



MEETING MINUTES

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING

DAKOTA COUNTY SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

Wednesday, February 3, 2016

8:30 a.m.

4100 220th Street, Suite 102
Farmington, Minnesota

Board Members Present:

Laura Zanmiller, Chair
Joe Meyers, Vice Chair
Chris Nielsen, Secretary

SWCD Staff Present:

Brian Watson
Lana Rotty
Brad Becker
Todd Matzke
Ashley Gallagher
Lindsey Albright

Others Present:

Dakota County Commissioner Mike Slavik

1. Call to Order

Chair Zanmiller called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m. The meeting started late due to snowstorm and travel conditions. Chamberlain had contacted the office and indicated he would not be able to attend. A quorum was present.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

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

3. 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.

4. Approval of Agenda

16.022 Motion by Meyers, second by Nielsen to approve the agenda as presented. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

5. Secretary's Report – January 7, 2016 Board Meeting Minutes

16.023 Motion by Nielsen, Second by Meyers to approve the January 7, 2016 Meeting Minutes. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

6. Treasurer's Report

6.1 February 3, 2016 Accounts Payable

16.024 Motion by Meyers, second by Nielsen to approve the February 3, 2016 Accounts Payable. Members voting yes: Zanmiller, Nielsen, Meyers. Members absent: Brown, Chamberlain. Motion carried.

Committee of the Whole

7.1 Adopt 2016 Cost Share Policies

Watson highlighted proposed changes to calendar year 2016 cost share policies. He stated that there are no staff recommended changes to the five current cost share programs offered; Landscaping for Clean Water, Citizen Conservation Stewards, Conservation Initiative Funding, Community Conservation Partnership, and Incentive Payment Practices. However, he added that the staff is recommending four application deadlines under the Incentive Payment Practices (IPP) Program. The deadlines are March 15, May 15, July 15, and September 15. Applications not approved for funding in one round may be considered in future application rounds. If not funded in the calendar year, the applicant would need to submit a new request for cost share funds. Watson also noted that basic land assessment questions and water impairment information on both a sub-watershed and major watershed scale have been added as part of the application process with the intent of educating the recipient receiving cost share funds on the goals of State agencies, local partners and the District.

16.025 Motion by Meyers, second by Nielsen to approve the 2016 State Cost Share Policies as presented. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

7.2 Approval of Board of Supervisors Redistricting Plan

Watson stated that the Dakota County Board of Commissioners took action at their Board meeting on January 19th to support the District Boards recommendation of staying with five supervisors and implementing "Plan C" for nomination districts. Watson added that the SWCD Board now needs to adopt a resolution that identifies which nomination districts will initially have 4-year terms and which will have 2-year terms in order to stagger elections into the future.

Meyers questioned if this was permanent or if Supervisor Districts could change again. Watson indicated that the 2014 State legislation established Supervisor Districts based on population. Supervisor Districts may be required to change again after the next census and depending on population changes within the County. Watson noted that there remains a statutory process for redistricting Supervisor Districts and that would need to be followed.

Dakota County Board Commissioner Slavik stated that he had two items that he was trying to pass onto fellow Commissioners. He felt strongly that representation by more than one District Supervisor within the rural area was needed. He also stated that, with the District Board of Supervisors being elected positions, the County Board of Commissioners should support the resolution of the elected officials.

16.026 Motion by Meyers, second by Nielsen to identify Supervisor Districts 4 and 5 as serving two-year terms and Supervisors Districts 1, 2, and 3 as serving four-year terms under the redistricting plan. Member voting yes: Nielsen, Meyers, Zanmiller. Members absent: Brown, Chamberlain. Motion carried.

On behalf of the Board of Supervisors, Nielsen thanked Commissioner Slavik for his support on the redistricting issue.

7.3 Update on Water Monitoring Programs

Lindsey Albright, Water Resource Specialist, gave a presentation on the Districts 2016 Water Monitoring Programs. She stated that the District monitors both surface and ground water. The surface water monitoring locations are scattered throughout the Vermillion River Watershed, North Cannon River Watershed, and the Lower Mississippi River Watershed. The monitoring is funded and coordinated by the watershed management organizations. The District also provides surface water monitoring for the Metropolitan Council at outlet locations on the Vermillion and Cannon Rivers. Albright further stated that they monitor and sample chemistry data, flow, stage, temperature, habitat, aquatic vegetation, and lake level. Sample information and downloads are analyzed and reports are prepared annually.

