

**Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation
District Regular Board Meeting
April 24, 2025
8:15 am
611 Broadway Ave. Suite 10B**

I. CALL MEETING TO ORDER

II. PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE

III. AGENDA

Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Knudsen to approve the Agenda with the adjustment of moving Old Business letter D. to District Reports Letter F.

Affirmative: Ross, Klennert, Tentis, Knudsen, 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

i. Contracts

- A. Kenneth Heise Contract# 25-CC-8 in the amount of \$1,743.61 for Practice 380 Windbreak/Shelterbelt Establishment and Renovation, Practice 490 Tree/Shrub Site Preparation.
(Funding sources – FY24 Conservation Contract \$150.99 and FY25 Conservation Contracts \$1,592.62)

ii. Contract Amendments

- A. Contract Amendment# 2 for Contract# WS-08 to change the Land Occupier from Dan Baker to Diane Baker.

iii. Vouchers

- A. Nancy Kuklinski Voucher payment for Contract# 24-SWCDaid-2 in the amount of \$570.00 for Practice 314 Brush Management.
(Funding source – SWCD Aid)

iv. Grants

v. AgBMB Loan Applications

- A. Jary Holst AgBMP loan application in the amount of \$17,000.00 for John Deere 1770, 12-row planter that allows for no-till planting. This will help with erosion and nutrient runoff.
- B. Isaac Holst AgBMP loan application in the amount of \$40,000.00 for a Self-propelled Sprayer to apply side dressing on corn and soybeans. Will limit drift since application can be made at the correct time and weather. Less product may be used.

Motioned by Ross and seconded by Klennert to approve the Consent Agenda.

Affirmative: Ross, Klennert, Tentis, Knudsen, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

VI. SECRETARY'S REPORT

- A. March 27, 2025, Meeting Minutes – Board Action

Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Ross to approve the Secretary's Report as presented.

Affirmative: Ross, Klennert, Tentis, Knudsen, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT – Board Action

- A. March District Financial Statements
Included for your review
- B. March Program Record

Motioned by Ross and seconded by Tentis to approve the Treasurer's Report to the best of our ability.

Affirmative: Ross, Klennert, Tentis, Knudsen, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

VIII. PAYMENT OF MONTHLY BILLS

- A. Monthly Bills in the amount of \$64,185.05 - Board Action

Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Ross to approve Payment of the Monthly Bills in the amount of \$64,185.05.

Affirmative: Ross, Klennert, Tentis, Knudsen, Zabel

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

IX. DISTRICT REPORTS

- A. Chair Report – Lynn Zabel

Attended Executive Board Meeting in Rochester for SE MN Area 7. Discussed planning for the summer meeting and agenda. Thinking of topics for a resolution. June 23, 2025, Resolution Meeting at the Legion in Stewartville.

Discussion: Randy Smith had heard that Illinois pays \$275.00/acre for land that is taken out of ag production. This goes to the SWCD for funding. Up to \$10 million in total. Lynn reported that the Executive Board discussed other topics, solar panels, contracts. Mark Ihlenfeld, Steele County mentioned something put on property tax – farmland to development – solar panels
Discussion followed on solar panels, clean-up.

B. County Commissioner – Bob Walke

Lynn had a call about 110 acres by Mazeppa that someone wants to build houses on. 10 lots, shared wells. Bob said that the street doesn't meet city specs and that this has been going on for 2-3 years. The County Board tabled the request. Bob reported that there is a solar field planned on 1800 acres in Olmsted County. Quiet neighborhood, people are upset. The county requires a \$250,000.00 bond for solar clean-up. Also, since then, one has been one planned in the Plainview area. Hoping that the bond stays with the land, not the developer. Assessor's Office, utilities properties challenged state for valuations. Not recorded in time for 2025 payable. Special meeting 4-25 to change valuations for utilities properties.

C. District Manager Report – Terri Peters

Make Your Own Rain Barrell Day had 23 people. Afterwards we had a request for 2 more. Probably will do again next year. Letter of Support for Olmsted Soil Health Bill, going through regional. Lynn signed and Bob brought it to the County, and they did a letter of support as well. Hearing in the House Ag Committee a few weeks ago. Worked with Shawn on the Wage Study. No major changes. Presentation at the May meeting. Will be working on possibly using a promotional ladder. Quarterly billing. Quarterly financial. Need answers on the Federal Regional Soil Health Program. We don't have the funds. NRCS - back for review. Ella has been very helpful with different things since Jenna left. She was going to continue for another year, but Ameri-Corp cut that program. She is interested if we open Jenna's position. Replacing Jenna, will need to use other funding programs, and continue well inventory. NFWF federal grant funding approved to move ahead. We can't use staff time for soil health, since we already have soil funding. Check if Matt can use it for structural projects.

D. NRCS Report – Christina Taylor – (In the Packet)

Christina was at the meeting and gave her report. Personnel changes, hiring freeze until 7/15/2025. Need 2 Soil Conservationists. John Benjamin, Teddy Moreno-Santos and Christina will be handling Goodhue, Wabasha and Olmsted Counties. Teddy's team lead 120-day term has run out and he has been extended indefinitely.

E. District Technician Report- Matt Kempinger – (In the Packet)

- F. Natural Resources Technician Report– Katelyn Abts – (In the Packet)
Well Inventory Update

Sent out 2,709 well inventory letters on 4/14/2025. Letter was like Olmsted's, just changed a bit for Wabasha. Options - can call if they have no idea where well is. Google form to fill out. Need coordinates of where the well is located. Google map, zoom into the location and hold your finger down and you can pin the coordinates. We have 108 responses so far. The goal is to get the wells in the MDH database. 1900 wells are not in the MDH database. We can keep doing outreach education, mapping, and identifying wells through 2027. Have funding for well-sealing cost share.

