

# **WEST POLK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

## **MINUTES FROM APRIL 17<sup>th</sup>, 2025, REGULAR BOARD MEETING**

The meeting was called to order at 8:05 am by Chairman Cournia, at Irishman's Shanty, 1501 South Main Street, Crookston, MN.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

{Motion #41-2025} Motion by Peterson and seconded by pester to approve the March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025, agenda.

Affirmative: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Supervisors Present:

Chris Cournia, President  
Derek Peterson, Vice Chairman  
Christian Pester, Treasurer

District Employees Present:

Nicole Bernd, District Manager  
Aaron Habermehl, District Technician  
Morgan Torkelson, District Technician

Others Present:

Zach Anderson, NRCS DC  
Taylor Farm Bill Biologist II

Others Absent:

Eric McWalter, Secretary  
John Sorenson, PR & I

### **SECRETARY'S:**

{Motion #42-2025} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Pester to approve the minutes with corrections from the regular board meeting held February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

Affirmative: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

### **FINANCIALS REPORT:**

No financials.

Bernd is requesting approval to submit a reimbursement in the amount of \$7,460.84 to West Polk SWCD. These expenses were accrued for administration/coordination and project development activities of the FY24 SHR Watershed Based Implementation Fund.

{Motion #43-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Peterson to approve reimbursement to West Polk SWCD in the amount of \$7,460.84.

Affirmative: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

{Motion #44-2025} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Pester to approve the February treasurer's report.

Affirmative: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

**COST SHARE REPORT:**

District Staff are requesting approval for payment of the listed Conservation Contract(s).

<b>Contract#</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Approved Project Cost</b>	<b>Incentive Payment Amount</b>	<b>Technical Approval Authority</b>
CC-24-04	340	\$3,200.00	3,200.00	Torkelson
<b>Contract#</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Approved Project Cost</b>	<b>Cost Share Payment Amount</b>	<b>Technical Approval Authority</b>
CC-25-05	351	\$2,070.00	\$1,800.00	Habermehl

{Motion #45-2025} Motion by Pester and seconded by Peterson to approve payment for the listed Conservation Cover Contract(s).

Affirmative: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

District Staff are requesting approval for payment of the listed WPSHIP Incentive contract(s).

<b>Contract#</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Approved Project Cost</b>	<b>Incentive Payment Amount</b>	<b>Technical Approval Authority</b>
CC-24-05	340	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00	Torkelson
CC-24-06	340	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00	Torkelson
CC-25-01	340	\$1,200.00	\$1,200.00	Torkelson
CC-25-02	340	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00	Torkelson
CC-25-03	340	\$1,600.00	\$1,600.00	Torkelson

{Motion #46-2025} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Pester to approve payment for the listed Soil Health Incentive Contract(s).

Affirmative: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

### **OLD BUSINESS**

Kertsonville Township, Section 27 Proposed Project. Discussion.

{Motion #47-2025} Motion by Pester and seconded by Peterson to approve the Kertsonville Township, Section 27 Proposed Project for funding.

Affirmative: None

Opposed: Peterson, Pester and Cournia

Motion: Pass

Additional staff: financial scenarios - discussion

### **NEW BUSINESS**

District Logo choices: Discussion

NRCS/SWCD Local Work Group meeting after May Board meeting

### **MEETING REPORTS**

SWCD/NRCS Communication Pathway meeting, virtual	Bernd
MACDE State Managers Meeting, St. Cloud	Bernd
SWCD/NRCS Communication Pathway Meeting, McIntosh	Staff
WPSWCD Capacity Workshop, district office	Supervisors/Staff/BWSR
Well Aware Steering Committee meeting, virtual	Bernd
Upcoming Meetings/Trainings	
FDRWG Communication Committee meeting, virtual	Bernd
Crookston Community (tree initiative) meeting, virtual	Bernd
NW RSDP Natural Resource Work Group meeting, virtual	Bernd
Envirothon, Rydell Refuge	Bernd
Improving Crookston Trails, UMC	Bernd

### **DISTRICT EMPLOYEE'S REPORTS:**

**Bernd**

**1W1P:**

- WRM1W1P: attended the Policy Committee meeting March 24th FY21 WBIF Financial Report & BWSR Reconciliation; FY23 & FY 25 WBIF Financial ; CRP Incentives; 2024 Project Report; 2025 Upcoming Projects - Partners
- SHR1W1P Advisory/Committee meeting April 15<sup>th</sup>; discussed the MOCA-DNR Watershed Approach assessment, trends update and watershed stressor ID report for the lakes

**Other:**

- State Managers Meeting, St. Cloud; discussed the wage and benefit survey, new managers mentor program, BWSR IDP and Tech Training Teams; Roundtable discussion on wage step increases, employee evals, manager evals, resolutions, retention & employee protection and supervisor training and more.
- Attended the West Central Regional Water District March board meeting.

- SWCD/NRCS Communication Pathway meeting in McIntosh: 22 attended; collected information on how to improve customer service, agency communications and training.
- Water Testing Clinic at the White Earth Nation Community College, May 28-29<sup>th</sup> in Mahanomen.