Ground water is monitored in both the Minnesota River Watershed and various locations throughout Dakota County. The Minnesota River Watershed focus is to evaluate fen conditions and is funded by and coordinated through the Lower Minnesota River Watershed District. Other groundwater wells throughout Dakota County are through an agreement with the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources to evaluate groundwater levels. Albright also provided an update of water monitoring changes planned for 2016.

7.4 Landscaping for Clean Water Workshop Schedule

Watson stated that 30 Landscaping for Water Quality workshops have been scheduled throughout Dakota County. The workshops will begin in February and are scheduled through the middle of June. Ten of the workshops are introductory classes and if residents are interested in installing backyard raingardens or native plantings on their property they can attend a two-day design course. The two-day design course is a prerequisite to receive cost share funding. All workshops are sponsored by Watershed Management Organizations and Dakota County.

8. Interagency Reports and Announcements

Natural Resources Conservation Service

Michelle Wohler's provided the Natural Resources Conservation Services (NRCS) agency report. She stated that they are ranking and scoring the 24 Environmental Quality Incentive Program (EQIP) applications contracting will be completed by the end of April. Between now and April there will be scoring, ranking and quality assurance completed. She added that the funding rate for financial assistance has been reduced to roughly 50% of the project cost. With that, they are planning to send letters to all applicants informing them that the SWCD cost share program funding may be available at a higher funding rate.

She stated that the NRCS is separating duties for wetland determinations from local offices to increase efficiencies. Local NCCS staff upload all 1026 forms and wetland determination requests to central processing staff located outside of Farmington. Staff feel this may be challenging for landowners and field offices.

Wohlers stated that on April 1, the Xerces Society will be holding a Monarch Pollinating workshop at the Extension and Conservation Center in Farmington.

Wohlers also stated that she attended Irrigation training at University of Minnesota and Josh Stamper made statement that Dakota County has approximately the same number of irrigated acres as Bonanza valley. However Dakota County has approximately 60 permits for fertigation as opposed to approximately 330 permits in Bonanza Valley. She stated that there have been 282 irrigation sprinkler conversions funded by NRCS since 2004 and the permitting requirements for fertigation or chemigation should be conveyed to landowners.

Minnesota Board of Water and Soil Resources

The Board of Water and Soil Resources (BWSR) report was provided by Watson. He stated that February 1 was the deadline for all State reporting. Staff are processing work plans for FY16 Clean Water Grants that were received by the Metro Conservation Districts Joint Powers Board.

Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts

There was no Minnesota Association of Soil and Water Conservation Districts (MASWCD) report provided. However, Watson stated that the MASWCD Legislative Briefing and Day at the Capitol is scheduled for March 21 and 22.

Metro Conservation Districts Joint Powers Board

All Metro Conservation Districts Joint Powers Board (MCD) items have been previously discussed. It was noted that the next meeting is scheduled for February 24.

Dakota County

There was no additional Dakota County report other than items covered under the Board of Supervisors Redistricting Plan.

Watershed Management Organizations

Watson stated that the Vermillion River Watershed Joint Powers Organization (JPO) approved the annual District work plan and budget at their last meeting. Watson stated that last Tuesday evening the JPO held a public hearing on their draft 10-year watershed plan. There were about 30 people in attendance and approximately 15 provided comments. Most of the comments centered on concerns that the current plan as written would downgrade water quality standards for sustaining trout populations within the watershed.

Watson added that the annual work plan and budget with the Lower Minnesota Watershed District was in process.

9. Upcoming Meetings and Events

The upcoming events were reviewed.

10. District Managers Report

Watson stated that he had no additional items.

11. Closed Executive Session

16.027 Motion by Meyers, second by Nielsen to enter into closed session. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

16.028 Motion by Meyers second by Nielsen to approve annual performance review of District Manager. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

16.029 Motion by Meyers second by Nielsen to return to open session. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

Adjourn

16.030 Motion by Nielsen second by Meyers to adjourn the meeting. All members voting yes. Motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chris Nielsen, Secretary