

WEST POLK SOIL AND WATER CONSERVATION DISTRICT

MINUTES FROM THE NOVEMBER 21st, 2019 REGULAR BOARD MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 7:10 a.m. by Chairman Solheim at the FSA Conference Room, USDA Service Center, 528 Strander Ave, Crookston.

Supervisors Present: Elliott Solheim, Chairman
Derek Peterson, Vice Chairman
Mark McWalter, Secretary
John Sorenson, PR & I

District Employees Present: Nicole Bernd, District Manager
Duane Steinbrink, District Technician
Aaron Habermehl, District Technician
Morgan Torkelson, District Technician

Others Present: Bob Guetter, NRCS DC
Jillian Fejszes, Farm Bill Biologist

Absent: Chris Cournia, Treasurer

SECRETARY'S REPORT:

{Motion #71-19} Motion by McWalter and seconded by Peterson to approve the minutes from the Regular Board meeting held on October 17th, 2019.

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

The October financial reports were reviewed. Motion by McWalter and seconded by Sorenson to approve the financial reports, subject to audits and revisions.

TREASURER'S REPORT:

{Motion #72-19} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve the October treasurers report.

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

COST SHARE REPORT:

STATE COST SHARE REPORT:

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

Contract#	Practice	Approved Project Cost	Cost Share Amount	Technical Approval Authority
CS-18-05/19-04	410	10,970.00	2,742.00	Steinbrink
CS-20-01	351	2,500.00	1,000.00	Habermehl

{Motion #73-19} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve payment for the listed District Cost Share contract(s).

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

BUFFER COMPLINACE COST SHARE REPORT

District Staff is requesting approval of the listed Buffer Compliance Cost Share Contract(s).

Contract#	Practice	Approved Project Cost	Cost Share Amount	Technical Approval Authority
BS-18-67	410	2,000.00	1,500.00	Steinbrink

{Motion #74-19} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve payment for the listed District Cost Share contract(s).

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

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

Contract#	Practice	Approved Project Cost	Cost Share Amount	Technical Approval Authority
CS-18-59	410	3,180.00	795.00	Steinbrink

{Motion #75-19} Motion by McWalter and seconded by Sorenson to approve payment for the listed District Cost Share contract(s).

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

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

Contract#	Practice	Approved	Cost	Technical
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		Project Cost	Share Amount	Approval Authority
CS-18-26	410	10,000.00	6,465.00	Steinbrink
CS-18-27	410	10,000.00	4,290.00	Steinbrink

{Motion #76-19} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to approve payment for the listed District Cost Share contract(s).

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

OLD BUSINESS

Lease Agreement letter. Discussion

NEW BUSINESS

Personnel committee presented their recommendations to the board for the following employee evaluations of District Manager and District Technicians.

Motion made by the Personnel Committee to approve 2020 wages of:

- \$27.00/hr. for District Manager Bernd
- \$26.00/hr. for District Technician Steinbrink
- \$22.00/hr. for District Technician, Habermehl.
- \$19.00/hr. for District Technician, Torkelson

Motion {#77-18} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve recommended wages for 2020.

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

Bernd requests approval to pay BNSF Railway Company in the amount of \$2,804.35 in rent for the tree shed. This includes a 3% rent increase of \$81.68.

{Motion #78-18} Motion by Peterson and seconded by Sorenson to pay Staubach for BNSF Railway Company in the amount of \$2,804.35 in rent for the tree shed.

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

ARTICLE VI WORKING POLICIES

Add: Inclement Weather Policy

F. In the event of extreme or inclement weather, West Polk SWCD employees may use their discretion to choose to stay home, come in late or leave early. West Polk SWCD employees shall inform the district manager of their absence in a timely manner

and may utilize accumulated compensatory time or earned annual leave to make up hours.

{Motion #79-19} Motion by Sorenson and seconded by McWalter to approve Policy Handbook changes as listed.

