

Benton SWCD
Regular Board Meeting Minutes
USDA Service Center, Foley, MN
November 18th, 2009

Attendance: Supervisors - Chuck Rau, Wade Bastian, Bernie Thole (arrived at 8:40) and Phil Grosland.
Staff advisor - Gerry Maciej, Other – Pat Gehling (NRCS) and Jason Weinerman (BWSR)

I. Call meeting to order

The meeting was called to order by Bastian at 8:33 A.M.

II. Pledge of Allegiance - Recited

III. Approve Agenda

Maciej asked for the following changes. Remove VII. Information Items, A. Old Business, 1) Health insurance presentations, (a) Corporate Health Systems and (b) Thrivent Financial / Blue Chip Financial. Add VIII Action Items, B. Dale and Roberta Hovland – Ag. BMP Low Interest Loan Application and C. Plat book agreement and payment, IX Correspondence, C. Letter from Jason Weinerman, BWSR Board Conservationist and D. Letter from Steve Sunderland, MASWCD President. Motion by Grosland, second by Rau to approve the agenda with the changes. All were in favor. The motion passed.

IV. Minutes of Previous Meeting

Minutes for the October 21, 2009 regular board meeting were not available. Maciej distributed minutes from the October 28, 2009 joint meeting with Sherburne SWCD. Motion by Grosland, second by Rau to approve the minutes from the October 28, 2009 Benton and Sherburne SWCD meeting. All were in favor. The motion passed.

Thole entered the meeting at this time.

V. Treasurers' Report

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

VI. Progress Reports

A. Staff Accomplishments – District staff entered the meeting and presented their monthly accomplishments.

B. Dan Martens – U of M Extension – Martens presented information about the condition of this years corn (related to mold), MDA farmer assistance network and the Midwest Dairy Expo.

VII. Information Items

A. Old Business

1) Health insurance presentations

(a) Thorsten Financial Services – Brian Thorsten and Pam Lovaas presented information about several possible 2010 employee health insurance plans and answered questions from board members.

(b) Health insurance discussion – Program Assistant Pam Kuhn presented additional information about health insurance options for 2010. Motion by Rau, second by Thole to temporarily table the discussion. All were in favor. The motion passed.

2) Envirothon Presentation – Brad Wenz, Stearns SWCD – Wenz provided an overview of the Envirothon program. He also summarized his experience with the

- 3) Education committee recommendations – Bastian, Maciej and District Technician Evans shared a spreadsheet outlining the discussions from the education committee meeting. There was board consensus to continue providing the existing educational initiatives. A number of new initiatives were added to the education program for the district including participation in the Envirothon program.
- 4) State cost share program technical assistance option – Jason Weinerman, BWSR – Weinerman provided details on the technical assistance options for SWCD's and provided insight on how other SWCD's in his service area are considering this option. Weinerman answered questions from the board about specific opportunities for the Benton SWCD.

Motion by Thole, second by Rau to recess the meeting until 12:00 P.M. on Saturday, November 21, 2009. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed. The meeting recessed at 12:24 P.M.

The meeting was called back to order by chair Bastian at 12:07 P.M. on Saturday, November 21, 2009 at the USDA Service Center in Foley, MN.

Attendance: Supervisors - Chuck Rau, Wade Bastian, Bernie Thole, Phil Grosland and Joe Jordan.
Staff advisor - Gerry Maciej

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

VII. Information Items

A. Old Business

- 1) Health insurance presentations
 - (b) Health insurance discussion – Maciej and Grosland provided a summary of the meeting they had the afternoon of November 18th with Brian Thorsten. Thorsten provided scenarios showing the cost of health insurance for the employer and employee at various rates for the \$300 deductible plan and the \$2,100 health savings account plan. Maciej presented additional information about neighboring SWCD health insurance contributions, NRCS health insurance contributions and the draft 2010 operating budget. A number of grant applications that are currently being worked on were discussed at this time also. Motion by Rau, second by Grosland to offer the Blue Cross – Resource Training Government Pool insurance plan to employees to begin on January 1, 2010. The district would contribute 70% of the premium for a family policy and 90% of the premium for a single policy. Using a majority vote system, employees will choose between the \$300 deductible plan and the \$2,100 deductible plan. If the \$2,100 deductible plan is chosen, the districts premium savings, plus an additional \$50.00, will be deposited into the employee's health savings account, 50% of the annual savings on January 1, 2010 and 50% on July 1, 2010. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed. Maciej was asked to coordinate presentation

of the health insurance options to district employees with Brian Thorsten.

- 5) District Manager performance evaluation format – Supervisors reviewed the performance evaluation formats from neighboring SWCD’s. Through consensus the board decided to continue to use the existing format and asked Maciej to provide supervisors a copy of his position description and performance evaluation.
- 6) Board insight meetings – Supervisors and Maciej shared their observation from the insight meetings held on October 29th and November 18th. Three additional meetings were scheduled.
- 7) Bird house follow up – Bastian shared that he met with Larry VanHooser who offered to build birdhouses as he has in the past as long as cedar wood is provided to him. Jordan has visited with a company in St.Cloud who may be willing to donate cedar wood as it becomes available. Bastian indicated he will be meeting with a local business in the near future to ask for a donation of cedar materials as well.

B. Committee Reports

- 1) Benton/Sherburne SWCD joint planning meeting - September 28 – This meeting was briefly discussed.
- 2) MASWCD Area 2 meeting – November 5th – Thole and Rau reported on the meeting. A power point presentation about the Green Acres / Rural Preserves tax program was made during the meeting. The presentation was informative and showed that a significant amount of work may be required of the district in the future.

VIII. Action Items

- A.** Janet Albright – Ag. BMP Low Interest Loan application – Motion by Rau, second by Jordan to acknowledge that District Technician Evans contacted all board members and obtained prior approval to move forward with approving the loan application and to formally approve the project. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed.
- B.** Dale and Roberta Hovland – Ag. BMP Low Interest Loan application - Motion by Thole, second by Grosland to acknowledge that District Technician Evans contacted all board members and obtained prior approval to move forward with approving the loan application and to formally approve the project. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed.
- C.** Plat book agreement and payment – Maciej received an agreement from Red Barn Plat Books & Cartographic Services and made changes as suggested by the County Attorney’s office. Motion by Grosland, second by Thole to enter into the agreement with Red Barn Plat Books and Cartographic Services and authorize payment of 50% of the costs as outlined in the agreement. All were in favor of the motion. The motion passed.

IX. Correspondence

- A.** WC MASWCD Area 2 Envirothon thank you letter – Maciej shared that the district received a letter from Area 2 MASWCD thanking us for supporting the Envirothon.
- B.** NACD membership invoice – This item was tabled.
- C.** Letter from Jason Weirnerman, BWSR Board Conservationist – The board discussed the letter which thanked District Program Assistant Kuhn for her assistance at the BWSR Academy.
- D.** Letter from Steve Sunderland, MASWCD President – The board received a letter and copy of the draft minutes from the 2008 MASWCD annual business meeting and 2010 draft budget.

X. Adjourn

Motion by Rau, second by Thole to adjourn the meeting. All were in favor. The motion passed.

The meeting adjourned at 2:59 P.M.

Calendar of Future Events:

- November 19, MMM RC&D meeting
- November 24, WRAC meeting
- December 6-8, MASWCD annual convention
- December 16, Benton SWCD board meeting