

Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District
Regular Board Meeting
November 13, 2023 – Carlton SWCD Office, Carlton MN

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 am by Board Chair Bob Fox.

The Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Roll call was taken:

Board Members present: Barb Dahl
 Bob Fox
 Bruce Heikes
 Tim Michaelson
 Kim Samuelson

Staff present: Julie Radovich, District Administrator
 Cameron Gustafson, Community Conservationist
 Melanie Bomier, Asst. Manager for Water Resources

Guests present: Susan Zymslony, Carlton County Commissioner
 Alison Praet, NRCS
 Joe Quehl, Farmbill Biologist

Meeting Agenda: A motion was made to approve the meeting agenda with addition. M/S Dahl/Heikes. Motion carried.

Meeting Minutes: A motion was made to approve the minutes of the October 10, 2023 regular SWCD Board meeting. M/S Michaelson/Heikes. Motion carried.

Treasurer’s Report: The report was presented by Dahl. Motion to approve the Treasurer’s Report. M/S Heikes/Samuelson. Motion carried.

Financial Report: No Financial Report.

SWCD Committee Reports:

Policy Committee: Radovich presented updates to the Policy and Employee Handbooks regarding the Earned Sick and Safe Time (ESST), updated Facility Closing Policy, and updated Leave of Absence procedures and forms.

- Motion made to approve the ESST as presented on the Policy Committee Memo. M/S Michaelson/Dahl. Motion Carried.

Personnel Committee: Radovich presented the Personnel Committee’s recommendations. After discussion, Samuelson requested that more information be provided regarding compensation comparisons with other SWCDs in the northern part of Minnesota.

- Motion made to approve the performance adjustments as well as position advancements and salary increases for Clark and Radovich. M/S Michaelson/Heikes. Due to what she felt was incomplete information, Samuelson abstained. Motion carried.

- Motion made to approve 3.6% increase in employee taxable fringe for 2024. M/S Dahl/Heikes. Samuelson abstained. Motion carried.
- Motion to approve 3.2% COLA increase for employees for 2024. M/S Heikes/Michaelson. Samuelson abstained. Motion carried.
- Motion to approve adding dental coverage at 50% employer paid premium to benefits package starting January 1, 2024. M/S Heikes/Michaelson. Samuelson abstained. Motion carried.

Update on Forester Position: Radovich reported that there are three interviews scheduled with qualified applicants.

One Watershed One Plan Reports:

- Nemadji River: Report by Bomier.
 - A motion was made to approve Agreement C23-0009 – CSAH 4 and Clear Creek Design Fund Agreement. Funding would be from C23-0009 Nemadji Watershed Based Implementation Funds Second Biennium for a total of \$30,000. M/S Heikes/Samuelson. Motion carried.
 - A motion was made to authorize Melanie Bomier to sign the grant extension for C21-8755 – Nemadji Comprehensive Watershed Management Implementation Phase 1 in DocuSign. M/S Dahl/Samuelson. Motion carried.
- St. Louis River: No report.
- Kettle River: Report by Samuelson and Bomier that the draft plan is going out for public comment this week.
- Upper Mississippi, Grand Rapids: No report.

Old Business: None

New Business:

- Motion to approve the FY 2024 and 2025 Conservation Delivery and Conservation Contracts (cost share) Grant Agreement. M/S Michaelson/Heikes. Motion carried.
- Motion to approve and authorize Manager to DocuSign the \$18,300 Coastal Grand Agreement with Minnesota’s Lake Superior Coastal Program to develop a Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) for Carlton County. M/S Samuelson/Michaelson. Motion carried.
- Introduction of Joe Quehl, the new shared Farmbill Biologist.

Correspondence: None

SWCD Cost Share Projects:

Swanstrom Diversion Application

- Contract: BWSR 2023 Cost Share - 5
- Practice: Diversion
- Funding: BWSR 2023 State Cost Share
- Amount: \$5,415.00

Motion to approve funding. M/S Dahl/Michaelson. Motion carried.

LaBrasseur Knotweed Removal Voucher

- Contract: 2022 BWSR CWMA - 3
- Practice: Brush Management
- Funding: 2022 BWSR CWMA
- Amount: \$134.85

Motion to approve funding. M/S Dahl/Heikes. Motion carried.

City of Cromwell Invoice

- Contract: Big Sandy 319 – City of Cromwell Funding
- Practice: Stormwater Management
- Funding: Tamarack River, Horseshoe Island, and Minnewawa Lakes Restoration and Protection Phase 1 Grant – Big Sandy 319
- Amount: \$7,429.80

Motion to approve funding. M/S Dahl/Samuelson. Motion carried.

Carlton County Transportation Invoice

- Contract: County Road 104 Spring Creek Culvert Replacement
- Practice: Stream Crossing
- Funding: Enbridge Grant
- Amount: \$126,837.26

Motion to approve funding. M/S Michaelson/Heikes. Motion carried.

Kincanon Conservation Cover Pollinator Habitat Application

- Contract: BWSR 2023 Cost Share - 6
- Practice: Conservation Cover (327)
- Funding: BWSR Cost Share 2023
- Amount: \$3,000

Motion to approve funding. M/S Dahl/Samuelson. Motion carried.

Reports:

- SWCD Staff Reports – as presented in packet.
- NRCS Staff Report – presented by Praet.

Outside Organizations:

- BSALWMP – report presented by Dahl
- Laurentian RC&D – report presented by Samuelson
- MN SWCD Forestry Assoc – report presented by Michaelson
- Technical Services Area 3 – report presented by Fox

County Commissioner Comments: report presented by Zymslony

Ten Minute Topic: none

Other Business:

- Reminder of the MASWCD Annual Convention on December 11-13.

Adjourn: Motion to adjourn at 10:04 am. M/S Heikes/Michaelson. Motion approved.

Outstanding Conservationist Award Public Recognition/Reception:

Gustafson and Ryan Clark, Regional Ag Water Quality Certification Specialist, presented the Outstanding Conservationists for 2023 – Heather-Marie Bloom and John Hatcher who operate Rising Phoenix Community Farm in Barnum.

Next meeting – Monday, December 4, 2023 in the Carlton SWCD meeting room (808 3rd Street, Carlton MN).

Date _____

SWCD Board Secretary

SWCD Board Chair