

Due to the current CDC guidelines on social distancing, we are limiting the number in attendance to 8 people at the board meeting. We will also have limited call-in capabilities for up to 10 people. Phone# 651-560-1088 Access code # 0147478#

Phone or physical attendance will be allowed on a first come first serve basis following Wabasha SWCD board members receiving priority for phone or physical attendance. Anyone who is in the at-risk category should consider not attending. If you would like to attend either by call-in or physically, you must notify Sue Cerwinske to hold your place in advance. [susan.cerwinske.wabashaswcd@gmail.com](mailto:susan.cerwinske.wabashaswcd@gmail.com) or 651-560-2053

**Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District  
District Regular Board Meeting  
March 25, 2021  
8:15 a.m.  
County Board Room  
625 Jefferson Ave.**

- I. **CALL MEETING TO ORDER** – Meeting called to order by Terry Helbig, Chair at 8:18 am  
*Supervisors Present: Terry Helbig, Chair, Lynn Zabel, Co-Chair, Larry Theismann, Secretary, Sharleen Klennert, Treasurer, Chet Ross, Member*  
*Staff Present: Terri Peters, District Manager*  
*Others Present: Bob Walkes, County Commissioner, Dave Balcom, Editor of the Wabasha Herald*  
*Attending by Phone: John Benjamin, NRCS, Brian DeVetter, NRCS, Sue Cerwinske, Bookkeeper/Admin. Asst. Sheila Harmes, Winona County Water Planner, Whitewater Watershed*

Terri Peters made the decision to have call-in and limited number of attendees at the Board Meetings. Consulted with other SWCD's and BWSR on how they were handling meetings because of COVID-19 pandemic and State of Emergency Guidelines. Calling in is allowed under the open meeting law. Phone line set up for SWCD meetings by Wabasha County. Board was contacted about this suggested change and it was agreed that this was the best solution for the situation at this time.

II. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Comments limited to 5 minutes per speaker

III. **CONSENT AGENDA -Board Action**

A. WSB – Professional Services Order – Additional services through 5-31-2021

***Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Theismann to approve the Consent Agenda***

***Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross***

***Opposed: None***

***Motion Carried***

**IV. SECRETARY'S REPORT**

A. February 25, 2021 Meeting Minutes-**Board Action**

**Motioned by Ross and seconded by Klennert to approve the Secretary's Report**

**Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross**

**Opposed: None**

**Motion Carried**

**V. TREASURER'S REPORT:**

A. District Financial Statements-**Board Action**

**Motioned by Theismann and seconded by Ross to approve the Treasurer's Report**

**Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross**

**Opposed: None**

**Motion Carried**

**VI. PAYMENT OF MONTHLY BILLS**

A. Monthly Bills in the amount of \$73,904.02 -**Board Action**

**Motioned by Ross and seconded by Klennert to approve the payment of the monthly bills in the amount of \$73,904.02**

**Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross**

**Opposed: None**

**Motion Carried**

**VII. DISTRICT REPORTS**

A. **Chair Report – Terry Helbig**

*Thanked Sue and Sharleen for providing an acronym list to Supervisors*

*Attended Day on the Hill*

B. **County Commissioner – Bob Walkes**

*Attended Day on the Hill*

*Hiawatha Valley RC&D*

C. **District Manager Report – Terri Peters**

*Meetings for both 1W1P's. Local work group provided internal comments that were due for Greater Zumbro 1W1P. The plan will be sent out to State Agencies for review and once that is done, it will be released for public comments.*

*West Indian Plan*

*Prepared for Legislative day, highlights*

*Working with staff on projects. Organize projects that can be worked on together with NRCS*

*Working with Partners. National Fish & Wildlife coming to end. Will need to submit an application for more funding. This grant covers part of Henry Stelten's time.*

*Extra funding for staff time and for more project development.*

*Participated in locally lead work group training with John and Brian. SWCD has been putting the local work group together. Local comments, local feedback for Wabasha County priority projects for funding. Submitted back to NRCS and they go through ranking by National, State and Local criteria. EQIP programs Specific local criteria which pertains to target projects in Wabasha County to be funded.*

*Meeting options: Zoom Meeting. Supervisors contact with landowners, let us know what is important to them.*

- D. **NRCS Report – John Benjamin** – *Report submitted in Board Packet*
- E. **Ecological Technician Report – Henry Stelten** – *Report submitted in Board Packet*
- F. **District Technician Report- Matt Kempinger** – *Report submitted in Board Packet*
- G. **Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant -Sue Cerwinske** – *Report submitted in Board Packet*

