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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 March 14, 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
Others: Melissa Bauman

Staff Present

Darlene Kukuczka, Office Assistant

Other: NRCS: Noel Frank

BWSR: Chris Hughes and Amber Steele
County Commissioners Richard Androli and Mike Hintz

Motion by Wayne, second by Larry to approve the agenda as distributed. Motion carried.

Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Motion by Jurgen, second by Ron to approve the minutes of February 14, 2013. Motion carried.

Affirmative: All Opposed: None

The treasurer's report –Tabled

Bob will make plans to close the United Prairie Bank account, moving funds to the 1st National Bank.

Motion by Jurgen, second by Larry to authorize Ron Purcell and Darlene Kukuczka to sign checks.

Motion carried Affirmative: All Opposed: None

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

Affirmative: All Opposed: None

NRCS: Noel reported that CSP payments are completed. EQIP applications are being worked on. Waseca has quite few diverse applicants for EQIP.

Bauman/Howard: Melissa Bauman provided corrected invoices of acres for CREP enhancement for Jim Farley's payment request. She also submitted invoices from LeSueur River Seeding & Conservation for L. Oakland, J. Farley, and T. Bauman. Darlene was instructed to work on the payment process for these native seeding enhancements.

There was discussion on an older project done by H&H Excavating related to a pond. It was not clear if or when it may have become a cost share project with the district.

Amber Steele, BWSR Wetland Specialist – As Marla has been gone on medical leave, Amber will temporarily handle the WCA activities. Amber requested that the SWCD Board designate one of the officers to have sign off authority as required. Motion by Jurgen second by Ron for the chair to sign WCA related documents. Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Amber discussed the Wayne James request for ditch cleaning and recommended to deny it. She reported that the TEP recommends denying the ditch cleaning requests as the wetland where impacts are proposed is a Type 3 wetland that has existed for greater than 25 years and does not qualify for the private drainage exemption through the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act because there is no evidence provided by the applicant that the proposed activity is maintenance or repair. Motion by Jurgen, second by Ron to deny Wayne James's ditch cleaning request based on the wetland specialist recommendation and in concurrence with the TEP findings. Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Motion by Wayne, second by Larry for jurisdiction given to DNR for the restoration order on Wayne James.

Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Discussion was held on future WCA workload and the WCA resolution made with the county in the 1990's. Jeremy Maul is working with Bob Burns on wetland credits and Wayne Cords will be the board contact person. Subdivision on Lake Elysian: Amber will review and comment back to Mark Leiferman of Planning and Zoning.

BWSR Update: Chris Hughes provided an update of the legislative activities including legislation to allow for the consolidation of SWCD's, general service funds grants, farm bill assistance program and clean water funds. Wayne asked if there was any new or increase in funding for general services from the sources mentioned. Chris reported that there isn't any more sources to support current staff work/operating expenses.

Supervisors Reports:

Jurgen ordered trees, will attend Farm and City luncheon, and no trees will be provided for Sakatah Days from Waseca. Wayne and Chris Hughes reviewed the papers on Marla's desk that she had been working on.

Conservation Partnership Legacy Grant: Chris reported on the Pfeifer project being submitted to DNR. DNR sends the funds to the District who forwards to BWSR, as BWSR does the easement paperwork and BWSR pays the landowner for the easement. The district will receive technical and administrative assistance for the easement project. Motion by Ron, second by Jurgen to authorize Wayne to sign the grant papers on the Pfeifer project as soon as they are ready. Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Wetland Restorations: Chris reported that the Rim/WRP's were submitted and the District would receive \$2000.00 each for 2 of the three projects.

Wayne reported on other current work activities including:

Walk in Access: MN-DNR is asking districts to contact landowners to allow hunting on their CRP land and coordinate the process for payments the landowners would receive. Motion by Ron, second by Bob not to pursue this program this year. Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Wayne met with BWSR staff Steve Woods, Jeff Nielsen, and Chris Hughes about the district financial shortfall. The discussion and recommendations by BWSR was to eliminate office rent, reduce payroll costs, hire part time managerial staff and reduce all district staffing to less than one full time equivalent position.

Office space: BWSR suggested elimination of district rent expense by moving in with the county. The County doesn't have enough space ready and their maintenance department is unable to prepare more space in the near future. The District would have to break the lease in current location. Mike Hintz stated that he would discuss paying for the district's current space possibly to the end of the year at the commissioner's meeting.

Wayne inquired about extended family leave and he was told by BWSR that the Family and Medical Leave Act of 1993 which provides up to 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave to employees does not apply to organizations with less than 50 employees. District policy identifies this specific act in its Family Leave segment, so legal clarification is needed on this issue.

Wayne sent out RFP's to two soil and water districts for part time management services as discussed last month. The other person the board had contacted right after the last meeting was not interested in additional work.

Bob distributed the letter he received from BWSR dated February 28, 2013. BWSR is holding "the FY13 grants until change occurs in response to the on-going Waseca SWCD/County collaboration effort . The collaboration workgroup has identified contracting for managerial services as a strategy to improve operation, management, and budget for the SWCD. BWSR will release the FY13 grants when there is agreement on a contract for managerial services." See attachment to the minutes.

The board was also informed that if the grants are released they can only be used for future expenses not any retroactive costs. FY13 grants include Conservation Service funds \$18,986.00, Easement Service funds \$5,418.00 and Cost Share of \$13,717.00. The WCA fund of \$12,118.00 as part of the NRBG grant to the county has not been released to the district either. The collaboration workgroup BWSR mentioned includes BWSR staff Jeff Nielsen and Chris Hughes, County Commissioners Richard Androli and Mike Hintz, County Administrator Laura Elvebak and Mark Leiferman, County Planning and Zoning and District supervisors Bob Drager and Wayne Cords.

Staff Reports:

Darlene – Reported on GBERBA, RC&D & District activities. Office reconstruction isn't done yet.

Bookkeeping Contract with CPA: Motion by Ron second by Wayne to approve the contract with Jared Dufault.
Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Memberships: MN Darkhouse of \$15.00 Cannon River Watershed for \$50.00 MASWCD dues of \$2339.50 .
Motion by Wayne, second by Ron to eliminate membership with MN Darkhouse and Cannon River Watershed and to write a letter of hardship to MASWCD to defer the dues. Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None
Ron donated \$15.00 to the District to pay the MN Darkhouse dues. Motion by Wayne, second by Larry to accept the donation and pay the MN Darkhouse dues. Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Staff contract with RC&D: Motion by Ron, second by Wayne to approve a contract with Three Rivers RC&D for an average of 4 hours per week @29.00 per hour. Motion carried. Affirmative: All Opposed: None

District representatives on CRP contracts: Consensus was to keep the authorization as approved in the 1997 minutes.
2013 Outstanding Conservationist: Motion by Wayne, second by Ron to nominate David Krampitz as the outstanding conservationist for 2013. Motion Carried: Affirmative: All Opposed: None

Misc: Workload and current program activities were reviewed including the discussion of eliminating 1st grade day or find a volunteer to coordinate and arrange all of it.

The meeting was declared adjourned at 9:40 p.m. by Bob Drager, Chairman.

The Next Board Meeting will be April 11, 2013 at 6:30 P.M. at the Waseca SWCD office.