



MEETING MINUTES BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Thursday, February 2, 2017

8:30 a.m.

4100 220th Street, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

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

SWCD Staff Present:

Brian Watson
Lana Rotty
Curt Coudron
Todd Matzke
John Stelzner
Ashley Gallagher
Joe Barten

Others Present:

Brad Becker, Dakota County
Michelle Wohlers, NRCS

1. Call to Order

Chair Zanmiller called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. A quorum was present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. Presentation

Watson presented an overview of District operations to the Board of Supervisors including program information and revenue sources under 2017 adopted budget.

A Supervisor Handbook was distributed to each Board member with various information including organizational chart, acronyms and websites for additional information, adopted Board operating rules, employee policy manual, adopted comprehensive plan, joint powers agreement with Dakota County, merit compensation policy and plan, and Board and staff contact information.

4. 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. No one appeared.

5. Approval of Agenda

17.015 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Johnson to approve the agenda as presented. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

6. Secretary's Report – January 5, 2017 Board Meeting Minutes

17.016 Motion by Dee, second by Chamberlain to approve the January 5, 2017 Meeting Minutes. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

7. Treasurer's Report – February 2, 2017 Accounts Payable

17.017 Motion by Dee, second by Chamberlain to approve the February 2, 2017 Accounts Payable. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

Committee of the Whole

8.1 Resolution Accepting Certain Wetland Conservation Act Authorities from City of West St. Paul

Watson stated that the City of West St. Paul passed a resolution at their November 14, 2016 city council meeting to delegate certain decision and administrative authorities to the SWCD to include the following: Official Listing as WCA Contact, Wetland Delineations and Determinations, No Loss Determinations, Exemption Determinations, and Providing State Required Annual Reports.

17.018 Motion by Meyers, second by Chamberlain to accept the City of West St. Paul resolution delegating certain decision and administrative authorities under the Minnesota Wetland Conservation Act. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

8.2 Authorization to Request funds and Execute FY17 Grant Agreement with the Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources for Local Capacity Services

Watson provided an overview of Legislation passed in 2015 that provided new state funding to soil and water conservation districts for fiscal year (FY) 2016 and 2017 to increase their local capacity and the delivery of conservation. Last year we were appropriated \$130,337. The Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) recently provided guidance on the requirements to request FY2017 funds. For FY2017, the appropriated amount is \$100,000 but an additional \$14,500 State match is available if an equal amount is provided from the County above their funding level in 2016. We received a county levy increase of \$4,636 but will have additional revenues of approximately \$15,000 through charges for services to county departments and in-kind services under our joint powers agreement. BWSR is requiring documentation from Dakota County that the match will be provided and staff is currently working to obtain the necessary information. Watson indicated that based on the State appropriation of \$114,500, the following programs and activities have been identified for these funds:

- \$40,000 for compliance reviews of cost-share contracts and County easements
- \$39,500 for engineering and technical Assistance to implement projects
- \$15,000 for GIS land cover updates
- \$10,000 for promoting of soil and groundwater health
- \$10,000 to advance staff credentials and training

The term of the grant agreement would be from the time of execution until December 31, 2019.

17.019 Motion by Chamberlain, second by Dee to approve the workplan and execution of agreement for the FY17 BWSR Local Capacity Services Grant. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

8.3 Minnesota Ag Water Quality Certification Program Update

Gallagher provided an update on the Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification Program (MAWQCP). She stated that this is a statewide program offered by the Minnesota Department of Agriculture (MDA) that is implemented on a local level. The MAWQCP started as a pilot program in 2014 in four Minnesota watersheds. The program became available statewide in 2015 and local promotion of the program started in January 2016.

The goal of the MAWQCP is to give farmers and agricultural landowners the opportunity to showcase the conservation work they are doing as well as identify opportunities for new conservation practices. A whole farm assessment is completed that looks at physical field characteristics, nutrient management factors, tillage management factors, pest management factors, irrigation and tile drainage management, and conservation practices. An online tool is used to aggregate this information and calculate a score. In order to be eligible for certification a score of 8.5 or higher is required.

Benefits of certification include regulatory certainty; recognition and being prioritize for technical and financial assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP). Participation in the MAWQCP has been better than some areas of the State largely due to the outreach efforts of our Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) partners. To date, we have 18 applications, of which 7 have become certified and 4 have realized the program is not for them. The remaining 7 applications are still in progress, requiring a field review and final approval by a Certified Licensing Agent.

Watson added that if a landowner is not ready to be certified, they can work toward certification.

8.4 Landscaping for Clean Water Workshop Update

Barten provided an informational update on the Landscaping for Clean Water program. He stated that workshops are held throughout Dakota County and have been highly successful in providing outreach and education opportunities to residents. The watershed management organizations of Dakota County primarily fund these workshops through our annual agreements.

