

Please call office at 651-560-2053 or email susan.cerwinske.wabashaswcd@gmail.com if you have any questions on attending physically or by phone.

We have call-in capabilities for up to 10 people. Phone# 651-560-1088 Access code # 0147478#.

**Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District
Regular Board Meeting
May 23, 2024
8:15 am
County Conference Room
625 Jefferson Ave.**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

Lynn Zabel, Chair called meeting to order at 8:15 am.

Supervisors Present: Lynn Zabel, Chair, Chet Ross, Co-Chair, Dag Knudsen, Secretary, and Seth Tentis, Member

Staff Present: Terri Peters, District Manager

Others Present: Bob Walkes, County Commissioner, Dave Copeland, BWSR

On the Phone: Sue Cerwinske, Bookkeeper/Admin. Assistant

II. PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

III. AGENDA

Motioned by Ross and seconded by Knudsen to approve The Agenda.

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis. Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

IV. PUBLIC COMMENTS

Comments limited to 5 minutes per speaker

V. CONSENT AGENDA -Board Action

Items on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine by the Board and may be enacted through one motion. Any item on the Consent Agenda may be removed by any of the Board members for separate consideration.

- A. Frank Schuchard Voucher Payment for Contract# 22-CS-8 in the amount of \$315.15 for Practice 370 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation.
(Funding source – FY24 Conservation Contract)
- B. Grants for Funds to cover the Soil Health Nutrient Management position.
 - a. 2024 BWSR Soil Health Staffing Grant Program Grant Agreement
Grant ID C24-0156 \$450,800.00
 - b. MN PT/Coordinator - providing nutrient management technical assistance
\$84,800.00.

- C. MPCA - WinLaCs WRAPs Update Project, \$30,500.00 effective date May 1, 2024 and expiration date June 30, 2025
- D. University of Wisconsin-River Falls Standard Research Agreement Amendment# 2 Amending the subaward to extend period from May 1, 2023 – September 30, 2024.
Motioned by Ross and seconded by Knudsen to approve the Consent Agenda.
Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried

VI. SECRETARY'S REPORT – Board Action

- A. April 25, 2024 Meeting Minutes
Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Ross to approve Secretary's Report.
Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT – Board Action

- A. April District Financial Statements
Included for your review
Sue went over the financial statements.
- B. Program Record - April
The full spreadsheet was sent to the board in advance.
Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Tentis to acknowledge / approve the Treasurer's Report to the best of our ability.
Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried

VIII. PAYMENT OF MONTHLY BILLS

- A. Monthly Bills in the amount of \$43,462.51 - Board Action
Motioned by Ross and seconded by Knudsen to approve Payment of the Monthly Bills in the amount of \$43,462.51.
Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried

IX. DISTRICT REPORTS

- A. Chair Report – Lynn Zabel
- B. County Commissioner – Bob Walkes
Budget season. Request to SWCD. Promotion within for Auditor/Treasurer, Francie Warren. 30% + increase for health insurance next year. Looking into options to contain cost.

- C. District Manager Report – Terri Peters
Redoing Job descriptions, career ladder definitions for each job.
Retirement Policy
West Indian Creek partners. Lysimeters have rodent damage. Redoing them.
5th grade Field Day
Sub-agreements funding MDH and MDA for well nitrate program.
Job description for Soil Health position.
Planning for office move.
Ron Meiners, prairie strip contract for promotion. Matt took him on a tour of Watershed area and Ron will be starting contracting soon.
Community Meetings – MDH with the Goodhue area. June 27 at the Mazeppa Community Center. Will have a table there for questions. Region meetings, one in Stewartville and one in Rushford.
Election Filing opened May 21st. Dag, Chet and Sharleen.
MPCA Work Group – closed survey on 5/10
- D. NRCS Report – Chrstina Taylor – (in the packet)
Christina went through the NRCS report.
- E. District Technician Report- Matt Kempinger – In the Packet)
- F. Conservation Planning and Outreach Technician Report– Jenna Rasmusson – (In the packet)
- G. Natural Resources Technician Report– Katelyn Abts – (In the packet)
- H. Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant Report -Sue Cerwinske
Looking for a new auditor for our 2023 Financial Statements audit.
Smith Schafer no longer auditing SWCD's. Sent out a number of bid requests.
- I. BWSR Report – Dave Copeland
Phase 1 enter into grant agreement. 39 SWCD's requested soil health staffing funds.
Phase 2 Grant, Request for Interest (RFI). Inform SWCD's how much money is set aside and decide how much is needed. Can be used as match for Federal RCPP.
BWSR with NRCS \$25 million and \$25 million state funds for next 4 years. Can be used for staffing, cost share with producers, outreach, education and field days.
Make sure to be able to utilize what amount is requested. Grant will be executed after 7/1/24.
Other requests for proposals that are habitat related. One is the Habitat Enhancement Landscape Program. Goes to groups or partnerships. Meant to enhance existing habitat or establish pollinator habitat. Other proposal is the Pollinator Pathways Program that Katelyn will be working with the City of Wabasha and the City of Lake City. \$50,000.00 minimum. Grantees can be cities, townships, SWCD's and nonprofit. Katelyn and city staff want to visit with BWSR staff on pollinator pathways. 6/27 is deadline for application.
BWSR staffing update. Adam Beilke has taken a new position as Supervisor of Grants Staff in BWSR. He will be working on coordinating grant work. Also, there are 2 vacancies for board conservationists. One out of Mankato and one out of Rochester.

- J. Other agencies – Todd Boettcher, DNR
TJ Boettcher, DNR Conservationist focus area southern Minnesota. Based out of Caledonia. Taking over for James Wanstall, who is now covering northern Minnesota. Wants to form partnerships with organizations to get habitat on the ground. Spend money on public lands to improve hill prairies, remove invasive species, both plant and animal. Help with outreach. Reach out to landowners to see what we are doing with environment in this area.

X. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Conservation Project – Lynn (open to any Supervisor for ideas)
Waiting to try the Roller Crimper.

XI. **NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Approve Dave Hager Contract# 24-CC-1 in the amount of \$300.00 for Practice 314 Brush Management -**Board Action**
(Funding source: FY24 Conservation Contract)
Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Ross to approve Dave Hager Contract# 24-CC-1 in the amount of \$300.00 for Practice 351 Brush Management.
Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried
- B. Approve Mike Graner Contract# 23-CWF-WIC-4 in the amount of \$27,259.98 for Practice 528 Prescribed Grazing – **Board Action**
(Funding source: 2023 West Indian Creek Watershed Restoration and Protection Grant) Piggy back with EQIP funds. Total cost of project is \$154,617.
Motioned by Ross and seconded by Knudsen to approve Mike Graner Contract# 23-CWF-WIC-4 in the amount of \$27,259.98 for Practice 528 Prescribed Grazing.
Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried
- C. Approve Amendment to Resolution 01252024-7 for Contracts, Amendments and Extension Signature Authority dated 5/23/2024 – **Board Action**
Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Ross to approve Amendment to Resolution 01252024-7 for Contracts, Amendments and Extension Signature Authority dated 5/23/2024
Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried
- D. WinLaC Watershed Resources Assistance Program (WRAPS) Contract with MPCA. Approve moving ahead with sub-agreements with Winona, Olmsted, Root River and St Mary's for nitrate monitoring, Chloride monitoring, and Well inventory. – **Board Action**

Sub-agreements:

Olmsted SWCD – Nitrate Monitoring \$4,400.00 (\$3,500 staff, \$300.00 mileage, \$600.00 lab analysis)

Root River SWCD – Chloride Monitoring \$1,550.00 (\$1,200.00 staff, \$250.00 mileage and \$100.00 printing & shipping)

Saint Mary's University of Minnesota -Best Management Practice Mapping \$7,300.00 for staff.

Winona SWCD – Well Inventory \$10,400.00 (\$9,800.00 staff, \$600.00 printing and shipping.

Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Tentis to approve moving ahead with sub-agreements for the WRAPS project with Winona, Olmsted, Root River SWCD's and St. Mary's University of MN.

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

- E. Approve Safe Drinking Water for Private Well- Users sub-agreements between Olmsted SWCD and Wabasha SWCD – **Board Action for each**

a. Southeast Minnesota Safe Drinking Water for Private Well-Users (MDH)

b. Private Well Mitigation for Eight County -SE MN Region (MDA)

Discussion on nitrates in the water locally and what tested after reverse osmosis.

Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Ross to approve a. Southeast Minnesota Safe Drinking Water for Private Well-Users (MDH) and approve b. Private Well Mitigation for Eight County-SE MN Region (MDA)

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

- F. Approve (VNM) SE Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network Grant sub-agreement between Olmsted SWCD and Wabasha SWCD updated to a 2-year cycle beginning July 1, 2024 ending June 30, 2026 – **Board Action**

Katelyn filling nodes that needed to be filled. This will get long term data.

Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Tentis to approve (VNM) SE Volunteer Nitrate Monitoring Network Grant sub-agreement between Olmsted SWCD and Wabasha SWCD updated to 2-year cycle beginning July 1, 2024 ending June 30, 2026.

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

- G. Seth Tentis Storage Space Agreement -Discuss and Approve -Board Action
Motioned by Knudsen and seconded by Ross to approve Seth Tentis, Storage Space Agreement.

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

H. Upcoming Events

- i. Monday, May 27 Memorial Day Holiday - Office Closed
- ii. Saturday, June 15 Gorman Stream Walk
- iii. Wednesday, June 19 National Independence Day Holiday – Office Closed
- iv. Local Work Group – June 27th starting at 10:00 am

XII. Board Reports

- A. Whitewater JPB – Lynn
- B. Zumbro 1W1P – Dag **Quarterly Meeting 5/9 canceled**
- C. WinLaC 1W1P – Lynn
- D. SE SWCD Technical Support JPB – Dag **Next meeting in June**
- E. County Board Meeting – Sharleen

WAGZ Summary Report attached -Dag

2023 year in review link below

<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/fbd9f58ecb8d42bf9d305f0e2f6082a0>

XIII. Motion to Recess Regular Meeting and go in to Closed Session -Board Action

Motioned by Ross and seconded by Tentis to Recess Regular Meeting and go in to Closed Session

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

XIV. Closed Session – Discussion

- A. **Discuss and approve Minnesota State Retirement System Policy (previously sent to the board)**
- B. **Review job description updates with promotional career ladder**
 - a. **Approve submitting to Shawn Huth and work with HR and Consultant for scoring**
- C. **Approve moving ahead with hiring Soil Health/Nutrient Management Specialist**

XV. Motion to Close Closed Session and Reopen Regular Meeting – Board Action

Motioned by Ross and seconded by Tentis to Close the Closed Session and Reopen Regular Meeting

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

Motioned by Ross and seconded by Tentis to Approve the Minnesota State Retirement Policy.

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

Motioned by Ross and seconded by Tentis to approve moving ahead with hiring Soil Health/Nutrient Management Specialist.

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

Motioned by Ross and seconded by to approve submitting the job description updates with promotional career ladder and approve submitting to Shawn Huth and work with HR and Consultant for scoring.

Affirmative: Ross, Knudsen, Tentis, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

XVI. Adjourn – Board Action

Zabel adjourned meeting at 10:15 am

Respectively Submitted By:



Dag Knudsen, Secretary