**VIII. OLD BUSINESS**

**A. MASWCD Legislative Day Follow-Up Report: Lynn, Terry, Terri, Bob**

***Discussion:***

*Terry reported that they had a visit with Representative Haley.*

*Lynn reported that Rep. Haley seemed interested, she took notes. Seemed to care what we were talking about.*

*Bob mentioned that Terri did a good job of putting together the Highlights for the legislature, it was informative.*

*Terri mentioned the highlights were from 2019 and 2020. Added a few pictures to give them an idea of actual projects we are working on. 2019 outstanding conservationist. Included programs from 2019 and 2020. Grateful that we have gotten Capacity funding since 2016. Capacity comes from clean water funding.*

**B. Conservation Project – Lynn Zabel**

***Report from Lynn:***

*Included cover page of GAO report in Board packet. It gives you a good idea why there was a problem in the first place. Our idea for a local program has potential but funding is always an issue. Lynn noted that he noticed that many large chemical and other corporations seem to be promoting carbon programs for large landowners. It seems like SWCD's and other environmental organizations should try and take advantage of the carbon sequestration boom to generate money to promote conservation. Lynn attended online meeting for Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development area. One member said that the MAWQCP already did what we were proposing. Lynn stated, it partly addresses the issues, but he would get more information.*

*Lynn researched MAWQCP, as of 2020, 977 landowners signed up for 685,000 acres, but there are 67,500 landowners and 2,540,000 acres in Minnesota. It solves some of the problem, but have a long way to go. There seems to be room for more efforts. Lynn received an email from Robert Harris III the new Executive Director of Hiawatha Valley RC&D. He is interested in expanding scope of where Hiawatha Valley RC&D should be focusing on. He would like to hear more and would like to follow up by zoom. Research to do. Lynn sent GAO report and some other research to him. Once Robert has looked it over, they can have an informative discussion.*



C. **Program evaluation – Forestry Day, 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Day, Envirothon, WWJPB, RC&D, Others? – Board Discussion**

**Discussion:**

**Forestry Day** - Terry needs to get together with County Forestry Group. Wasn't able to get in contact with Mark Miller. Event has been well attended. Hopefully we can have it next year 2022. Terri work with Henry through the year to get trained. SWCD planned and organized it the last couple of years.

**5<sup>th</sup> Grade Conservation Day** – Right now we have Conservation Cubes in the classrooms. Mark Miller ordered some trees and we could take to classrooms. Talk about fish, forestry and soil scientist, could have them think about having a career as a Professional in Conservation.

**Envirothon** – Angela White, Olmsted SWCD has been organizing it for last couple of years. What are the barriers that keeps high school team from going to the Envirothon. Funding for teachers/schools. Teams are given a topic and materials to study. They give a presentation/report. Then they go to different sites, hear from resource professionals on the topic. Outdoor sites with different subjects, they get tested at each subject site. Asked Sharleen if the school budget would allow money for this. She said not this year, maybe next year interested in helping with that. Offer scholarships if they win. Regional/State/National Teams. Bob asked if FFA chapters could partner with us. Terri said yes. Each county SWCD has a staff person on the committee that help organize. Location changes every two years to wherever suitable. Need presenters and judges. Each county has to reach out to schools to try to get them involved by emailing or phone calls.

D. **West Indian 319 Plan – Update Terri**

319 Plan, Terri is working with MPCA on final changes. Greg Johnson, MPCA has a few things on his end to complete. This plan will than act as the grant application. Currently discussing on getting added to NRCS priority list. Will be meeting with Sharon Carpenter, NRCS State Office. Brian DeVetter will be joining in on meeting to discuss getting added to prioritization. Potentially NRCS would get a pot of money to go towards projects in that area. Plan will cover all area that flows into that water body. Implementation covers 10 years. Application process for priority watershed. Grant money to go to whole project at for small watershed. Selected in B Group, second group through this process.

4 years of implementation of plan we would get \$292,010, but one group dropped out and now will get \$324,454 from Federal funds. Can't use NRCS fund to match. We are expected to find 40% match. During project development, partners came together to see where they could help implement. Shouldn't have any problem finding partner for match, such as DNR Forestry, TNC.