Ten introductory workshops have been scheduled between February and June of 2017 and we are currently accepting registrations. After the introductory workshops, two-evening design courses will be provided to those that wish to install a raingarden or native prairie planting on their land. Participation to attend the introductory workshop is free and a prerequisite to attending the two-evening design course. The design workshops require a small fee (\$25). This year, 30 workshops are scheduled. Participants in the design workshops are then eligible to receive a \$250 grant and technical assistance from SWCD staff for the installation of their project.

8. Draft 2017 Cost Share Policies

Coudron provided an overview of existing cost-share programs and draft policies for 2017. He noted the variety of conservation project funding requests possible in Dakota County and the different programs that have been established to manage these requests. Funding limits have been established based on project type.

Coudron provided an overview of each of the cost share programs; Landscaping for Clean Water (LCW), Citizen Conservation Stewards (CCS), Citizen Conservation Stewards (CCS), Conservation Initiative Funding (CIF), Community Conservation Partnership (CCP), Community Conservation Partnership (CCP), and Incentive Payment Practices (IPP).

Coudron then reviewed the proposed cost share policy changes for 2017. Dee questioned the labor, equipment and material rates identified. Coudron explained that different rates are used when landowners hire contractors. The rates identified are used when the landowner or volunteers complete the work to establish consistent payment rates and policy.

Dee also asked if we knew what our compliance rate is on cost share contracts. Coudron stated that non-compliance has been minimal. Staff work with landowners as soon as possible to correct issues. Coudron stated that last year 87% of the projects inspected were in good to excellent condition.

Becker questioned how priority locations would be identified. Coudron responded that they would be identified continuously as needed. They would be site location specific rather than watershed based in order to tie into completed feasibility studies or subwatershed analysis documents.

9. Interagency Reports and Announcements

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Michelle Wohler's provided the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) agency report. She stated that the Conservation Stewardship Program application deadline is Friday, February 3. They received 8 applications. She noted that they have received 32 applications under the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) and funding awards will be announced on March 23. The deadline for EQIP applications for landowners pursuing the Minnesota Ag. Water Quality Certification Program is March 6. She added that they have referred eight landowners to the SWCD. She also stated that these landowners are interested in being qualified and recognized as good stewards of the land as well as being eligible for higher rates of financial assistance.

Wohler's then reviewed the Civil Rights responsibilities with the Board of Supervisors and requested confirmation signatures.

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

Watson stated that the MASWCD Legislative briefing and Day at the Capitol is scheduled for March 20 and 21.

Metro Conservation Districts Joint Powers Board

The next meeting is scheduled for February 22nd.

Dakota County

Brad Becker, Water Resources Supervisor provided the Dakota County report. He stated that the County and Soil and Water partner on many items. He provided an update on the Aquatic Invasive Species Program (AIS). This AIS program is a statewide priority program and currently is funded at 10 million dollars annually. The State is distributing that funding to counties based on the number of public boat launches and parking spaces. Dakota County receives \$123,000 annually. They are currently developing an AIS workplan. To develop this workplan, they are following the watershed planning process. Begin with identifying resource; lakes, rivers, streams that may be threatened, and identify issues that the County may have. The next step is to identify and prioritize solutions. The goal is to have the workplan ready for this fishing opener in May. The final draft of the AIS plan is currently being reviewed by cities and watershed organizations. Becker noted that the workplan was written by Lindsey Albright of the SWCD, and expressed that she has done a great job. The priority waters identified in the Dakota County system include Chub Lake and Lake Bylesby. This does not mean AIS activity is not happening in other waters in Dakota County. They want to find out what exists in these areas and how susceptible these waterbodies are for AIS. They will be hiring inspectors for weekends to check boats going in and coming out of these waters. Education and outreach will also be occurring. They are also developing a grant program. This workplan will run through 2020.

Cannon River One Watershed, One Plan Policy Committee

Watson stated that the Cannon River One Watershed, One Plan Policy Committee will be meeting on March 1, Chamberlain and Dee will attend.

10. Upcoming Meetings and Events

The upcoming events were reviewed. Watson added that the next meeting will be March 2 at 8:30 a.m. A finance committee meeting was scheduled for February 21 at 9:00 a.m.

District Managers Report

Watson stated that business cards for the Supervisors will be available at the March meeting.

Watson stated that the Flood Relief Grants term ended on December 31, 2016. He noted that staff oversaw the completion of 70 projects totaling over \$850,000 in construction costs. Watson added that we will be returning \$34,607.53 of unspent project funds to BWSR.

11. Adjourn

17.020 Motion by Dee, second by Johnson to adjourn the meeting. All members voting in favor. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chelsea Skog, Secretary