

WEST POLK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES FROM THE APRIL 11th, 2024, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:40 am by Cournia, at 528 Strander Ave, Crookston, MN.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

{Motion #27-2024} Motion by McWalter and seconded by Peterson to approve the April 11th, 2024, agenda.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Supervisors Present:

Chris Cournia, President
Derek Peterson, Vice Chairman
Christian Pester, Treasurer
Eric McWalter, Secretary
John Sorenson, PR & I

District Employees Present:

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

Others Present:

Zach Anderson, NRCS District Conservationist

Absent:

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

{Motion #28-2024} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve the minutes with corrections from the regular board meeting held February 15th, 2024.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

FINANCIALS REPORT:

{Motion #29-2024} The March financial reports were reviewed. Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to approve the financial reports, subject to audits and revisions.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

TREASURER’S REPORT:

{Motion #30-2024} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve the February and March treasurer’s report.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

COST SHARE REPORT:

Staff request approval of the West Polk SWCD Wildlife Habitat Tree Planting Program cost share policy.

{Motion #31-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Pester to approve the West Polk SWCD Wildlife Habitat Tree Planting Program cost share policy.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

District Staff is requesting approval for payment of the listed RLR1W1P Cost Share Contract(s).

Contract#	Practice	Approved Project Cost	Cost Share Amount	Technical Approval Authority
RLR1W1P-WP-22-01	410	\$16,000.00	\$14,030.23	Habermehl

{Motion #32-2024} Motion by McWalter and seconded by Peterson to approve payment for RLR1W1P Cost Share Contract RLR1W1P-WP-22-01 in the amount of \$14,030.23.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

OLD BUSINESS

Polk County Transit Sales tax
Property tax

NEW BUSINESS

CD – United Valley Bank

{Motion #33-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to approve 7-month CD.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Staff requests approval of the of the Minnesota Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) policy

{Motion #34-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the Minnesota Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST) policy.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Staff request a motion to approve a letter of support for the Walsh County Three Rivers Soil Conservation District's Working Land Cover Crop Initiative.

{Motion #35-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the Working Land Cover Crop Initiative.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

NRBG Match Reimbursement invoice.

Staff request approval to purchase the older RRVCSA/TSA survey equipment, VRS System 3 in the amount of \$2,700.00.

{Motion #36-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Peterson to approve the purchase of the VRS System 3 for \$2,700.00.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Sorenson and Pester

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

MEETING REPORTS

Envirothon meeting, Fertile	Bernd
WRM1W1P Steering Committee meeting, Ada	Bernd
WPSHIP Farmer Panel Discussion, Crookston	Torkelson
SHR1W1P Steering Committee meeting, Fertile	Bernd
MSTR1W1P Policy Committee meeting, Warren	Bernd
Well Aware NW MN Groundwater Initiative meeting, ZOOM	Bernd
SHR1W1P Policy Committee meeting, Fertile	Bernd/Cournia

Upcoming Meetings/Trainings

Polk County JD60 Landowner meeting, office	Bernd
RSDP Statewide Board meeting, New York Mills	Bernd
Envirothon, Rydell Refuge	Staff
Well Aware NW MN Groundwater Initiative meeting, ZOOM	Bernd
MSTR1W1P Steering Committee meeting, Microsoft Teams	Bernd

DISTRICT EMPLOYEE'S REPORTS:

Bernd

1W1P:

- RLR 1W1P – Boundary amendment process; PRAP; JD60 landowner meeting
- SHR 1W1P – Submitted implementation workplan in eLINK; 50% (\$352,634.00) of the WBIF will be submitted to WPSWCD by the end of May.
- MSTR 1W1P – Project ranking sheet; cost share pooling agreement (CCRP).
- WRM 1W1P – FY25 WBIF grant workplan; next Policy Committee meeting Nov 25, 2024

Other:

- Well Aware NW MN Ground Water Initiative: Strategic Plan, established a Steering Committee and Advisory Committee; anticipate the first screening clinic this coming fall.
- Crookston Area Community Fund – Adam Parnow Memorial Inc. grant application awarded
- Envirothon Sponsorships

Habermehl

Technician Habermehl Report 04/11/2024

WCA:

- TEP: YTD
- BWSR WCA annual reporting due March (complete/sent to BWSR 03/12/2024)
- RLWD Permits: (3 WCA), Tax Forfeiture (19 complete)
- Polk County Landfill: NOD w/conditions issued 03/22/2023. Monetary RNC and T/E compensation only (no easement). Addendum received 02/14/2024, TEP findings signed, (modified) NOD issued 03/27/2024.
- WP 24-02 Crookston 16 Enbridge: Joint App. received 02/14/2024, NOD issued 02/22/2024.
- WCA inquiries (x2) Crookston 15.

