



MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 10, 2017 MONTHLY BOARD MEETING

Supervisors

Chair
District 1
Vice Chair
District 2
Kevin Kokesch

The monthly meeting of the Renville Soil and Water Conservation District was called to order at 7:30 A.M. by chair, Mark Koenig, and opened with the pledge of allegiance.

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mark Koenig, Terrylea Ness, Kevin Kokesch, Jim Hebrink, Kathryn Kelly

Treasurer
District 3
Terrylea Ness

COUNTY COMMISSIONER: John Stahl

HAWK CREEK WATERSHED: Jordan Austin joined the meeting at 8:00 A.M. and left at 8:30 A.M.

District 4
Kathryn Kelly

BWSR: Jeremy Maul

District 5
Jim Hebrink

STAFF PRESENT: Holly Hatlewick and Michelle Koenig

NO CITIZENS PRESENT: Comment period dispensed

Staff
Holly Hatlewick
District
Administrator

CONSENT AGENDA: Approve the minutes of the July 13, 2017 regular meeting
(Kokesch, Ness) MSC

Karen Wermers
Farm Bill
Technician

TREASURERS REPORT FOR JULY 2017: Approve July's treasurers report
(Kelly, Hebrink) MSC

Cody Dale
Technician

STAFF REPORTS:

Michael Sandager
Technician

Holly Hatlewick: Administrator Hatlewick has been working with customers on the cover crop cost-share program. She attended the nation strip till conference and obtained lots of good information as well as networked. She presented on soil health and demoed the rain simulator at the Ryberg field day. She presented the rain simulator and on soil and health at the Extension Meeting on July 26, 2017. She worked at the Farm Fest Booth with Area V fielded a lot of comments and answered lots of buffer questions from attendees. She drafted the 2018 Budget and county budget request. She submitted the county budget request for 2018. She attended the Area VI manager meeting to discuss TSA services and deliverables. She attended High Islands One Watershed One Plan preliminary planning meeting. She also handled a variety of administrative work and book keeping.

Michelle Koenig
Administrative
Assistant

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Karen Wermers: Assisting landowners with CRP questions. The 2nd batch CREP deadline was July 31, 2017 – CP23, CP23A, CP2. She worked on 6 CREP applications. She is putting together CREP estimates for interested landowners. She assisted landowners with questions in regards to the buffer law while utilizing DNR's official buffer maps. She answered the phone and talked to landowners at the counter about CRP, CREP, and Buffer Law questions. She attended the Prairie Reconstruction Day hosted by Redwood County on July 27, 2017.

Cody Dale: Continuing to work with engineers and landowners to get designs and projects completed. Releasing bid forms to contractors. Working on Cultural Resource assessments and field reviews. John Kane grassed WW construction. The Beaver Falls WMA agreement with the DNR is out for bidding on the state website. Morton retention pond and survey Morton for dam safety permit. The Greenslit and Gaasch projects are to be constructed by Schmidt Construction. There is a joint project with Renville County and the SWCD to complete streambank restoration project. He worked on Wetland Banking applications, delineation requests for mining and building permits, and enhancement requests as well as Solar Garden applications through the county. He worked on the Sherman, Gaasch, and Forsyth grade stabilization structures for state cost-share. Technician Dale assisted multiple landowners regarding sealing wells and taking advantage of cost-share. He continued to work on the RIM enhancement project, haying and grazing plans, and RIM site inspections. The Sampson wetland restoration project is almost complete. He worked on the Gaasch RIM construction project. He assisted with CREP quotes. He handled MAWQCP applications and entering applicant information into the assessment tool. He took care of drill rentals and maintenance. He also did TSA and design training.

Mike Sandager: Contacting farmers to set up feedlot site visits and actively conducting feedlot inspections. There are about twelve left to complete. Administering and participating in the precipitation monitoring program. Maintaining SWCDs social media and website. Working on quotes for CRP and CREP. Informing landowners about CRP sign-up options. Answering questions about the buffer law and working with landowners on solutions for their land. He developed the Buffer State-Cost Share policy. He began tracking compliance and issuing waivers. He worked on quotes for CRP and CREP. He informed landowners about CRP sign-up options. Answered questions and informing walk-in visitors about CRP. He handled drill maintenance and rentals, discussed CREP with interested landowners, worked with SWCD and NRCS customers, developed the Cultural Resources policy, and conducted RIM spot checks. He trained Shelly on Supervisor Payroll, Grant and Payroll tracking, and Grant Tracking. He attended the Prairie Reconstruction Day held by Redwood County on July 27, 2017. He will be attending the Conservation Planning Training on August 15-18, 2017.

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Shelly Koenig: She has been working on a variety of administrative tasks as assigned by Administrator Hatlewick. She created bookmarks for Farmfest and the fair. She has scanned and forwarded bills to the accountant, processed RIM ownership change forms to BWSR, developed a variety of spreadsheets, compiled outreach and catalog information into binders, and reorganized the office space. She helped Karen prepare the information for the fair board. All RIM easements have been relabeled as well as the map books. She has worked to improve letterheads and spreadsheets as used by the SWCD staff. She will be attending the September 14-15th in Bloomington with Administrator Hatlewick and Board Member Ness.

NRCS REPORT: Jeff Kjorness reported that the deadline for EQIP applications is August 18, 2017. He currently has four ag waste projects in progress. 6 CSP applications are pre-approved for contracts. Ultima has a contract for an administrative assistant for NRCS.