MDH has free well test kits and if tests come back with high nitrates of 10 milligram's/per liter, owners can get a free reverse osmosis system.

Ella is making a list of abandoned wells to send letters to.

- G. Soil Health/Nutrient Management Tech Report – Deanna Pomije – (In the Packet)
H. Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant Report -Sue Cerwinske -
I. BWSR Report – Dave Copeland

Dave gave kudos to the Wabasha SWCD staff. Conversations and interactions have been positive and professional.

Feedlot funding - last year's legislative session bill for \$850,000.00 statewide in general funds. Money to BWSR is partly in response to the EPA petition. Not specific to 8 counties in petition. Financial assistance for Nutrient Management, Manure Management plans and Ag Waste System. Probably come out this fall.

Pause of Federal funds, RCPP- Regional Conservation Partner Program. Soil Health. \$21 million Federal funds are paused for water storage efforts. BWSR is doing an RFP, a water storage application with state money, that was set aside.

Will be matched with Federal RCPP.

Regional Soil Health Bill - Skip Langer, Olmsted SWCD presented to Clean Water Council on Monday 4/22. Hoping this effort will gain Clean Water funds.

Also submitted LCCMR proposal for \$9 million for Regional Soil Health.

Bob Walkes commented that the County Board talked about funding shifts and how it will affect the budget. Frustrating for planning and for projects.

2026 - \$300,000 cut and 2027 \$900,000 cut. \$170,000 levy. Most cuts will affect programs, such as Public Health, that are state-required programs. Change source of money shifted to County. Most likely tax bills will be higher. Unfunded mandates, taking funded mandate money away.

- J. Other agencies –

X. **OLD BUSINESS**

- A. Conservation Project – Lynn (open to any Supervisor for ideas)

- B. Wage Study – Terri Update (Presentation at May meeting)
Working with David Drown Associates & Shawn. The study showed we are not paying more and aren't out of line. Talked about implementation, assessment and performance review Method to move forward. Goal to set up employees for retention & take care of HR issues. New hire placement on our scale. May 22nd meeting, Shawn & Mark will give a presentation.
- C. Federal Funds – Terri Update -- *Talked about earlier*
- D. Well Inventory – Katelyn Update (*Moved to District Reports Letter F*)
- E. Well Mitigation Program – Terri Update
Meeting with Dept. of Health. Summary report given by the MPCA on nitrogen reduction strategy. Completed report on results from 10 years. Work plan for the next 10 years. A local group contributing to nitrate issues is led through MPCA. Group coming up with suggestions and recommendations. Discuss what can be implemented.
The Dept of Health laid off 120 employees. Lost \$220 million of Federal funding. Request for \$6 million Clean Water fund. \$2.8 million available now through 6/30/2027. Use for Well inventory.
425 water samples received, 523 water samples were analyzed through Olmsted Tap-In program. 164 Reverse Osmosis Systems were installed.
Test results: 11% over nitrate level, 11% exceeded bacteria, 19% arsenic, 42% lead (old pipes, run the water for 10 seconds), 8% manganese.
Private well focus group. Private well owners to participate.
Outreach – articles, KTTC spots. Olmsted had more test kits requested.
MDH has a quarterly report on their website.
MDA has more funding, \$450,000 that will be coming through Olmsted SWCD.
Use for new wells, rebuild wells. Survey out to see what practices and how much to cost-share.

XI. NEW BUSINESS

- A. MASWCD Memo - Call for Resolutions – 2025 Resolution Process - Informational
 - i. 2025 Resolutions Process Guidelines.
Ideas from the Board for resolutions.
Terri messaged Margaret Martin, Drazkowski's Assistant. She helped to bring the Bill for Pond Clean Out to the house. We might need to do that again. We aren't sure what this legislative session will do.
Discussion on Pond Clean Outs.
Terri will bring a resolution to the meeting, to run by the board.
- B. Selecting the Conservation Farmer of the Year – Discussion
Talk to staff. Terri mentioned, possibly Stacy Miller.
- C. Selecting the Woodland Manager of the year – Discussion
Check with Katelyn on some people she has worked with.

- D. Approve Val Adler Contract# 2025WAGZ-WC-02 in the amount of \$53,599.50 for Practice 410 Grade Stabilization Structure including multiple practices – **Board Action**
(Funding source -FY24 Greater Zumbro Watershed Based Funding (WAGZ) *Group addendum agreement that named Val Adler to receive the funding. 90% Cost-Share, based on ranking tool to assign points.*
Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Knudsen to approve the Val Adler Contract# 2025WAGZ-WC-02 in the amount of \$53,599.50 for Practice 410 Grade Stabilization Structure, including multiple practices.
Affirmative: Ross, Klennert, Tentis, Knudsen, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried
- E. Upcoming Events
- i. Tree Pick up Day, Friday April 25, 9:00 am – 3:00 pm.
 - ii. 5th Grade Conservation Field Day, May 14, 2025
 - iii. May 22, 2025, Regular Board Meeting
 - iv. Local Work Group – June 26th, 10:00 am (with our Regular Board Meeting)

XII. Board Reports

- A. Whitewater JPB – Lynn
- B. Zumbro 1W1P – Dag *The next Policy Committee meeting is Thurs. May 8th.*
- C. WinLaC 1W1P – Lynn *The next meeting is Mon. May 12th.*
- D. SE SWCD Technical Support JPB – Dag *Next meeting will be the end of July.*
- E. County Board Meeting – Sharleen

XIII. Adjourn

Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Ross to Adjourn the meeting at 10:30 am.
Affirmative: Ross, Klennert, Tentis, Knudsen, Zabel
Opposed: None
Motion Carried

Respectively Submitted By:



Seth Tentis, Secretary