



MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Thursday, June 10, 2021

9:00 a.m.

4100 220th Street W, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

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

SWCD Staff Present:

Brian Watson
Curt Coudron
Lana Rotty
Todd Matzke
Joe Barten

Others Present:

Michelle Wohlers, NRCS
George Fischer, Dakota County
Valerie Grover, Dakota County

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 9:00 a.m. Chair Zanmiller requested a roll call. Supervisors Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson were present. Supervisor Dee had previously indicated that she would need to join the meeting a bit late due to another commitment.

2. Audience

Chair Zanmiller asked if there was anyone in the audience that wished to address the Board on an item that is not on the agenda. Nobody came forward.

3. Approval of Agenda

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

CONSENT AGENDA

4. Approval of May 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes

The May 13, 2021 Meeting Minutes were presented.

5. Approval of June 10, 2021 Accounts Payable

The June 10, 2021 Accounts Payable were presented.

6. Acceptance of April 2021 Financial Report

The April 2021 Financial Report was reviewed.

7. Acceptance of May 2021 Financial Report

The May 2021 Financial Report was reviewed.

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

REGULAR AGENDA

8. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to Steve Meyers for repair of Water and Sediment Control Basin

Steve Meyers has completed the repair of a water and sediment control basin in Douglas Township, Trout Brook watershed of the Cannon River. The project was approved for funding at the October 8, 2020 Board meeting at 75% cost share not to exceed \$1,275 and based on a cost estimate of \$1,700. Final project cost was \$1,240.

21.046 Motion by Johnson, second by Chamberlain to approve final payment to Steve Meyers for repair of water and sediment control basin in Section 8, Douglas Township, Trout Brook Watershed of the Cannon River at \$930 from CY Agreements with the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization and Dakota County. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog. Motion carried.

9. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to John (JB) Dudley for Installation of Grassed Waterway

JB Dudley has completed the installation of a 1,393-foot grassed waterway in Waterford Township, Cannon River Watershed. The project was approved for funding at the September 10, 2020 Board meeting at 75% cost share not to exceed \$17,475 and based on a cost estimate of \$23,300. Final project cost was \$24,062.81.

21.047 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to approve final payment to John (JB) Dudley for installation of grassed waterway in Section 28, Waterford Township, Trout Brook Watershed of the Cannon River at \$17,475 from CY Agreement with Dakota County and FY20 State Cost Share Grant. Members voting in favor: Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson. Motion carried.

10. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to Ron Beissel for Repair of Grade Stabilization Structure

Ron Beissel has completed the repair of grade stabilization structure in Hampton Township, Vermillion River Watershed. The project was approved for funding at the October 8, 2020 Board meeting at 75% cost share not to exceed \$4,300 and based on a cost estimate of \$8,764.25. Final project cost was \$7,743.84.

21.048 Motion by Johnson, second by Chamberlain to approve final payment to Ron Beissel for repair of grade stabilization structure in Section 12, Hampton Township, Vermillion River Watershed at \$3,616.82 from CY Agreements with the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization and Dakota County. Members voting in favor: Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson. Motion carried.

11. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to Dan Duncomb for Installation of Grade Stabilization Structure

Dan Duncomb has completed the installation of a grade stabilization structure in Douglas Township, Trout Brook watershed of the Cannon River. The project was approved for funding at the April 8, 2021 Board meeting at 75% cost share not to exceed \$15,300 and based on a cost estimate of \$20,400. Due to dry site conditions, additional soil preparation and an alternative stabilization method was needed, which increased project costs. Dan has requested to amend the contract to include cost share for the increased project costs. Final project cost was \$21,503.39.

21.049 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to amend contract with Dan Duncomb to increase the cost estimate (final cost) to \$21,503.39 with 75% cost share not to exceed \$16,127.54. Provide final payment for installation of grade stabilization structure and waterway in Section 28, Waterford Township,

Trout Brook Watershed of the Cannon River at \$16,127.54 from FY18 Trout Brook Watershed Initiative Grant. Members voting in favor: Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson. Motion carried.

