



105 22nd Avenue N.E.
Waseca, MN 53093
Phone (507) 835-4800
Fax (507) 835-7895

Approved Minutes

The meeting of the Waseca County SWCD Board of Supervisors was held at the Waseca Soil and Water Conservation District's meeting room on April 11, 2013. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m. by Bob Drager, Chairman.

Members Present

Bob Drager, Chairman
Jurgen Peters, Vice Chair
Ron Purcell, Treasurer
Larry Hagen, Secretary
Wayne Cords

Staff Present

Darlene Kukuczka, Office Assistant

NRCS: Noel Frank and Todd Piepho

BWSR: Steve Woods, Jeff Nielsen, and Chris Hughes

Others: County Commissioners Richard Androli and Mike Hintz, and County Administrator Laura Elvebak Lee Roy Cain

Motion by Jurgen, second by Ron to approve the agenda as distributed. Motion carried.

Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Motion by Larry, second by Ron to approve the minutes of March 14, 2013. Motion carried.

Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Response to Staffing recommendations: Darlene distributed the "staffing needs worksheet" page of Waseca SWCD's annual plan of work for years 2009 through 2012. Darlene commented on the increase in workload over the years where one person has already been trying to handle the workload of over two people. The plan to operate the district on less than one full time staff equivalent is not feasible. It is inconceivable to think that less than a full time staffing level can manage and provide technical duties for the district and without any errors.

The treasurer's report dated March, 2013 was presented to the Board for review. Motion by Wayne, second by Jurgen to approve the Treasurer Report as presented and file for audit. Motion carried. Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Cash flow Review: A revised cash flow without the BWSR FY13 funds was distributed indicating the district would be out of funds in June. Darlene highlighted the changes. Jeff Nielsen inquired if the district had a long range/business plan to find a solution to the financial situation. Other comments were made by Steve Woods for change to management. Chris mentioned, the hiring of a private consultant from the list Leann Buck of MASWCD had emailed to everyone, but a potential cost was unknown. District board members, Ron, Jurgen and Wayne all discussed the importance of promoting and implementing conservation practices. The philosophy of board is that the district's primary purpose has been to get conservation on the land.

Bob deferred more discussion to later on the agenda.

Invoices: Motion by Ron, second by Larry to approve the payment of the presented invoices. Motion Carried:

Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Supervisors Reports:

Ron assisted Chris Hughes with sorting some district paperwork.

Jurgen was involved with two feedlot site team reviews and inspected two windbreaks.

Wayne reported that Blue Earth and Steele SWCD's declined the offer for part time management services for Waseca SWCD. He stated that with a potential closing of the district, the district would be directly responsible for unemployment costs, according to the unemployment office.

NRCS: Noel stated that if districts have to always be profitable then private business would have already taken over the work they do. The conservation benefits that have been received for the county don't show as a reduction in costs. This type of payout for the county is indirect. He reported that federal farm bill programs won't be available in Waseca County without a Soil and Water Conservation district present.

WCA: Motion by Jurgen second by Ron to terminate the 1994 agreement made with Waseca County for the administration of the Wetland Conservation Act of 1991, returning the responsibility and authority back to the County by mutual agreement or 30 days after this notice whichever is the soonest.

Motion carried. Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Tree Sales: Pick up day for trees will be Saturday morning, April 27th.

1st Grade Environmental Day: Ron notified all the teachers of the cancelled educational event.

Year end report: Updates are needed and BWSR granted an extension for the report.

Staff Report: Darlene – Reported on GBERBA, RC&D & District activities.

She requested corrections to the 2012 accrued leave, increasing it by 54 hours to a total of 79.25 hours, due to a recording error since June 2010. Monthly vacation earnings were recording at 15 instead of 17 hours.

Motion by Ron, second by Jurgen to approve the increase, complying with the district policy.

Motion carried. Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Easements: Maintenance enhancement work need review/technical sign off and authorized SWCD representative signatures before forwarding to BWSR for landowner payments. Noel Frank said he could conduct the technical review. Chris Hughes stated that seeding must be done before submitting for payment. Projects were put on hold for further review.

Rain gauge program: Motion by Wayne, second by Ron to return the rain gauge program to Planning and Zoning office.

Motion carried. Affirmative: All Opposed: None

GBERBA: 9 Buffer Incentives contracts not started yet. Motion by Jurgen, second by Ron to cancel the contracts and forward to GBERBA for action. Motion carried. Affirmative: All Opposed: None

GBERBA: Conservation Drainage project is waiting for technical sign off by SCTSA engineer.

GBERBA: PMZ grant – Hugh Valiant and Darlene met with Paul Davis of MPCA on activities already done.

USFISH & Wildlife: Hugh & Darlene met with Mike Mauling on wetland/prairie grant for 4 projects that are to be completed.

Misc: Darlene reported on MCIT risk assessment & finances, DUNS number information request and, MASWCD accepted the letter and reduced dues to \$1670.00, deferring payment until July.

District Operations: Discussion continued about the financial shortfall and staffing needs. Steve Woods stated that 89 of the 90 districts are in good financial condition and Waseca must present a business plan just like a farmer would need if he went to a bank for a loan. He continued that the district must cut the highest expenses by reduce staff hours, make pay adjustments and reduce rent. Most districts average support is 40% county, 30% state and 30% self generated. Management needs to be different and secure more grants.

Chris Hughes commented that others manage their money differently, such as using some of the cost share for technical assistance purposes.

Wayne stated that the only option is for the district to dissolve unless the county can help with financial support. Commissioners commented that taking over WCA already will be help to the district and could not commit to any additional assistance outside of a commissioner's board meeting.

BWSR presented options to reduce expenses, before they would consider releasing any FY13 funds. It included the division of the management and technical work into two separate positions with a total salary reduction range of 25,000 to 35,000. All options were reviewed. Consensus by the board was to work with the option to spend \$20,000 for management services and \$42,000 for technical staffing. Discussion continued.

Motion by Jurgen, second by Larry to pursue the budget for salaries/benefits/rent of about \$115,000 with the 20/42 option by hiring a manager and keep Marla in the technical position. Discussion was held.

Motion carried. Affirmative: All Opposed: None

BWSR staff will try to help find a part time manager for the district. Steve Woods would release the funds as a chosen option is pursued.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:45 p.m. by Bob Drager, Chairman.

The Next Board Meeting will be May 9, 2013 at 6:30 P.M. at the Waseca SWCD office.