

# WEST POLK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## MINUTES FROM DECEMBER 19<sup>th</sup>, 2024, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 am by Chairman Cournia, at Irishman's Shanty 1501 South Main Street, Crookston, MN.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: McWalter, Pester, Cournia and Peterson

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

{Motion #90-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by McWalter to approve the November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024, agenda.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Supervisors Present:

Chris Cournia, President  
Derek Peterson, Vice Chairman  
Eric McWalter, Secretary  
Christian Pester, Treasurer

District Employees Present:

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

Others Present:

Zach Anderson, NRCS District Conservationist

Absent:

John Sorenson, PR & I  
Taylor Leback, Farm Bill Biologist II

### **SECRETARY'S REPORT:**

{Motion #91-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Pester to approve the minutes with corrections from the regular board meeting held November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

### **FINANCIALS REPORT:**

{Motion #92-2024} The November financial reports were reviewed. Motion by McWalter and seconded by Pester to approve the financial reports, subject to audits and revisions.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

{Motion #93-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by McWalter to approve the Octobers treasurer's report.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

**COST SHARE REPORT:**

District Staff are requesting approval to cancel State Cost Share contract CS-22-08 in the amount of \$878.00.

{Motion #94-2024} Motion by McWalter and seconded by Pester to approve the cancellation of State Cost Share contract CS-22-08 in the amount of \$878.00.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

District Staff are requesting approval to return State Cost Share funds to BWSR in the amount of \$3,350.70 for FY22 and \$13,414.00 for FY23.

{Motion #95-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Peterson to approve the return of State Cost Share funds to BWSR in the amount of \$3,350.70 for FY22 and \$13,414.00 for FY23

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

District Staff are requesting approval for an amendment to the RLR1W1P Cost Share Contract RLR1W1P-WP-22-02 to change the contract expiration date from 12/31/2024 to 12/31/2025.

{Motion #43-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by McWalter to approve the amendment to the RLR1W1P Cost Share Contract RLR1W1P-WP-22-02 to change the contract expiration date from 12/31/2024 to 12/31/2025.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

**OLD BUSINESS**

MASWCD Resolutions from Annual Convention

Strip-till letter

Staff request approval for the purchase of a vehicle in the amount of \$53,870.00 from Brost Chevrolet, Crookston MN.

{Motion #96-2024} Motion by McWalter and seconded by Peterson to approve the purchase of a vehicle in the amount of \$53,870.00 from Brost Chevrolet, Crookston MN.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Polk County Board meeting agenda Dec. 17, 2024/NRBG Match MOU approved

### **NEW BUSINESS**

Bernd requests approval to open a checking account at United Valley Bank, Crookston, MN, for the FY24 Sand Hill River Watershed Based Implementation Funding grant in the amount of \$352,633.50.

{Motion #96-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Peterson to approve opening a checking account at United Valley Bank, Crookston, MN, for the FY24 Sand Hill River Watershed Based Implementation in the amount of \$ \$ 352,633.50. The SWCD Board of Supervisors, C. Cournia, D. Peterson, E. McWalter, C. Pester, J. Sorenson and District Manager, N. Bernd will be listed on the signature card.

Affirmative: McWalter, Pester and Peterson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

### **MEETING REPORTS**

NW Research and Outreach Center Advisory meeting, UMC	Bernd
Project Team Training, Red Lake Watershed District,	Bernd
HOLIDAY Thanksgiving OFFICE CLOSED Thurs.-Friday	
WRM 1W1P Policy Committee meeting	Bernd/Cournia
Well Aware NW Mn Groundwater Initiative meeting,	Bernd
MASWCD Convention, Bloomington	Bernd
SHR 1W1P MS4 training, virtual	Bernd
RLR 1W1P MS\$ training, virtual	Bernd

### ***Upcoming Meetings/Trainings***

HOLIDAY Christmas OFFICE CLOSED	
Red River Basin Conference, Moorhead	Bernd
Outreach Strategies, BWSR, training, virtual	Bernd
NRCS/BWSR RCPP meeting, virtual	Bernd/Torkelson
NRCS/SWCD Communication Pathway meeting, virtual	Bernd
Area Technical Team Training meeting, virtual	Bernd
Soil Management Summit, Mankato	Torkelson

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

### **Bernd**

#### **1W1P:**

- RLR 1W1P – MS4 tracking tool training by HEI; Policy Committee meeting, 12/18/24 that covered 2022 financial report and mid-point grant amendment, 319 workplan and project updates. Contract RLR1W1P-WP-22-02, Andover 14-15-22 was presented for an amendment to the contract date.
- MSTR 1W1P – Steering Team Meeting was on 12/11/24; discussed 2023 WBIF Financials/Timeline (Grant Expires 12/31/25); Well Sealings Update; Ag Practices Update; Swift Coulee/RIM Update; County Ditch 45 Assessment; CCRP Incentives Program; 2025 WBIF; Next Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for 12/18/2024
- SHR 1W1P – Bernd is working on revamping the reimbursement invoices to align the activities in eLINK. MS4 tracking tool training by HEI; Next Steering Committee and Policy Committee meeting is scheduled for February 2025.

