



MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Thursday, February 8, 2024

9:00 a.m.

4100 220th Street W, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

Kevin Chamberlain, Chair
Jayne Dee Hager, Treasurer
Bruce Johnson, Secretary and Information Officer

SWCD Staff Present:

Brian Watson
Pam LaValle
Curt Coudron
Ashley Gallagher
Todd Matzke
Lindsey Albright
John Stelzner

Others Present:

Dain Olson, DCAO
Valerie Neppel, Dakota County
Travis Thiel, Vermillion River Watershed
Joaquin Guerrero, Student ISD 196

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Chair Chamberlain called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. A quorum was present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Chamberlain led the Board of Supervisors in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Audience

Chair Chamberlain 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.

4. Presentation

Joaquin Guerrero, a student of ISD 196 and the School of Environmental Studies, presented on his mentoring experience with the Dakota County Soil and Water Conservation District (SWCD).

5. Approval of Agenda

24.010 Motion by Dee second by Johnson to approve the agenda. Members voting in favor: Chamberlain, Johnson, and Dee. Motion carried.

CONSENT AGENDA

6. Approval of January 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes

The January 11, 2024 meeting minutes were presented.

7. Approval of February 8, 2024 Accounts Payable

The February 2024 accounts payable were presented.

8. Authorization to Enter into Engagement Letter with Peterson Company LTD for conducting 2023 Financial Audit.

Engagement letter with Peterson Company LTD for 2023 Financial Audit was presented.

9. Ratify Approval of Master Joint Powers Agreement with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources for providing Technical Assistance to Implement the RIM Reserve Program.

The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources administers the Reinvest in Minnesota (RIM) easement program. The RIM is a voluntary program that provides state funds to landowners for establishing conservation easements. The State needs assistance at the local level from SWCDs to assist with program administration and landowner coordination. The role of the SWCD will be to provide easement delivery services, easement acquisition services, conservation plan development and implementation, and construction implementation.

24.011 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to approve the consent agenda with a change to the January 11, 2024 meeting minutes to add the Building Facility Committee to the list of standing committees and Dee and Johnson as being appointed to that Committee. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Chamberlain, and Dee. Motion carried.

REGULAR AGENDA**10. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to Mark Malecha for Installation of Water and Sediment Control Basins.**

Mark Malecha has completed the construction of two water and sediment control basins in Greenvale Township, Cannon River Watershed. The project was approved for funding at the April 13, 2023 Board meeting at 85% cost share not to exceed \$14,535.

24.012 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to provide final payment of \$14,535.00 to Mark Malecha (23-IPP-02) for the Installation of Water and Sediment Control Basins. Project funds are available through our FY22 State Cost Share Grant and our agreements with Dakota County and North Cannon River Watershed Management Organization. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Dee, and Chamberlain. Motion carried.

11. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to Gerald Henry and Elaine Marie Swedin Trust for Installation of Water and Sediment Control Basins and a Grassed Waterway.

Gerald Henry and Elaine Marie Swedin Trust (Gerry Swedin) has completed the construction of two water and sediment control basins and a grassed waterway in Eureka Township, Cannon River Watershed. The project was approved for funding at the October 12, 2023 Board meeting at 85% cost share not to exceed \$23,375.

24.013 Motion by Johnson, second by Dee to provide final payment of \$18,093.00 to Gerald Henry and Elaine Marie Swedin Trust (23-IPP-45) for two water and sediment control basins and a grassed waterway. Project funds are available through our FY23 Cannon River WBIF Grant. Members voting in favor: Johnson, Dee, and Chamberlain. Motion carried.

12. Authorization to Provide Final Payment to Janelle and Jim Cikanek for the Installation of Native Prairie with Pollinator Habitat.

Janelle and Jim Cikanek have completed the installation of a 0.6-acre native prairie with pollinator habitat in Sciota Township, Cannon River Watershed. The project was approved for funding at the June 8, 2023 Board meeting at 85% cost share not to exceed \$1,615.

24.014 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to provide final payment of \$1,615.00 to Jim Cikanek (23-IPP-24) for native prairie with pollinator habitat. Project funds are available through our FY22 Drinking Water

Protection Project grant and our agreement with Dakota County. Members voting in favor: Dee, Chamberlain, and Johnson. Motion carried.