12. Authorization to Execute Contract with Peine Cattle Company for Establishing Cover Crops (multi-year)

Peine Cattle Company is proposing to establish cover crops on 100 acres over a three-year period. The field is in Douglas Township, Trout Brook Watershed. A seeding plan has been prepared and accepted.

21.050 Motion by Johnson, second by Chamberlain to execute contract 21-IPP-24 with Peine Cattle Company for establishment of cover crops on 100 acres at \$35 per acre annually, for three years, not to exceed \$10,500 from CY Agreement with Dakota County and the FY18 Trout Book Watershed Initiative Grant. Members voting in favor: Skog, Johnson, Chamberlain, Zanmiller. Motion carried.

13. Authorization to Execute Contract with Pat Maher for Establishing Cover Crop (one-year)

Pat Maher is proposing to establish cover crop on 27 acres over a one-year period. The field is in Marshan Township, Vermillion River Watershed. A seeding plan has been prepared and accepted.

21.051 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to execute contract 21-IPP-25 with Pat Maher for establishment of cover crops on 27 acres at \$25 per acre annually, for one year, not to exceed \$675 from CY Agreements with Dakota County and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog. Motion carried.

14. Authorization to Execute Contract with Pat Maher for Establishing Cover Crops (three-year)

Pat Maher is proposing to establish cover crops on 75 acres over a three-year period. The field is in Marshan Township, Vermillion River Watershed. A seeding plan has been prepared and accepted.

21.052 Motion by Johnson, second by Chamberlain to execute contract 21-IPP-28 Pat Maher for establishment of cover crops on 75 acres at \$35 per acre annually, for three years, not to exceed \$7,875 from CY Agreements with Dakota County and the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization. Members voting in favor: Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson. Motion carried.

Supervisor Dee joined the meeting.

15. Authorization to Contract with Noah Blaha for Installation of Native Prairie with Pollinator Habitat

Noah Blaha is proposing to install a native prairie with pollinator habitat in Vermillion Township, Vermillion River Watershed. The native prairie will improve infiltration, reduce erosion, and provide wildlife habitat, particularly for pollinators. Total costs of the project are estimated at \$3,300.

21.053 Motion by Johnson, second by Chamberlain to execute contract 21-IPP-29 with Noah Blaha for installation of native prairie with pollinator habitat on 1 acre in Vermillion Township of the Vermillion River Watershed at 75% cost share, not to exceed \$2,475 from CY Agreements with Dakota County and Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization. Members voting in favor: Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson, Dee, Chamberlain. Motion carried.

16. Authorization to Execute Contract with Nollie Freeman for Installation of Native Prairie with Pollinator Habitat

Nolie Freeman is proposing to install a native prairie with pollinator habitat in Douglas Township, Trout Brook Watershed of the Cannon River. The native prairie will improve infiltration, reduce erosion, and provide wildlife habitat, particularly for pollinators. Total costs of the project are estimated at \$11,800.

21.054 Motion by Johnson, second by Skog to execute contract 21-IPP-30 with Nollie Freeman for installation of native prairie with pollinator habitat on 4.50 acres in Douglas Township, Trout Brook Watershed of the Cannon River at 75% cost share, not to exceed \$8,850 from CY Agreements with Dakota County and FY18 Trout Brook Watershed Initiative Grant. Members voting in favor: Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson, Dee, Chamberlain. Motion carried.