Affirmative: McWalter, Peterson, Sorenson

Opposed: None

Motion: Pass

MN BWSR FY202-FY2021 Watershed-based Implementation Funding

MASWCD Annual Business Meeting Items

Peterstown Company LTD Audited Financial Statements

Conservation Tillage Conference, St. Cloud, 12/17-12/18/2019

2020 Red River Basin Drainage Conference, Moorhead, 1/27/2020

22nd Annual Joint Conference, Moorhead, 03/10-3/11/2020

MEETING REPORTS

Attended Meetings/Trainings

Red Lake River 319 Small Watershed meeting, RLWD	Bernd
ND & MN Agri-Women's Harvest of Knowledge Conference	Bernd
Wild Rice-Marsh 1W1P Steering Committee meeting, Ada	Bernd
RLR 1W1P Planning Group Conference Call	Bernd
BWSR Academy, Breezy Point	Staff
Northern Assn. Conservation District Employees meeting, UMC	Staff
MASWCD Area 1 meeting, Detroit Lakes	Staff

Upcoming Meetings/Trainings

Wild Rice Marsh 1W1P Steering Committee conf. call	Bernd
FDRWG Conference Planning meeting, Detroit Lakes	Bernd
AgBMP Loan meeting, Thief River Falls	Staff
Crookston Well Head Protection Plan/Biodiesel plant meeting,	Staff
FDWWG board meeting, Grand Forks,	Bernd
East Polk SWCD Grant Reconciliation, McIntosh	Bernd
Conservation Tillage Conference, St. Cloud	Staff?
Red Lake River 1W1P Policy Meeting, RLWD	Staff/Supervisor
CHRISTMAS, Office Closed	
NEW YEARS, Office Closed	

DISTRICT EMPLOYEE'S REPORTS:

Bernd

LWM:

Bernd initiated a meeting with MN Dept. of Health, MN DNR, City Administrator, Widseth Smith and Nolting, Water Superintendent and CHEDA Executive Director

regarding the DRAFT Crookston Wellhead Protection Plan and the proposed biodiesel plant. Meeting will be December 5th at City Hall.

CWL:

RLR 1W1P has been approved for \$1,071,149 for the FY 2020-2021 Watershed-based Implementation Funding Grant approved by BWSR Sept. 25, 2019.

FEEDLOTS:

Bernd presented the Polk County Feedlot Delegation Agreement and Workplan for approval to the County Commissioners, Nov. 5th.

BUFFERS:

Bernd will be sending a letter those who have approved encumbered Buffer Compliance Cost Share contracts stating there is an extension till February 1, 2021.

OTHER:

Mentorship requested by Soil Researcher, Heidi Reitmeier, Dept. of Soil, Water and Climate, U of M. A requirement through a training course for credits to the Land and Atmospheric Science program.

Bernd has assisted EPSWCD financial/managerial and through the month of November and attended the November 14th board meeting.

Steinbrink

Technician Report 11-21-19

Buffer Bits:

Working on maps for Public Waters to locate where buffers need to be seeded.

Conservation Projects:

All SWI projects are in winter shut down.

Red Lake Watershed District

Burnham Creek Russia 13 Project: Winter shut down

Habermehl

Technician Habermehl Report 11/21/2019

WCA:

- TEP: 11/04/2019 Crookston FO; Polk County, MnDNR, USACE, BWSR, Wenck
- RLWD Drain 17: Joint App. received 08/01/2019 WCA analysis- incomplete NOA sent 08/21/2019 MN certified delineation required (inform RLWD).
- Polk County Landfill: Joint App. 18-08 issued Incomplete Application Checklist; suspends 15.99 TEP: MnDNR rare natural community- biological survey ~07/2019, MPCA permit cell 13-16- subsequent EAW Wetland D & proposed gravel mining area. In communication with agent, TEP & MnDNR biologists (WCA LGU on-site assessment 06/13/2019), MnDNR report- meeting Crookston FO 11/04/2019. Require (Wenck) amended on-site alternatives analysis (pending).
- RLRCEP: WCA analysis, NOA issued 09/12/2019. Request to meet (1599 extension) sent 10/14/2019. City Administrator Stassen FO 10/16/2019. Application withdrawn.

- Crookston 29: WCA inquiry; respond (exemption analysis/options) 10/16/2019. Bob Herkenhoff FO 11/12/2019.

Buffer Initiative:

- BuffCAT updates, CAN(s) generated for issuance Polk P&Z, fielding telephone calls and FO visits, etc. Plan to fulfill SWCD statutory duties (on reviewed parcels) & confirm designated statutory responsibilities to enforcement (Polk County P&Z).

Other:

- BWSR IDP (SWI EJAA) submitted, BWSR WDCP to MWPCP submitted, NACDE meeting (volunteered serve as Director), Area 1 meeting, engineering assistance (Russia 13, Skaug, Larson) landowner easement inquiry, upcoming meetings (Sand Hill advisory, WPSWCD newsletter articles, training modules (BWSR), etc.