### **Habermehl**

Technician Habermehl Report 04/17/2025

#### WCA:

- RLWD permits (3 new), Tax Forfeiture (0).
- Russia 04: WCA inquiry (level 2).
- Vineland 08: (level 2).

#### CCCS/1W1P:

- well inquiries (\*7 in process). Request payment CCCS 24-\_\_ Kertsonville 19, 27 (x2) \$1800.00, new contract CCCS 24-\_\_ Gentilly 05 \$698.00, (4) other outstanding.
- Hammond 10 DNR Public h2o cleanout assistance request.
- Drainage assessment request Lowell 10.
- Crookston 18, 24 Michaelson (surveyed/landowner conversation 10/09/2024)- designs received/sent to client 12/11/2024 (met FO 02/05). Andover 05 Samuelson (I&E, surveyed), Crookston 27 Gasper (I&E, surveyed), Bygland 01 Sorenson (I&E, surveyed 11/06/2024), Gentilly 14 Langlois (I&E, surveyed), Angus 15 Judovsky preliminary designs transmitted to client.
- Andover 14, 15, 22 Perry (FO 09/13, contacted DNR, onsite contractor + engineer 11/13/2024) -S15 SWI install 11/18/2024- NRCS/client meeting 12/17/2024. Fisher 27, 34, 35 Faugstad, Fanny 04 Radi (DNR PW permit required), Eng. request sent 12/12/2024 Gentilly 05 sinkhole (not yet surveyed), Kertsonville 27 met w/eng. & renter 04/07/2025 (modified designs received) DISCUSSION, equipment upgrade.

#### Other:

MN DNR records assist (near completion), CREP III (BWSR training 02/20, 04/14), RIM inquiries/outreach, 2025 site inspection list, etc.

### **Torkelson**

Technician Report 4/17/2025

#### Tree Program:

- 21 machine plantings in the works so far
  - 20 finalized with deposit paid, one PIF
    - 13 farmstead (5.2 miles)
    - 3 WHTP C-S (2.9 miles)
    - 2 wildlife – no C-S (0.8 miles)
    - 2 field windbreaks (1.4 miles)
    - 1 organic buffer (0.25 miles)
- 89 hand plant orders so far
  - Assisting landowners with species selection/planning projects
  - Unable to procure potted spruce this year – 11 refunds being issued

Year to date	# Trees sold/reserved	# Hand plant orders	Gross revenue
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2019	10,827	88	\$24,264.38
2020	6,900	75	\$18,917.64
2021	11,611	102	\$36,901.99
2022	13,556	128	\$44,833.04
2023	14,362	108	\$43,311.29
2024	12,874	121	\$36, 871.85
<b>2025</b>	<b>16,812</b>	<b>112</b>	<b>\$40, 863.66</b>

- Will be hosting a stop at NWROC Crops & Soils Day – Wind erosion and tree selection, planting and maintenance

#### Soil Health Incentive Program:

- Four inquiries for 2025 growing season, three contracts out for signatures

#### AgBMP Loan Program:

- One new inquiry on 3/12
- Two inquiries total awaiting purchase/application

### **NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST'S REPORT**

April 2025 District Conservationist Report

4/16/25

#### EQIP:

- Fiscal year 2025 Sign Up #1 o 29 applications ranked
  - **13 applications preapproved (45%)**
    - 4 funded via EQIP-CIC
      - \$436,419.00 (additional \$197,327 frozen)
    - 7 funded via RCPP #2888 (Red Lake Watershed)
      - \$385,747.00
    - 4 funded via General Farm Bill Funds
      - \$382,243.00
  - West Polk obligations total: **\$1,204,409**

#### CSP:

- General sign up is closed for FY25
  - 3 applications ranked
    - 1 funded

#### CRP: (No Change)

No talk of CRP sign up, likely awaiting a new farm bill.

#### Misc.:

- Inflation Reduction Act dollars remain frozen for FY25 sign up; previously funded IRA contracts are active.

Submitted by,

Zach Anderson

District Conservationist

Crookston Field Office

Other:

Farm Bill Biologist II

Taylor Leback

#### Board Report:

- CRP Contract Modifications

- Walk in Access Enrollment
- Train the Trainer Planning
- Judge for the MN Jr. Duck Stamp Contest

Meetings/Trainings:

- March 26th Camp Ripley Fire Training
- March 31st BWSR Online Spring Training
- April 2nd SWCD/NRCS & Partners Meeting

Upcoming:

- April 23rd Envirothon
- April 25th Native Seed Mix Design and Evaluation Training
- Prescribed Burning with The Nature Conservancy

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Publications:

Minnesota Conservation Volunteer	Sand Hill Watershed District
Board of Water and Soil Resources	Wild Rice Watershed District
Minnesota Counties Intergovernmental Trust	Crookston Watch
Polk County Newsletter	

The next meeting was scheduled for May 15<sup>th</sup>, 2025, at 7:00 am.

With no further business, Chairman Cournia adjourned the meeting at 9:40am.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary  
EM\nb