17. Authorization to Execute Contract with RESPEC for development of Irrigation Management Assistant Online Scheduling Tool

Gallagher stated that in 2019 the SWCD used Watershed Based Funding to gather input from irrigators in Dakota County. There was support to develop a publicly available, online irrigation scheduling tool, specifically the Irrigation Management Assistant (IMA) tool, that was demonstrated at an irrigator focus group meeting. This tool has been developed for parts of Benton and East Otter Tail Counties. There is also an effort to expand the IMA tool statewide through LCCMR funding. However, statewide funding has not yet been approved and development may not occur for a few years. The SWCD and Dakota County want to move forward and make the IMA tool available for the 2022 growing season. Funds are available through the Cannon River and Vermillion River Watershed Based Implementation grant and Dakota County under Groundwater Plan implementation.

RESPEC would develop the IMA tool with a completion goal of November 2021. Research could be conducted with the IMA tool this growing season, however full roll out of the IMA tool would occur over the winter months in preparation for the 2022 growing season.

Chamberlain stated that a few years ago, Steve Meyers participated with an irrigation management pilot project and he wondered if this was a similar type of program and technology. Gallagher replied the Meyers pilot program involved a few agencies; and they took measurements with a “checkbook” method, while this is a much more automated way to do this.

21.055 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to execute contract with RESPEC for development of Irrigation Management Assistant Online Scheduling Tool with a not to exceed cost of \$34,226 that includes set-up costs of \$28,226 and maintenance costs of \$6,000. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Dee, Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog. Motion carried.

18. Authorization to Execute Joint Powers Agreement with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) to assist with implementing the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan within Hastings Drinking Water Supply Management Area

Gallagher stated that the SWCD has had an agreement with Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) since 2017 for work related to the State of Minnesota Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan and the Groundwater Protection Rule which includes coordination of the Local Advisory Team (LAT). The current agreement with the MDA expires June 30, 2021.

A new agreement has been prepared that would start July 1, 2021 and expire June 30, 2023 with a not-to-exceed amount of \$7,936. The agreement would allow for continued assistance from SWCD to continue with the LAT.

21.056 Motion by Johnson, second by Chamberlain to execute contract with Minnesota Department of Agriculture to assist with implementing the Nitrogen Fertilizer Management Plan within Hastings Drinking Water Supply Management Area at a total not to exceed \$7,936. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Dee, Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog. Motion carried.

19. Modify Priority Location sites identified in the Trout Brook sub-watershed Analysis (SWA)

Coudron stated that in 2016, a sub-watershed analysis (SWA) was completed to identify locations for implementing conservation practices within the Trout Brook watershed. The goal of the SWA was to determine the most cost-effective projects within the watershed and prioritize projects for implementation. The SWA considered project feasibility, estimated construction costs, and pollutant reduction potential for each identified project. For each location where a conservation practice was identified, a cost-benefit ratio was estimated and projects were ranked with the most cost-effective sites receiving the highest priority.

Since the completion of the SWA, two Clean Water Fund grants have been received to implement projects that were most cost effective within the Trout Brook Watershed of the Cannon River. The first grant (Phase 1), which has been completed and closed, specifically targeted practices with an annualized sediment reduction cost of less than \$10 per ton.

Dakota County SWCD Cost Share Policy allows the District Board to designate “Priority Locations” that would provide up to 90% cost share for projects. This increased cost share allocation creates better incentives for the most beneficial projects. In 2017, the District Board designated projects with an annualized sediment reduction cost of less than \$10 per ton be identified as Priority Locations to align with the first grant.

The Phase II grant, which is currently being implemented, specifically targets practices with an annualized sediment reduction cost of less than \$30 per ton. Staff recommends modifying the “Priority Locations” to include projects with an annualized sediment reduction cost of less than \$30 per ton to align with the Phase 2 grant which would then allow for cost share up to 90% of project costs.

Projects that exceed \$30/ton/year of sediment reduction would still be eligible for cost share allocations of up to 75% of the project cost.

21.057 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to modify “Priority Location” sites in the Trout Book Watershed to include projects with annualized sediment reduction cost of \$30 per ton/year. Members voting in favor: Dee, Chamberlain, Zanmiller, Skog, Johnson. Motion carried.

