



MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Thursday, February 11, 2021

9:00 a.m.

4100 220th Street W, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

Laura Zanmiller, Chair
Kevin Chamberlain, Vice
Jayne Hager Dee, Treasurer
Chelsea Skog, Secretary
Bruce Johnson, Public Information Officer

SWCD Staff Present:

Brian Watson
Curt Coudron
Lana Rotty
Todd Matzke
Gabe Okins

David Holmen
Ashley Gallagher
Diane Schmidtke
Lindsey Albright
Joe Barten

Others Present:

Georg Fischer, Dakota County
Mark Zabel, VRW JPO

Due to the local state of emergency and social distancing, the Board of Supervisors participated in the meeting via telephone and the Board meeting was conducted under Minn. Stat. § 13D.021.

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Zanmiller called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m. Chair Zanmiller requested roll call. All Supervisors were present.

2. Audience

Chair Zanmiller asked if there was anyone on the call that wished to address the Board on an item that is not on the agenda. No one came forward.

3. Approval of Agenda

21.010 Motion by Johnson, second by Dee to approve the agenda. Members voting in favor: Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson, Dee, Chamberlain. Motion carried

CONSENT AGENDA

4. Approval of January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The January 14, 2021 Meeting Minutes were presented.

5. Approval of February 11, 2021 Accounts Payable

The February 11, 2021 Accounts Payable were presented.

- 6. Authorization to Exercise Technical Assistance Option for FY21 Conservation Cost Share Grant**
Authorization to use FY21 Conservation Cost Share funds of up to \$22,054 for technical assistance.
- 7. Authorization to Submit Non-Structural Land Management Practices Implementation Plan for FY21 Conservation Cost Share Grant**
Authorization to allow implementation of nonstructural practices with FY21 Conservation Cost Share Grant and other applicable grants under Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) policy.
- 8. Authorization to Submit FY21 funding request to Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources for Mississippi River East, Minnesota River South and Vermillion River Watershed Based Implementation and Execute Grant Agreement**
Authorization to submit funding request and execute a FY21 grant agreement with the BWSR under their Watershed Based Implementation Program to include Minnesota River South (\$50,000), Mississippi River East (\$32,565), Vermillion River (\$84,915).
- 9. Authorization to Enter into Engagement Letter with Peterson Company Ltd for Conducting 2020 Financial Audit**
Authorization to enter into engagement letter with Peterson Company Ltd. for conducting 2020 financial audit at cost not to exceed \$3,650.

21.011 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to approve the consent agenda items. Members voting in favor: Skog, Johnson, Dee, Chamberlain, Zanmiller. Motion carried.

REGULAR AGENDA

10. Adopt 2021 Cost Share Policies

Watson stated that cost share policies are updated and adopted annually to address administrative needs and program goals. The Rural Lands Committee met with staff on January 28 to discuss proposed changes and additions to our cost share policies. Coudron summarized the following proposed changes to the policy:

- Updating of staff credentials and delegated authorities.
- Allowing maintenance and repair on serviceable engineered practices that have exceeded their designed lifespan to be eligible for cost share.
- Requiring tax information to be supplied before payments can be issued on flat-rate payments.
- Updating application deadlines, completion deadlines, and project criteria for the Landscaping for Clean Water Program.
- Allowing a flat rate payment of \$150 per acre if temporary cover needs to be planted for future access or construction of a structural water quality practice.
- Requiring cover crops to be planted before October 15. Under the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) practice standard, some cover crops can be planted as late as November 1. This change is to get better fall establishment and winter cover.
- Making incentive payments for cover crops on an annual basis after cover crops are installed and certified each year on multi-year contracts. Previous payments have been made as a lump sum up front for multi-year contracts.
- Addition of Harvestable Covers based on \$20 or \$25 per acre, based on years of contract.
- Making Native Prairie Restoration part of the IPP program. It is currently the only cost share program dedicated to a specific practice type. Making it part of the Incentive Payment Practice program would not change the type of practice or cost share provided to applicants.
- Allowing Upland Wildlife Habitat Management as an accepted practice for Native Prairie pollinator habitat enhancement.

Coudron also stated that we have moving from the term technical approval authority to job approval authority to align with the NRCS standards.

Coudron further explained the harvestable cover incentive option for landowners. He stated that this is an addition to our existing programs, and it is not currently an accepted practice by BWSR or NRCS. It will allow landowners to have winter vegetation and harvest that for seed or grains.

Dee asked how we communicate our policies with landowners. Coudron stated that they are posted on the web site and are included with all newly approved contracts.

Dee also asked what the marketing strategy will be and how soon benefits might be seen. Coudron indicated that along with general outreach, it will be incorporated with other outreach, such as the Dakota County Ground Water Plan which targets nitrogen reduction. He also added that benefits from the harvestable cover crop option may be slow at the beginning since it is a new program.

Chamberlain added that the Harvestable Cover option will provide opportunities for landowners to diversify their cropping practices.

21.012 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to adopt 2021 State Cost Share Policies as presented. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Dee, Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog. Motion carried.

11. Announcements and Reports

Natural Resources Conservation Service

There was no report as NRCS staff indicated they had other commitments.

Dakota County

Georg Fischer, Director of Dakota County Environmental Resources provided the Dakota County report. He stated that he recently had the opportunity hear about the updated 2021 SWCD cost share policy at the Vermillion River Watershed Planning Commission (VRWPC) meeting and is looking forward to seeing how these options will be received by landowners. Currently, staff are updating the 2021 workplans with Environmental Resources and they appreciate the partnership with the SWCD. Staff continue to evaluate existing and additional programs that can be incorporated into the recently adopted Groundwater and Land Conservation Plans.

Metropolitan Conservation Districts Joint Power Board

There was no Metropolitan Conservation District Joint Powers Board report. The next meeting is scheduled for February 24.

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Watson provided the Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) report. He stated that the Legislative day is scheduled for March 18 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. in virtual format. Registration is required, all Supervisors expressed interest in attending. Watson added that we should discuss how we want to reach out to legislators this year. Dee suggested we also focus on newly elected Dakota County Commissioners as well. Dee recommended hosting a tour later this summer or early fall.

Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board

There was no Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board report. The next meeting is April 7.

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

Mark Zabel provided the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (VRWJPO) report. He began commending the SWCD Board for approving the Harvestable Cover option in the 2021 Cost Share Policy. He noted that he would like this incentive based on performance in the future with values calculated on pollutant reductions. He added that Vermillion River Watershed funds are provided annually to implement the SWCD Cost Share programs and policy for landowners within the watershed and is

looking forward to seeing how the new Harvestable Cover program will be received by landowners. He noted that John Stelzner with the SWCD provided an update of the Braun Wetland bank to the VRWPC yesterday. He stated that this includes approximately 15 acres of wetland credits for the VRWJPO. He further stated that he appreciates SWCD staff willingness to present at VRWJPO meetings as it is important for members.

District Managers Report

Watson requested a finance committee meeting be scheduled prior to the March Board meeting.

He highlighted that the new and improved website has launched, encouraged Supervisors to review and provide feedback.

Watson also asked if the Board had any suggestions on how the virtual format for Board Meetings could be improved. He added that Dave Holmen will be reaching out to each Board member individually to assist iPad and software programs as needed.

Board of Supervisors Reports

There were no reports or updates.

Upcoming Events

The upcoming events were reviewed.

12. Adjourn

20.013 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to adjourn the meeting. Members voting in favor: Dee, Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:03 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Skog

Secretary