#### **Other:**

- Employee Aaron Habermehl recognition
- NRCS/SWCD Communication Pathway
- Training survey for local SWCD staff; District staff working with Red Lake County SWCD Soil Health Outreach Technician
- NRCS/SWCD Communication Pathways is a new local effort; NRCS Team Leads from Roseau and Crookston and SWCD Staff from West Polk and Kittson
- The final 2023 audit was sent to BWSR in November
- Bernd has reached out to those who received free water test kits to ask for their return by 12/31/2024 if they haven't been used.

### **Habermehl**

Technician Habermehl Report 12/19/2024

#### **WCA:**

- RLWD permits (6)
- Tax Forfeiture (0)
- Crookston Industrial Park 24-05 (Andover 01): Joint Application received 10/14/2024. NOA issued 10/28/2024. NOD issued 12/11/2024.
- Hwy 75: (3) bridges, Joint Application received 10/09/2024 (LGRWRP).
- Utilities exemption/USACE permit inquiry. LGU responded (x2) 11/14, 12/16/2024.

#### **CCCS/1W1P:**

- well inquiries (3), new contract CCCS 24-05 Page 351 Gentilly 24
- payment CS 22-07 11/18/2024-
- **CANCEL CS 22-08 \$878.00 Dufault 351**, send cancellation letter.
- Crookston 18, 24 Michaelson (surveyed/landowner conversation 10/09/2024)- designs received/sent to client 12/11/2024.
- 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 (I&E, status check)

- 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 (contractor?)
- Fanny 04 Radi (DNR PW permit required)
- Eng. request sent 12/12/2024 Gentilly 05 sinkhole

Other:

volunteer climatology packets, MN DNR records assist, SHR1W1P GIS, RIM (BWSR training), RIM inquiries, ArcPro reset, etc.

## **Torkelson**

Technician Report 12/19/2024

Tree Program:

- 14 machine plantings in the works so far
  - Two wildlife habitat plantings
  - One field windbreak
- Taking payments for hand plant orders and machine plant deposits

Working Lands Cover Crop Initiative:

- Helping put interested farmers and cattlemen in touch with each other for grazing partnerships
- Meeting with interested farmers to discuss options/plans

Outreach/Other:

- Hosted Working Lands Cover Crop Initiative farmer informational meeting 11/26
- Hosted Haney soil test informational session with Ray Archuleta 12/11
- ESMC meetings – advising committee about municipal ash tree replacement
- Writing articles for district newsletter
- NRCS basic cover crop training (recorded webinars)
- EPA webinar Integrated Pest Management for Oak Wilt, Oak Decline (ISA CEUs)

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

December 2024 District Conservationist Report

12/18/24

EQIP:

- General sign up #1 rank & assessment deadline is January 10<sup>th</sup>
  - 29 applications
- EQIP-CIC:
  - New fund pool
  - Red Lake Watershed only
  - Max 5-year contracts
    - Limited to cover crop, tillage practices, and livestock practices
  - RCPP #2888 1W1P “Red Lake Watershed”
    - 19 applications within priority area
      - 12 from Crookston

CSP:

- All renewal applications funded

- General sign up is closed for FY25
  - 5 applications in Crookston
  - Rank & assessment date typically in March

CRP:

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

Submitted by,  
Zach Anderson  
District Conservationist  
Crookston Field Office

Other:

**Farm Bill Biologist**

CRP/SWCD:

- CRP Outreach in Mud River Watershed

Meetings/Trainings:

- November 22nd Pheasants Forever Meeting
- November 25th Successful Outreach Strategies Training

Upcoming:

- January 16th – 19th Minnesota Pheasants Forever State Convention

**CORRESPONDENCE:**

Publications:

Forestry Notes	MCIT
Conservation Brief	Shade Tree Advocate
Conservation Views	Red Lake Watershed District:
Crookston Daily Times	Polk County Board of Commissioners
MN Department of Labor	BWSR
Wild Rice Watershed District	Sand Hill Watershed District

The next meeting was scheduled for January 16th , 2025, at 8:00 am.

With no further business, Chair Cournia adjourned the meeting at 9:50 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary  
EM\nb