20. Announcements and Reports

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Michelle Wohlers provided the NRCS report. She stated that she and Matthew Schaar are working out of Farmington, Lucas is now working out of the Faribault office. She noted that there is a Soil Conservationist vacancy for the Farmington office. They received 65 EQIP applications. Of those, 13 have been pre-approved and 35 are pending approval. She stated that a new office lease is being negotiated and they will be adding space to work with clients as well as space to house additional employees. Staff attended irrigation water management training in Rice, Minnesota. A new Chief for the NRCS, Terry Crosby, has been hired. He was previously the State Conservationist in Ohio.

Dakota County

George Fischer and Valerie Grover were in attendance from Dakota County; Grover provided the report. She stated that they are beginning to implement the Groundwater Plan. This Plan has been approved by BWSR and adopted by the County Board of Commissioners. Grover highlighted a few strategies and priorities that are underway including work with groundwater quality, groundwater quantity, education, governance and developing a comprehensive approach to evaluate new opportunities. Specifics to these priorities included:

Water Quality:

Plan to assist private well owners by implementing community-focused private well testing program and target well seal grants in Mississippi River East Watershed Based Incentive Funding grant area. As for the well testing program, over the next five years they will offer every private well owner the opportunity to test for contaminants. This is approximately 2,000 annually, with the first round of approximately 635 landowners, 30% returned their post-card indicating they are participating.

Reduce agricultural chemical contamination by developing the Agricultural Chemical Reeducation Effort (ACRE). They will be contracting with a facilitator to conduct stakeholder engagement with rural landowners to identify what can be implemented and what is workable.

Establish Minnesota Department of Agriculture and Dakota County monitoring well network in the Hastings DWSMA by adding 30 wells outside that area to see if current strategies are working.

Water Quantity:

The well ordinance has been updated to prevent unsustainable groundwater appropriations and exportation.

Education:

Expanded groundwater education efforts are underway, including making the information available in multiple languages.

Governance:

Establish County Groundwater/Source Water Collaborative.

Comprehensive Approach:

With this priority, they will be requesting local agencies complete a survey so they can identify and address quality and quantity concerns, develop efficiencies-shared data, tools, and resources, identify resource needed at local level for projects, and Identify opportunities to initiate county-wide.

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

There was no Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization report.

Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board

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

Metropolitan Conservation Districts Joint Power Board

There was no Metropolitan Conservation District Joint Powers Board report. The next meeting is scheduled for August 25.

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Watson stated that the Metro Area meeting will be held virtually on June 18 at 9:00 a.m. Policy resolutions will be considered at this meeting but the annual tour has been cancelled due to Covid.

District Managers Report

Watson stated the building will be re-opening on July 6 and he asked if a return to in-person meetings would be preferred. The consensus was to hold the July meeting in person and to follow any current health safety requirements that may be in place. Watson indicated that he would like to schedule a Personnel Committee meeting in June to discuss changes to Employee Policy Handbook and to conduct his mid-year review.

Watson stated that National Pollinator week is June 21 -27. A kick-off event is being planned for June 16 at 2:00 at Spring Lake Park. Chamberlain will attend that event and Watson will update him as information becomes available. State agency staff and Lieutenant Governor Flanagan are also planning an event at the Kimber farm on June 24. Watson reminded those present that Kimber Contours received the SWCDs 2020 Conservation Cooperator award and they farm in Castle Rock Township. More information will be provided as it becomes available. Supervisor Dee indicated that she would plan to attend.

Board of Supervisors Reports

Chamberlain stated that he watched Sorg Farms plant cover crops recently. They have a machine to apply rye grass in standing corn. An application of nitrogen, will follow, the rye grass will germinate, the corn will shade it to slow or stagnate growth. The corn will be harvested, the cover crop will remain. He is very interested to see the outcome of this conservation practice.

20. Upcoming Events

The upcoming events were reviewed.

21. Adjourn

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

The meeting was adjourned at 10:09 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Skog
Secretary