

Minutes of the regular meeting of the Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors held on Thursday, May 8th, 2014 at the Ag Services Building in Olivia MN.

Present: Kathryn K. Kelly
Marc Iverson
Kevin Kokesch
Jim Hebrink
Mark Koenig

Also Present: Adam Beilke, BWSR; Gary Watson, NRCS; John Stahl, Renville County Board; and SWCD & NRCS staff.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 a.m. and opened with the Pledge of Allegiance.

MSC (Kevin, Marc) to approve the minutes of the April 10, 2014 Regular Meeting.

MSC (Marc, Mark) to approve the April 2014 Treasurer's Report subject to audit and the bills as presented.

Staff Reports:

Karen reported that news releases have been sent to County papers about filing period for open Supervisor Positions. She's also been communicating with the Auditor's office about the election. Three schools are scheduled for WALK later this month. The Flexible Spending Account was renewed for another year. One Farm Bill Assistant RFP was submitted to BWSR per the Board decision at the April 2014 meeting. Karen registered for MCIT Risk Management training later in the year.

Tom reported on the spring workload for easements including working with the TSA staff on projects that need to be completed on easements. Workload includes spring coordination of firefighting equipment and fielding questions about management activities. The RIM Inspection list arrived and there will be 140 inspections required this year. No feedlots inspected this month with increased workload in other areas.

Tom updated the Supervisors on some of the conversations with other agencies regarding Limbo Creek and the continuing attempt to do a ditching project.

Tom has been invited to be a guest speaker at the annual Team Building meeting for the Farm Bill Biologists in Lanesboro on June 25th. He will be presenting on his 35 years of delivering local conservation private lands programs.

Gary Watson reported that Don Baloun, Lewis Brockette and he attended a landowner meeting pertaining to a possible project in the Limbo Creek area. The message was that the landowners need to sit down with all the agencies and present their plan.

Gary also reported that applications for the ACEP (formerly WRP) program will be taken soon. Funds will be obligated in June & July for both the CSP and the EQIP programs.

Gary reported that Minnesota is "in the black" for both CRP and CSP.

Ryan Clark gave his staff report. He handed out a packet of information on drainage in Minnesota. This is the same information that has been given to landowners and elected officials at previous meetings. It should be a good reference for the Supervisors if they have questions from people about drainage issues. They also suggested that the information be posted to the website.

Ryan has been answering some questions on WCA rules from contractors. He Passed the WCA Certification exam and was congratulated by the Board. He did a WCA replacement plan review for a mine and approved a no-loss for a pond cleanout.

Ryan reported that he submitted the BBR which included funds for projects. He's been doing site visits for possible construction projects. Others including the TSA staff, NRCS staff and Hawk Creek staff have been out with him. There is very little State Cost-Share money remaining so it will be necessary to work with other agencies to fund projects.

Ryan has a meeting scheduled regarding the Ft. Ridgeley Creek/Mayflower Gold Course on May 12th. Bob Fox and Larry Zupke will attend. Supervisors were invited if interested in getting an update.

Ryan attended the Local Water Management Task Force meeting, the Mid-MN Watershed Zonation meeting and the Lower MN Watershed kickoff meeting. He also attended a MN Erosion Control Association training.

Ryan mentioned the proposed "Watersheds of the US" changes and reported they could change the Army Corps of Engineers authority. He will forward a link to the proposal to the Supervisors.

Marc Iverson left the meeting at 8:40 a.m.

Trenton Brenny reported that Toolkit has been working better. He also sat in on the new federal easement training (ACEP) teleconference. He attended the Hawk Creek Watershed Project meeting. He got started on the Lync pass process by going into the cites and while he was there visited the BWSR easement staff. He attended a DNR native community ecology training.

Trent reported that workload continues both with processing RIM easements and with preparing applications for new easements. He's been sending quotes to landowners. Currently there are 23 applications waiting to be submitted and he anticipates that number will grow in the next few weeks. One of the priority areas is the Fort Ridgeley Watershed. The quotes to those landowners should be completed this week.

The only news on the Farm Bill is the information on the new easement program. Still waiting to hear about a CRP sign-up.

Chris Gehrig reported that he also attended the DNR native plan community training. Chris has been preparing quotes and estimates for CRP and RIM for Fort Ridgeley Watershed ditches and streams. Those will be completed soon. He's been working with current CRP contract owners on mid-contract management requirements and modifying the Conservation Plans for FSA on the contracts doing an activity.

BWSR Report:

Adam reported that the dates and location of the BWSR Academy have been set. It will be held at Breezy Point, October 28-30.

Renville County SWCD is scheduled for a PRAP this year. More information will be coming.

Karen indicated that both Trent & Ryan have completed six months of employment as of today. **MSC (Mark, Kevin) to change the employment status of both Trenton Brenny & Ryan Clark from probationary to Regular Full-time in view of their exemplary performance.**

Board Reports:

Kathryn reported that she attended the Hawk Creek Watershed regular meeting. She also attended the SW/WC meeting and the employer annual insurance renewal meeting will be in August again.

She also attended a Water Conference at Cragun's and the Local Water Management Task Force meeting.

Jim reported that he attended the Limbo Creek landowners meeting and that he'd had a couple calls.

There was discussion about the possibility of naming/hiring a District Manager including the possibility of the Personnel Committee coming up with salary suggestions. Supervisors had copies of the proposed job description. **MSC (Mark, Jim) to proceed with the next step of creating a District Manager position.**

Meeting was declared adjourned at 9:32 a.m.

Next Regular Meeting will be held on Thursday, June 12th at 7:30 a.m.