E. **Discussion on tablets, emails, IT (bring questions)**

*Discussion: Terri stated that wanted to change because our Gmail addresses are lengthy. To be consistent we had the County set up .Org emails. Private Domain, which the county manages. If FSA/NRCS would have a shutdown, we would lose access to our information. Whichever one you want to use, is fine. Just let us know your preference.*

F. **Lynn - Seed Prices – Environmental Troubleshooters**

*Lynn Reported on Seed prices for Zumbro bank restoration: “The oat seed bid range quoted in the information from the contractor ranged from .86 to 11.50 per pound. The lowest bid was used but the price for seed oats from a farm seed dealer is 27.23 cents per pound. The seed prices run a bit high, but the difficult issue is that the seed mixes required by the contract include more exotic blends that are only handled by a limited number of seed suppliers. Some may be justified if they are for pollinators or other specific reasons but for the purposes of securing the stream bank less expensive and more common plants could do the job. All in all, it is not an issue we can change due to requirements for the seed mixes being pre-determined.”*

IX. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Approve Balow Farms (David & Laurie Balow) Contract 19-DWP-CC-6 in the amount of \$2,700.00 for practice 340 Cover Crops – **Board Action**  
***Motioned by Theismann and seconded by Klennert to approve Balow Farms (David & Laurie Balow) Contract 19-DWP-CC-6 in the amount of \$2,700.00 for practice 340 Cover Crops***  
***Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross***  
***Opposed: None***  
***Motion Carried***
- B. Approve Pete Weis Contract 21-CS-1 in the amount of \$5,354.25 for practice 412 Grassed Waterway – **Board Action**  
***Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Theismann to approve Pete Weis Contract 21-CS-1 in the amount of \$5,354.25 for practice 412 Grassed Waterway***  
***Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross***  
***Opposed: None***  
***Motion Carried***
- C. Approve Lars Polson Amendment #1 to Contract LMFR-17RCPP-5WAB to move install date from 5-15-2021 to 12-31-2022. (RCPP Feedlot program in the authorized amount of \$95,318.85) – **Board Action**  
***Motioned by Theismann and seconded by Zabel to approve Lars Polson Amendment #1 to Contract LMFR-17RCPP-5WAB to move install date from 5-15-***

**2021 to 12-31-2022. (RCPP Feedlot program in the authorized amount of \$95,318.85**

**Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross**

**Opposed: None**

**Motion Carried**

- D. Approve Deborah Allan Contract 20-CWMA-7 in the amount of \$600.00 for practice 388 Prescribed Burning – **Board Action**

**Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Thiesmann to approve Deborah Allan**

**Contract 20-CWMA-7 in the amount of \$600.00 for practice 388 Prescribed Burning**

**Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross**

**Opposed: None**

**Motion Carried**

- E. **New Board Photos will be taken**

*Photos will be taken after the meeting*

- F. **Upcoming Events:**

*Supervisor Training 3-31-2021*

X. **Board Reports**

- A. **Whitewater JPB**

*Sheila reported that she received an Amendment for the Surface Water Assessment Grant that Wabasha is helping with. Extra funding to pay for staff to participate in. Presenting at next board meeting for signature. Next JPB meeting is 4-15-21.*

- B. **Zumbro 1W1P**

*Larry said no meeting. Were sent information online to read. Comprehensive Water Plan.*

- C. **WinLac 1W1P**

*Lynn reported, New officers. Intent to Prepare for Watershed. Discussed consultant qualities for the project. Jeff Wise gave a presentation of different aspects. Sheila said State Grant meeting is 4-12-21. Terri reported that the Local Work Group met and talked about notification going out to a number of people about intent to do the plan. If anyone knows of any organizations, like environmental groups, farmer led groups who would be interested, get contact information. Sheila is compiling a list. Talked more about putting together request for qualifications for consultant to move forward with this project. Next policy committee meeting is 4-12-21.*

- D. **SE SWCD Technical Support JPB – No report**

- E. **County Board Meeting – Terri gives Larry SWCD report and he presents it at the County Board Meeting.**



**F. Hiawatha Valley RC&D**

*Lynn reported that they are making their own website.*

*Biochar, where they take brush, wood and matter to make charcoal.*

*Going more towards renewable energy. U of M to partner on grant for graduate student to come in and do a project. Fiscal agent for a dog park, taking in the donations, for 5%. Raising dues to \$400.00*

*Bob reported that at June meeting they want to reach out to other counties.*

*Carbon Retention, the Forestry will be doing webinars in the Summer.*

*They could work on more things, depends on what is brought to them.*

*We have a few ideas they could work on.*

**XI. Adjourn – Board Action**

***Motioned by Theismann and seconded by Ross to adjourn the Meeting at 9:42 am***

***Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross***

***Opposed: None***

***Motion Carried***

***Respectively Submitted By:***

  
***Larry Theismann, Secretary***