

Minutes of the September 10, 2015 Renville County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors regular meeting held at the Ag Services Center in Olivia MN

Present: **Kathryn K. Kelly**
 Terrylea Ness
 Kevin Kokesch
 Mark Koenig
 Jim Hebrink

Also present: John Stahl, Renville County Board; Holly Hatlewick, NRCS District Conservationist; and Ryan Clark, Ben Trochlil, Karen Wermers and Karen Flom, staff.

Meeting was **called to order** by Chair Kelly at 7:35 a.m. Meeting opened with the **Pledge of Allegiance**.

Approval of the Buffer & Ag Quality Certification fund request was added to the agenda as Item 14a

MSC (Kevin, Terrylea) to approve the minutes of the August 13, 2015 regular meeting.

MSC (Terrylea, Kevin) to approve the August Treasurer's Report subject to audit and the bills as presented.

Staff Reports:

Karen Flom reported on several financial items including the FY16 District Operations Grant, and that she will begin paying all bills and payroll from District funds and then transferring funds based on billable hours for each grant. New timesheets were implemented with the August 20th pay period to keep track of billable rates and hours.

*MCIT sent out estimates of 2016 contribution amounts. Similar to 2015 and what's budgeted.

*Karen gave a report on the BWSR Verification Report. All 3 of the findings have either been corrected or staff are now aware of the error for future reference. Most observations have been taken care to some extent and staff are always working to improve reporting and time tracking for future verifications.

*Karen reported that plans are pretty well in place for the November 17, 2015 SCMASWCD meeting to be held at Turner Hall in New Ulm. Menu is set and so are speakers. Registration should go out to the other SWCD offices as soon as the agenda is finalized with Mark Snobrich, Area Director.

Karen attended the Kandiyohi County Buffer meeting in Willmar.

Ben Trochlil reported that the RIM Site Inspections are complete. He is working on vegetative enhancements of RIM easements with some old CRP seedings that are smooth brome and alfalfa.

*The repair work on four old easements (dikes, etc) should begin within the next couple weeks. Ben has been working with Mike Anderson, BWSR Engineering Tech on those plans and Ben expects to be on-site during surveying and construction.

*Ben has been assisting landowners with maintenance issues on CRP and helping Karen with CRP spot checks.

*Everyone who needs a feedlot inspection has been contacted. Appointments are scheduled as they return calls.

*Ben is continuing to promote buffers and answers landowner questions about buffers and about conservation programs.

*Ben attended 4 days of Conservation Planning, a Drainage Workshop, Toolkit 8 training, did DNR Well Monitoring with Ryan Clark and attended the variance hearing for the Duininck gravel mine proposal.

Ryan Clark reported that there was a no-loss application for WCA and that he is reviewing the JD15 improvement project for WCA.

*Ryan is working with the TSA engineer on DRAP projects and also met with an engineering firm to view some of the larger stream bank stabilization projects.

*Two Phase 1 DRAP project designs are nearly complete.

*Two or three DRAP sites should be surveyed this fall for design over winter.

*Ryan has been providing technical assistance for the HCWP Cover Crop Program

*Ryan is also helping Karen with buffer quotes and questions.

*Ryan approved a rain garden design for the County and worked on the LWM well sealing cost-share apps

Ryan presented the proposed DRAP policy. After discussion it was decided to keep the policy pending and add it to the October Board Agenda.

Karen Wermers reported that she has been busy making CRP buffer quotes. There is a lot of interest in CRP for buffers. She is completing contracts for 38 CRP renewals and about 15 new contracts with 14 more potential sign-ups for this fall. There is also a lot of phone work and office visits with landowners who want information about buffers and a possible CREP III.

*Holly, Ben and Ryan Clark have been helping Karen with field visits for CRP renewals.

*The Buboltz easement paperwork is in St. Paul for processing.

*The Zaske easement has been signed and is at the county for recording.

*Karen also attended the Ag Drainage Workshop in Mankato, the Toolkit 8 Training and the Conservation Planning Training.

NRCS Report – Holly Hatlewick, District Conservationist

Holly reported that there were six 2016 CSP renewals and 41 CRP renewals.

The contribution agreement between the SWCD and NRCS for a Soil Health tour and test plots was approved. A tentative date for a ½ day tour of the test plots has been set for November 5th.

The number of outstanding AD 1026 forms has been reduced to 9 which is an improvement over last year.

Board Reports:

Jim attended the Kandiyohi Buffer meeting.

Mark attended a feedlot meeting with the county and Kathryn. He was involved in MASWCD convention planning and in planning the SCMASWCD November meeting.

Terrylea attended the Groundwater session in St. Cloud and found the geologist interesting. He stated that the state of Minnesota's waters is not yet at the Emergency Room status but is at Urgent Care.

Kathryn attended the feedlot meeting.

MSC (Terrylea, Mark) to enter into the Phase 2 DRAP Grant Agreement with BWSR.

Staff suggesting returning designated funds to the Hawk Creek Watershed so they can do all the payments for the Cover Crop program. This is to streamline paperwork and make things less confusing for landowners. This money has been in the SWCD account since 2003 when SMBSC gave it to the Hawk Creek Watershed Project to promote projects for MPCA required Phosphorus trading credits. **MSC (Kevin, Mark) to return \$17,265.31 to the Hawk Creek Watershed Project.**

MSC (Terrylea, Mark) to give approval to the District Manager to request funds from BWSR.

MSC (Terrylea, Kevin) to approve the Request to BWSR for Buffer Implementation Funds in the amount of \$45,000 and for MAWQCP funds in the amount of \$6,000.

MSC (Kevin, Terrylea) to change Bennett Trochlii's status to permanent full-time as of September 17, 2015 and to change his hourly salary to \$19.50/hour.

Next Meeting October 8, 2015 at the Ag Services Building.