

# WEST POLK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

## MINUTES FROM THE FEBRUARY 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 am by Cournia, at 528 Strander Ave, Crookston, MN.

Pledge of Allegiance

Roll Call: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

{Motion #20-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to approve the February 15<sup>th</sup>, 2024, agenda.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

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:

Absent:

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

{Motion #21-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to approve the minutes with corrections from the regular board meeting held January 16<sup>th</sup>, 2024.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

### **FINANCIALS REPORT:**

{Motion #22-2024} The January financial reports were reviewed. Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve the financial reports, subject to audits and revisions.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

**TREASURER'S REPORT:**

{Motion #23-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to approve the treasurer's report.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

**COST SHARE REPORT:**

West Polk SWCD Wildlife Habitat Tree Planting Program cost share policy: Discussion

**OLD BUSINESS**

Pheasants Forever Farm Bill Biologist

**NEW BUSINESS**

Staff request approval of the Sand Hill River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Implementation Agreement.

{Motion #24-2024} Motion by McWalter and seconded by Pester to approve Sand Hill River Watershed Comprehensive Watershed Management Plan Implementation Agreement.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Bernd requests approval of the audit engagement letter for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023. The audit fee will be \$4,500.00.

{Motion #25-2024} Motion by Pester and seconded by Sorenson to approve the audit engagement letter for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2023.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Bernd requests a motion to approve West Polk SWCD as fiscal agent and coordinator for the Sand Hill River Watershed Based Implementation Funds. WBIF reimbursements must be approved by the West Polk SWCD Board of Supervisors prior to submittal.

{Motion #26-2024} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to approve West Polk SWCD as fiscal agent and coordinator for the Sand Hill River Watershed Based Implementation Funds and that WBIF reimbursements need to be approved by the West Polk SWCD Board of Supervisors prior to submittal.

Affirmative: Peterson, McWalter, Cournia, Pester and Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Polk County 2024 allocation

MN Department of Revenue: Notification of tax rate change

Policy Handbook revision/update – discussion

## MEETING REPORTS

### *Attended Meetings/Trainings*

HOLIDAY, Dr. Martin Luther King Day,	OFFICE CLOSED
Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference	Bernd
BWSR Board Meeting, virtual	Bernd
SHR 1W1P Steering Committee meeting, Fertile	Bernd
West Polk SHIP Soil Health Workshop, Valley Tech Park	Torkelson
SHR 1W1P Policy Committee meeting, Fertile	Bernd/Cournia
RLR 1W1P Policy Committee meeting, RLWD, Thief River Falls	Bernd/McWalter

### *Upcoming Meetings/Trainings*

Polk County Board meeting, Crookston	Bernd
SWCD Supervisor Training, Crookston	Bernd
WPSHIP Panel Discussion, Bede Ballroom, UMC, Crookston	Staff
MNTWS Annual Meeting, Bemidji	Bernd
North POD meeting, Mahanomen	Staff
RRVSCA Board Meeting, Mahanomen	Peterson/Staff

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

### **Bernd**

#### **1W1P:**

- RLR 1W1P – Received supplemental funds, \$457,509; Plan Assessment (5 yr); Plan update process and visioning; Plan amendment; 2024 Annual Plan; Planning regions and new data
- SHR 1W1P – BWSR approval Jan. 24, 2024; approved work plan for Watershed Based Implementation Funding; Implementation MOA; anticipated funds in April.
- MSTR 1W1P – CCRP incentives Policy; WBIF Supplemental Funds; project tracking; next PC meeting is March 13, 2024, in Warren.