BOARD REPORTS:

Kevin Kokesch: Attended the monthly SWCD meeting in July, but other than that has nothing to report.

Jim Hebrink: Attended the monthly SWCD meeting in July, but other than that has nothing to report.

Terrylea Ness: Attended regular meetings and Farm Fest on August 2, 2017. She went to the roundtable with Farmer's Union. They handled a lot of questions regarding buffer law and farm pricing from the crowd.

Mark Koenig: Attended two Crow River meetings. Sharlene formerly with the CROW obtained a new job and they are in the process of replacing her.

Kathryn Kelly: Kelly advised there is a 25 by 25 Governor Listening Session on August 16, 2017 in Mankato and on August 17, 2017 in Marshall and suggested for the board members to attend. She attended several BWSR meetings. She provided information on the University of Minnesota research in which they were able to prove why the buffer law is important and why landowners need to policy with it. She also informed on the modernization of drainage records and the steps being taken by Renville County to maintain records more accurately. She also reported on CREP outreach funds. If additional staff is needed, funds can be requested to hire an additional outreach technician for the SWCD. She advised for the SWCD to submit a letter of interest so that we may be on the list and that we can partner with water sheds.

COMMISSIONER STAHL REPORT: Informed that there was a problem with the demo at the hospital. Seventy-five percent of the addition ended up with asbestos in the footings, which

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has created a delay in the completion deadline. A county meeting was called to see what can be done to expedite the project. The first robotic surgery was completed on August 8, 2017 at the hospital. It is the only critical access hospital in the state of Minnesota with robotic capabilities. He talked about the county budget requests. They will be making decisions for entities requesting funds on August 15, 2017. He also reported that road construction is coming along on County Road 4 and Highway 71 South.

JORDAN AUSTIN – HAWK CREEK WATERSHED PROJECT: Jordan Austin joined the meeting at 8:00 A.M. to share information on water sampling and monitoring. He monitors three sites in Hawk Creek and three sites in Yellow Medicine. He takes downstream samples on the Renville County side and send them off to the lab in New Ulm. He also discussed his work with pesticide sampling and working with MN Discovery Farms. He also covered how Hawk Creek, Renville County, and the Renville County SWCD all work together to improve water in our county. Every Wednesday, Jordan connects with Redwood, Mankato, MSU and the MPCA for a call to share data and samples so everyone within the region can say on the same page for water improvement.

RENVILLE SWCD BUFFER COST-SHARE POLICY PROPSAL: Administrator Hatlewick brought forth to the board the SWCD Buffer Cost-Share Policy to adopt. The SWCD received \$75,000 to assist landowners with installing buffers. Jeremy Maul with BWSR advised that they cannot set a minimum dollar amount, but suggested to the board to consider looking at an acreage minimum. Renville County will also be receiving funding to handle the enforcement of the Buffer Law. In discussing the administrative process of monitoring buffer compliance, Administrator Hatlewick advised that Jeremy with Renville County is creating a new system similar to buffer-cat to assist the county and the SWCD. The policy draft submitted to the board was adopted with the only change being that that it applies to land in Renville County.

(Hebrink, Kokesch) MSC

Regarding the Buffer Cost-Share Policy, Administrator Hatlewick requested permission to sign contracts, grants, and agreements with BWSR and landowners on behalf of the SWCD. **(Kelly, Kokesch) MSC**

Jim Hebrink left the meeting at 8:45 A.M.

CULTURAL RESOURCES POLICY: In the best interest of the SWCD to protect cultural resources, Administrator Hatlewick proposed the policy the SWCD would like to use while evaluating areas within Renville County to ensure we are maintaining the integrity of the land. **(Kelly, Kokesch) MSC**

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SWCD OFFICE SPACE: Administrator Hatlewick proposed changes to the office space shared with NRCS. The landlord is okay with removing a portion of the wall currently enclosing Administrator Hatlewick's office to create a more open space for the staff. The landlord is willing to split the costs in half with the SWCD. The quote to complete the work is \$1,800. Discussion tabled until NRCS hires additional staff.

SWCD TO SELL TREES: Terrylea Ness proposed to start selling trees this fall and to begin advertising for it soon. Administrator Hatlewick advised that she will check with Technician Dale on where he is at with research and pricing and will report back to the board in September.

BWSR UPDATE FROM JEREMY MAUL: Jeremy Maul with BWSR advised that the applications for clear water funds for projects closed on August 9, 2017. He also advised that John Jaske is coming down on August 17, 2017 for a listening session in Mankato's army for 25 by 25. He will be in Marshall at the Lyon County Government Center in the Board Meeting room on August 18, 2017 for an additional listening session as well.

ACCOUNTING/PAYROLL: Administrator Hatlewick proposed to bring the account and payroll services back into the SWCD offices and to provide adequate compensation for Administrative Koenig to handle the duties. Kokesch suggested to have the Personnel Committee meet in regards on salary changes and to report that information at the September Board Meeting. Overall motion to transition away from CDS to the SWCD proposed. (Ness, Kelly) MSC

NEXT MEETING: The next regular meeting will be September 13, 2017 at 7:30 A.M. at the USDA Service Center in Olivia, MN.

ADJOURNMENT: To adjourn the Renville SWCD Meeting 10:10 A.M. (Kelly, Ness) MSC

SUPERVISOR