Torkelson

Technician Report 11/21/2019

Buffers:

- Preparing NONs for submission to officially allow Polk County P&Z to begin enforcement of noncompliant parcels.
- Putting together a plan for summer 2020 buffer monitoring.

Tree Program:

- Assisting landowners with planning windbreaks and making species selections to fit their needs/planting site.
- Submitted initial order to Schumacher's Nursery.
- Newsletter:
 - Writing buffer update article to inform district landowners of our shift into ongoing compliance monitoring
 - Working on an article(s) for tree program. Windbreak rejuvenation? Planting for wildlife habitat?
- Will begin uploading all informative articles to website and provide printed copies at office and tree shed during pick-up days.

Meetings/Other:

- Attended BWSR academy 10/29-31.
- NACDE meeting 11/13.
- Area 1 meeting 11/19.

NRCS DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST'S REPORT

NRCS REPORT

November 2019 REPORT

EQIP:

- Accepting new applications
- No Batching period deadline set or announced yet
- RCPP Monies available through 1W1P- \$171,000. For 2020 no applications yet, need partners to identify potential applicants/projects and do some convincing!
- Doing modifications for contracts that couldn't complete practices due to wetness

CSP:

- Collecting documentation from FY19 activities

- Waiting on money to do mod's and make payments, minimal money in the system currently.
- No batching period announced yet- looking for more applications in W. Polk

CTA:

- Soil Conservationist Technician, Jess Tiedemann, is assisting Norman County with survey work

CRP:

- General sign-up in December
- Rumors say it will be a very large sign up- potentially meaning there will be less acres available in future sign ups...?
- Changes are coming to CRP, still waiting for the manual to be finished.
- MN is participating in 2- CRP Pilot programs- no details known at this time

Other:

- Soil Conservationist, Wade Jackson, last day in Crookston is Friday 11/22
- Writing staff performance plans
- SINEW Administrative Clerk, Sheila Olson, is meshing into her position and increasing efficiency
- Crookston NRCS is scheduled to have a pathways intern summer 2020 and someone has accepted the position.
- Holiday season is coming up quickly and all staff will be looking for leave.
- Compliance/Wetland work is trying to get to zero backlog by the end of 2020 but it's tough when the whole state is short staffed.
- MN staffing has received priority and they have temporarily assigned us additional HR staff from FPAC business center to advertise for staff.

Bob Guetter

District Conservationist- Team Lead

CORRESPONDENCE:

Publications:

Forestry Notes

Conservation Brief

Conservation Views

Crookston Daily Times

MPCA Feedlot Update

Outdoor News

ENewsletter for MASWCD

ENotes for NACD

Waterline

River Monitor

Shade Tree Advocate

Minnesota Environment

BWSR Snapshots

Other:

November 2019 Report

Jillian Fejszes, Farm Bill Biologist

Trainings/Meetings:

- 10/15- Pennington SWCD Board Meeting
- 10/17- West Polk SWCD Board Meeting
- 10/22- Marshall SWCD Board Meeting
- 10/25- Harvest of Knowledge Agri-Women's Conference- Grand Forks

Ongoing Work:

- Talked to 8 landowners with questions. Hearing back from a few people I had talked to over the summer.
- Met with one landowner in Pennington County on site to look at his recreational land. We will be meeting with him to talk about CSP, EQIP or CRP options.
- Helping NRCS with CSP work in Toolkit
- Working on requirements for Conservation Planner certification. Talked to the Area Resource Conservationist about what qualifies.
- Working on outline for Women Caring for the Land workshop that I will hope to plan for next summer. Will be reaching out to other staff soon.
- I have been asked to help find speakers for the Wildlife Society Meeting in February. The theme is related to wildlife management and agriculture. Will be talking to local staff to brainstorm more.
- CRP enrollment data is compiled. I gave the SWCD's areas where the CRP came out and needs a buffer. Working soon to get data for CRP expiring in 2020.
- CRP revisions and paperwork

Upcoming:

- 11/18- Pennington SWCD Board Meeting
- 11/20- Marshall SWCD Board Meeting
- 11/21- West Polk SWCD Board Meeting
- 11/22-11/29- Off to Visit Michigan
- 12/4- Conservation Desktop Training
- 12/16- 12/17- PF Team Meeting- Duluth (October meeting was cancelled)

The next meeting was scheduled for December 19, 2019 at 7am.

With no further business, _____ adjourned the meeting at _____ am.

Respectfully submitted,

Secretary
Mark McWalter\nb