#### **Other:**

Polk County Board meeting topics  
Envirothon Sponsor Letters  
Hwy 75 Soil Health Tour

### **Habermehl**

Technician Habermehl Report 02/15/2024

#### **WCA:**

- TEP: YTD
- BWSR WCA annual reporting due March

- RLWD Permits: (2), Tax Forfeiture (19, ½ complete)
- Polk County Landfill: NOD w/conditions issued 03/22/2023. RNC mitigation, T/E takings pending. USACE meeting 07/12/2023, DNR meeting 07/13/2023. Monetary RNC and T/E compensation only (no easement). Re-write NOD w/conditions after Polk letter of intent. Telephone w/agent 12/12/2023, 01/17/2024, 02/07/2024 emails- expected addendum.
- WP 23-03, 23-05, 24-01 LaFave park EGF: On-site TEP 06/29, boundary/type NOD issued 07/06/2023, No-Loss NOD issued 07/20/2024, Replacement Plan application received 01/29/2024. Replacement NOD issued 02/08/2024.
- WP 24-02 Crookston 16 Enbridge: Joint App. received 02/14/2024.

RIM: AMH signed BWSR JPA/work order (effective 02/2024), meet with (4) potential applicants (+NRCS/CRP), review training.

ECWM/1W1P:

- well decommissioning (3/\$900.00 = \$2700.00) +(1) new, Roome 01 (trash guard installed/reimbursement).
- North Pod training 03/06/2024.
- Investigate Angus 01+, survey this spring.
- Engineering request Crookston 24, 18 received/sent to engineers.
- Received Fisher 35, 34, 27 (Faugstad) preliminary designs (WASCOB, drop options) sent to client/telephone conversation meet w/engineers 02/22/2024.
- Received Fanny 04 (Radi) preliminary designs (flexamat), sent to client 02/14/2024, meet w/engineers.
- Received Kertsonville 27 (Engelstad) preliminary designs, send to client, meet w/engineers.

Other: WCA training 02/05, 02/06, h2o meeting, staff CCCS meeting, RRVCSA meeting 02/29 (maybe Teams) etc.

**Torkelson**

Technician Report 2/15/2024

Tree Program:

- Planning windbreak plantings for spring 2024 – four deposits paid, seven more in the works
- 62 hand plant orders so far, 6474 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

Soil Health Incentive Program:

- Hosting soil health discussions with panels of farmers, academics & industry
  - 1/29/24 Travis Ross, Bryan Boll, Andrew Johnstad, Jodi DeJong-Hughes, Dorian Gatchell
  - 2/20/24 Andrew Johnstad, Bryan Ryberg, Anna Cates, Todd Cymbaluk
  - 3/12/24 Craig LaPlante, Chad Knutson, Dan Aakre, Paul Wilder, Angie Peltier
- Planning Hwy. 75 Soil Health Tour for summer, 2024 (7/9/2024)
- In the process of signing up two more fields for soil health incentive (for cover crops)

## Outreach:

- Wrote newsletter articles:
  - WPSHIP, Buffer Reminder, Tree Program Update, Tree Species Highlights,
- KROX Valley Talk 1/31/24 – WPSHIP and tree program promo

## Meetings/other:

- Session 4 of MASWCD Leadership Program in Alexandria – January 16, 17th

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

January/February 2024 District Conservationist Report

### **EQIP:**

- Fiscal year 24, sign up #1 deadline: Friday October 6th, 2023.
- Currently taking applications for sign up #2
  - No ranking deadline yet. (7 applications, so far)
- Sign up #1 (50%) fund allocation.
  - 20 applications ranked.
    - 4 Beginning Farmers, 1 Socially Disadvantaged, 3 Veteran Farmers
  - Obligations so far
    - High Tunnels (3 apps) – 100% funded.
    - Socially Disadvantaged (1 app) – 100% funded.
    - Pasture Pool (1 app) – 100% funded.
    - Cropland Pool (15 apps) – No obligations yet.
- More contracts will be obligated following the March fund assessment, STC Daniels is likely to request further funding for IRA related practices.

### **CSP (No Change)**

- Classic sign up ended January 12, 2024
  - 10 applications
  - All screened high and will continue to rank/assessment.
- Crookston will have one eligible CSP renewal in FY24.

### **CRP**

- Continuous sign up is open.
  - Month to month on length of sign up.

\*Agency is currently funded through March 1st, 2024, by continuing resolution.

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 March 21<sup>st</sup>, 2024 at 7:30 am.

With no further business, Chairman Cournia adjourned the meeting at 9:02 am.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary  
EM\nb