RIM: AMH signed BWSR JPA/work order (effective 02/2024), (4) potential applicants, met w/(2), (CRP), training, send application materials to BWSR.

ECWM/1W1P: CS 22-06 Schulz, Richard 351 (x3) \$200.00, CS 22-07 Knutson, Scott 351 900.00. 4 (new) outstanding well decommissioning inquiries. Met with engineers & Faugstad 02/22/2024 final designs, met with Radi 04/03/2024 preliminary design modifications, met with Engelstad 04/10/2024 preliminary design modifications, met with Perry 04/10/2024 preliminary design modifications.

Other: WCA training, load construction stakeout files to controller, field test GNSS unit 2024, ArcOnline reorganization, etc.

Torkelson

Technician Report 4/11/2024

Tree Program:

- Planning windbreak plantings for spring 2024 – 14 deposits paid, 1 PIF
- 118 hand plant orders so far - 12,754 trees reserved
- Drafted new policy to define West Polk Wildlife Habitat Tree Planting policy
 - New windbreaks/block plantings
 - Additional rows for existing windbreaks/woodlots

- Hand plants to fill gaps/add understory to overmature windbreaks/woodland
- Three wildlife habitat tree planting projects planned – one block planting, one corridor/field windbreak, one stand improvement

Soil Health Incentive Program:

- Finished hosting three soil health panel discussions (1/29/24, 2/20/24 & 3/12/24)
- Planning Hwy. 75 Soil Health Tour for July 9th, 2024)
- One incentive contract signed (2023), three more awaiting signatures (2024)

Outreach:

- KROX Valley Talk 1/31/24 – WPSHIP panel discussions and tree program promo
- KROX Valley Talk 3/7/24 – WPSHIP panel discussions and tree program promo
- KROX Valley Talk 4/19/24 – tree program promo and Hwy 75 Tour promo

Meetings/other:

- NW MN Ag BMP Loan Area meeting 3/20/24
- Wrote letter of support to NACD for Wash County Three Rivers SCD's Working Lands Cover Crop Initiative (for Climate-Smart Commodities grant)

NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST'S REPORT

March/April 2024 District Conservationist Report

EQIP:

- FY24 Applications Total: 20
 - 5 Funded so far (25%)
- More funds coming, Crookston FO should fund a few more applications before the end of FY24.

(NEW) 1W1P RCPP EQIP sign up announced.

Signup Number	Date	Activity
1	April 26, 2024	Application Deadline
1	May 24, 2024	Assessment and Ranking Deadline
1	May 28, 2024	Application Pre-Approvals
1	August 30, 2024	Contract Obligation

Priority points are awarded to the following practices. Grade Stabilization Structure (410), Prescribed Grazing (528), Farmstead Windbreak (380), Water & Sediment Control Basin (638), and Pasture/Hay Plantings (512).

Other practices are still eligible for this program, but do not receive priority points.

CSP:

Classic sign up ended January 12, 2024

- 10 Apps total, 5 will be ranked, two deferred, and two canceled.
- All screened high and will continue to rank/assessment.
- Assessment deadline is April 12th, we will begin preapproving applications shortly after.
- (No Change) Crookston will have one eligible CSP renewal in FY24.

CRP:

- Continuous sign up is open.
 - Month to month on length of sign up.
- General Sign Up Ended March 29th.

Submitted by,
Zach Anderson
District Conservationist
Crookston Field Office

CORRESPONDENCE:

Publications:

Forestry Notes
Conservation Brief
Conservation Views
Crookston Daily Times
MN Department of Labor
Wild Rice Watershed District

MCIT
Shade Tree Advocate
Red Lake Watershed District
Polk County Board of Commissioners
BWSR
Sand Hill Watershed District

The next meeting was scheduled for May 16th, 2024, at 7:30 am.

With no further business, Chairman Cournia adjourned the meeting at 9:07 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary
EM\nb