13. Authorization to Execute Joint Powers Agreement with the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District for 2024 Services.

Staff has drafted a 2024 work plan and budget for services to the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District (LMRWD). The work plan and budget include a total amount not to exceed \$20,750 for education and community engagement through our Landscaping for Clean Water (LCW) program, technical assistance with fen well monitoring and project installations, and LCW cost share.

24.015 Motion by Johnson, second by Dee to execute joint powers agreement with the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District for 2024 Services. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

14. ADOPT 2024 COST SHARE POLICY

The 2024 cost share policies were presented. Highlights of the proposed cost share policy changes for 2024 include:

Adding a new "pilot" program, "Lawns Reimagined", focused on assisting homeowners wishing to convert traditional turf lawns into fescue lawns which require less water, fertilizer, and maintenance.

Adding new soil health incentives under the Incentive Payment Practices Program to include:

- No-till/strip-till of \$15/acre for a single year contract or \$20/acre/year for a multiple year contract
- Incentives for implementing secondary practices (must implement cover crops, harvestable cover, or reduced tillage to qualify):
 - Nitrogen Inhibitors (\$5/acre)
 - Planting Green (\$10/acre)
 - Split Rate Nitrogen Application (\$5/acre)
 - Irrigation Management (\$5/acre)

Allowing extensions to cover crop planting dates based on current and forecasted weather conditions.

Increase in the native prairie restoration funding to \$4,000 per acre for native prairies that include pollinator habitat.

24.016 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to adopt the 2024 Cost Share Policies. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

15. ADOPT AMENDMENTS TO EMPLOYEE POLICY MANUAL

Updates to the Employee Policy Manual were presented. The Personnel Committee reviewed the draft policy changes at their meeting on December 7, 2023. Subsequently and in accordance with our 5-year joint powers agreement with Dakota County, the updated policies were coordinated with Dakota County Employee Relations.

Several minor changes were made to correct grammar errors, improve formatting, and provide clarity. The more significant changes include:

Improve language under Remote Work and reference to County Policy 3182

Further clarify differences between County Policy 3241 under Flex Leave

New language under the Insurance, Workers Compensation and Retirement section that summarizes employee benefits including a new Health Savings Plan

24.017 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to adopt the Employee Policy Manual Amendments. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

16. UPDATE ON 2024 LANDSCAPING FOR CLEAN WATER PROGRAM

An update on the 2024 Landscaping for Clean Water (LCW) Program was provided. Classes will be held in-person and virtually beginning in late February. There will be three rounds for submitting LCW grant

applications - residents must attend an Introduction and Design Course before submitting a grant application. Grant awards will be up to \$250 per project installed. The LCW program is funded through our annual agreements with watershed management organizations.

17. Announcements and Reports

Natural Resources Conservation Service

The Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) report was submitted via email and presented by Brian Watson. The report included opportunity for an education outreach grant and that EQIP preliminary ranking assessments will be completed by Friday.

Dakota County

The Dakota County report was provided by Valerie Neppl. Neppl provided an update to a Safe Drinking Water for Private Well Owners grant, the Groundwater Protection and Implementation grant, and chloride reduction efforts.

Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board

The Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Board report was provided by Kevin Chamberlain. Chamberlain reported the Board met February 7, 2024. At the meeting, the 2024 Officers were elected; Cost Share Policy adopted; a well grant update was provided, and the annual report was presented.

Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization

The Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization report was provided by Travis Thiel. Thiel provided an update on the next generation watershed management plan.

Metropolitan Conservation Districts Joint Power Board

No report provided. The next meeting is February 28, 2024.

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

The Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation District report was provided by Brian Watson. Watson reported the Day at the Capital will be March 13, 2024. The briefing will be held March 12, 2024. Please let Brian Watson know if you plan to attend; registration is due March 5, 2024.

District Managers Report

Watson reported he has currently received three qualified letters of interest for the District 3 Board vacancy. The deadline for submitting letters of interest is February 16, 2024.

Board of Supervisors Announcements

No report provided.

18. Upcoming Events

The upcoming events were reviewed.

19. Adjourn

24.018 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to adjourn. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:15 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,



Bruce Johnson
Secretary