All were in favor. The motion passed.

2) Consider Rural Preserve Property Tax Program items

(a) Set fee schedules – Maciej presented a proposed fee schedule as follows:
Writing Conservation Management Plans - \$200 per plan plus \$1.00 per acre
Reviewing and approving plans written by non-SWCD employees - \$60 per plan
Motion by Jordan, second by Thole to approve the fee schedule as presented. All were in favor. The motion passed.

(b) Approve District Conservation Management Plan writers and reviewers – Motion by Rau, second by Grosland to approve District Technicians Mike McMillin and Katie Evans as Benton SWCD Conservation Management Plan writers. All were in favor. The motion passed.

(c) Establish Conservation Management Plan writer criteria and approval process – Maciej recommended that the SWCD adopt the criteria recommended by BWSR including the following:

OPTION 1:

Post secondary degree in natural resource field such as: natural resource management, forestry, soils, or other related field determined adequate by the SWCD.

At least two years professional experience in natural resource field.

Completion of BWSR CMP training.

Submission of brief resume outlining these qualifications.

OPTION 2:

Existing planner certification programs may fulfill the requirements and presentation of up-to-date credentials shall be considered adequate. Consideration should be given to assure the certification type matches the resource type the plan will cover. Certification programs include: Certified Stewardship Plan writer, as approved by the Forest Stewardship Committee, for the Forest Stewardship Program as required by Sustainable Forest Incentive Act (SFIA) and 2c Managed Forest Land programs. MN Tree Farm Inspector certified by the Minnesota Tree Farm Committee. Technical Service Providers registered with the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

CMP planner approval is subject to revocation by the SWCD board based upon quality of plans and plan acceptance rate.

Maciej also recommended that the SWCD board be the entity that approves and revokes plan writers. Motion by Thole, second by Jordan to approve the Conservation Management Plan writer criteria and approval process as presented. All were in favor. The motion passed.

- (d) Consider a public notary commission for district staff – Maciej shared that having public notary commission for district plan writers will make the program more efficient for participants. Motion by Thole, second by Jordan to move forward with obtaining public notary commission for district Conservation Management Plan writers. All were in favor of the motion. Then motion passed.
- 3) BWSR Native Buffer Program two bid requirement and agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources – There was discussion about the BWSR and SWCD two bid requirement for State Cost Share projects. No formal action was necessary.
- 4) Greg Novak – Ag BMP Low Interest Loan application – Motion by Rau, second by Grosland to approve eligibility for the low interest loan program. All were in favor. The motion passed.
- 5) Eric and Kris Beehler – Ag BMP Low Interest Loan application – Motion by Grosland, second by Jordan to approve eligibility for the low interest loan program. All were in favor. The motion passed.
- 6) Approve Freedom of Information Act Acknowledgement – Maciej reviewed comments received from Benton County Attorney Robert Raupp. Motion by Jordan, second by Rau to sign the Freedom of Information Act Acknowledgement. All were in favor. The motion passed.
- 7) Consider BWSR grant agreements and authorize the chair to sign – Motion by Rau, second by Thole to approve upcoming BWSR 2010 grant agreements and authorize the chair to sign the agreements. All were in favor. The motion passed.
- 8) Set price for the new plat book – Maciej informed the board that he expects delivery of the new plat books by the end of March. Motion by Jordan, second by

Rau to set the price for the 2010 plat book at \$32.00 plus tax. All were in favor. The motion passed.

- 9) Consider purchasing bird house materials – Motion by Rau, second by Jordan to move forward with purchasing cedar lumber from Foley Lumber. All were in favor. The motion passed. Grosland will be contacting Mille Lacs / Benton Chapter Pheasants Forever about sponsoring this initiative.
- 10) Consider 2010 budget – Motion by Rau, second by Thole to approve the budget as presented to include the following actions: undo the temporary budget balancing actions approved by the board in September 2009 (reinstate 40 hour work weeks for all employees, reinstate the District Manager salary, reinstate supervisor per diems), eliminate the position of Program Assistant (effective immediately following adopted policy), authorize the District Manager to hire a part time temporary summer employee, and use State Cost Share program funds for technical assistance. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed. Motion by Thole, second by Jordan to request an interim agreement with Sherburne SWCD for administrative services at a rate of \$24/hour until a formal agreement can be made. The interim agreement could be terminated by either party at any time. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed.
- 11) Consider using FY 2010 State Cost Share funds for technical assistance – This item was taken up during the 2010 budget discussion. Bastian signed the request to BWSR.
- 12) Approve the Annual Plan of Work – Motion by Jordan, second by Grosland to approve the annual plan of work with the approved 2010 budget inserted. All were in favor. The motion passed.

VIII. **Progress Reports**

- A. Staff reports – These were reviewed.
- B. NRCS reports – This was reviewed.
- C. U of M Extension Service report – Martens reported on new data recently published showing the density of dairy cows nationwide and reported on an upcoming “Barriers to Bushels” workshop.

IX. **Information Items**

A. **Committee Reports** – Supervisors reported on the meetings they attended.

- 1) ERWA board meeting – January 25 (Joe and Gerry)
- 2) WRAC and EQIP Local Workgroup meeting – January 26 (Chuck, Gerry, Annie, and Pat)
- 3) Supervisor/Staff insight follow up meeting – February 10 (Wade and Joe)
- 4) MASWCD day at the capital – February 17 & 18 (Wade, Chuck and Gerry)

B. **New Business**

- 1) 2010 Minnesota Department of Agriculture Low Interest Loan Program Application – The Benton SWCD has applied to re-use anticipated revolving funds in 2010.
- 2) U of M / BWSR Clean Water Listening Sessions – No supervisors were able to attend the listening sessions.
- 3) Area 2 MASWCD March 18th meeting attendance – Maciej and Thole plan to attend.
- 4) 2010 SWCD supervisor election – More information about possible changes to the election dates is expected by March or April.

- 5) Road Right of Way Buffers – Weirnerman reported on a potential LCCMR project installing road right of way buffers of native plants in Benton, Morrison and Stearns counties. The project is currently in the brainstorming stage.
- 6) Mississippi River – St. Cloud Watershed Intensive Watershed Monitoring Program update. This item was not discussed due to limited time.
- 7) Elk River Watershed Coordinator 2010 Budget –This item was not discussed due to limited time.

X. **Correspondence**

- A. Elk River Watershed Association October 19, 2009 meeting minutes

XI. **Adjourn**

Motion by Rau, second by Thole to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The motion passed. The meeting adjourned at 12:20 P.M.

Secretary, Board of Supervisors

Date

Calendar of Future Events:

- March 4, Anoka Sand Plain Plant Materials Center meeting
- March 15, Elk River Watershed Association meeting
- March 17, Benton SWCD board meeting
- March 18, Area 2 MASWCD meeting
- March 23, Water Resources Advisory Committee meeting