

Carlton County Soil and Water Conservation District Reorganization Board Meeting Minutes

Date: Monday, January 11, 2021

Location: Google Meets

Matlack called the meeting to order at 9:08 a.m.

Present

Russ Kurhajetz
Bob Fox
Rick Dalen
Barb Dahl
Kim Samuelson

Staff Present

Brad Matlack
Julie Radovich
Melanie Bomier
Alyssa Alness

County Rep

Commissioner Mark Thell
BWSR Erin Loeffler
NRCS Allison Praet

Oath of Office – District 1 Barb Dahl, District 4 Kim Samuelson, District 5 Rick Dalen

Call Meeting to Order – Manager Brad Matlack

The Pledge of Allegiance

Election of Officers

Personnel Committee Officer Recommendations:

Chair – Kurhajetz

Vice Chair – Fox

Secretary – Dalen

Treasurer – Dahl

PR Officer – Samuelson

M/S Fox/Dahl to approve personnel committee recommendations as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson – Aye

Kurhajetz - Aye

Motion carried

Chair Kurhajetz took over meeting.

M/S Dalen/Samuelson to approve agenda as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Committee Assignments

M/S Fox/Dahl to approve committee assignments as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Committees Outside SWCD

M/S Dahl/Samuelson to approve committee assignments outside SWCD as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Meeting Rules:

M/S Dalen/Fox to adopt Roberts Rules of Order to govern SWCD Board Meetings.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Depository of Funds

M/S Dahl/Dalen to approve Cornerstone State Bank in Cloquet as the Depository of funds.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Official Newspaper

M/S Fox/Dahl to approve Pine Knot as the Official Newspaper of the SWCD.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Payment of Bills

Recommend authorization for manager to pay bills up to \$3,000. Prior Board Authorization required on amounts over \$3,000. Two signatures on checks in an amount over \$3,000.

Prior Board Authorization Exemptions: (Still requires 2 signatures)

1. Online payments of payroll liabilities
2. Payments to partners/contactors to reimburse their expenses in cooperative work/board approved grant projects.
3. Cost share payments approved by board action.

M/S Dalen/Fox to approve payment of bills as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Authorized signatory on bank accounts

M/S Dahl/Samuelsen to authorize the following as signatories:

Manager, Brad Matlack

Chair, Russ Kurhajetz

Treasurer, Barb Dahl

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelsen - Aye

Motion carried

Meeting Schedule

Second Monday of each Month for Regular Monthly Board Meeting, meeting to start at 9:00 a.m.

2021 Second Monday Schedule

January 11

February 8

March 8

April 12

May 10

June 14

July 12

August 9

September 13

October 12 (Tuesday)

November 8

December 13

M/S Fox/Dahl to accept 2021 regular board meeting schedule.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelsen - Aye

Motion carried

M/S Dalen/Samuelsen to set mileage rate to 2021 IRS rate of \$.56

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelsen - Aye

Motion carried

M/S Dahl/Fox to set 2021 meal allowances

Breakfast - \$10.00

Lunch - \$15.00

Dinner - \$25.00

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelsen - Aye

Motion carried

Set Service Rates:

Maintain \$7.00/ac and base rate of \$200.

WCA (Wetland Conservation Act) – Minimum site visit charge is \$200. Projects exceeding 4 hours incur additional expenses at the approved hourly rate.

M/S Fox/Dahl to set service rates as recommended.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Set Supervisor Reimbursement Rate:

Recommend \$70 per meeting in 2021 for all District authorized business.

Recommend \$30 for board packet review rate

M/S Dalen/Samuelson to set Board Packet review rates and Board Reimbursement rate as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Set Supervisor Election Options:

Currently at large by nominating districts

M/S Fox/Dalen to set Supervisor election options as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Carlton SWCD Comp Time Policy

In May 2018, the SWCD board adopted the following Comp Time policy:

ARTICLE VI

Compensatory Time (*policy adopted May 2018*)

Overtime is not authorized by the SWCD for any Employee. Comp time will be allowed according to the following process. With exception for an employee on flex time, Employees will manage their time to not exceed 40 hours in a work week (or the normal hours for employees on flex time). If daily time management for any work week requires hours to be worked in excess of the normal flex time hours, the employee will manage those hours with the 2 week pay period. If comp time cannot be managed with the pay period, the employee will request in writing to the manager, prior to working the extra time, to extend the use period to the calendar year. The request must be on the SWCD Comp Time Form and include expected number of extra hours, project being worked on, time extent of project, anticipated use week. Form must be signed by Manager. The rate for comp time is 1 hour off for each hour worked in accordance with the Federal Office of Personnel Management – Fair Labor Standards Act.

The Fair Labor Standards Act requires annual review and approval of this policy by employees and the Board. Staff reviewed the policy at the January Staff meeting and recommends approval

M/S Samuelson/Dahl to follow comp time as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Land Value for Match *Allows for land for conservation practices to be valued for use as match.* Use Carlton County parcel data online an estimate from the county GIS data can be used and confirmed with County Assessor as needed.

M/S Samuelson/Dalen to use Carlton Counties GIS information web tool to estimate land value and seek specific values for parcels under consideration from Carlton County Assessor as needed.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Carlton SWCD Combined Erosion Control and Water Management Program (ECWMP) policy and nonstructural Lan Management Practices (NLMP) policy-FY 2020.

The District ECWMP and NLMP policy shall be reviewed annually for updates at the January SWCD board reorganization meeting:

Project Prioritization:

Financial assistance through the SWCD's various funding programs shall be directed to Best Management Practices (BMPs) implemented to address identified water quality, erosion, and sedimentation designated to protect and improve soil and water resources. These issues have been vetted through multiple planning efforts both locally, by watershed, and regionally and are identified in numerous goals and associated action items within these plans.

The primary local plan identifying resource concerns driving conservation practice implementation is the Carlton County Water Plan, 2010-2020, Amended 2014. The Carlton County Water Plan identifies several goals to target technical and financial assistances programs to implement water quality practices.

Priority Concern 1: WATER QUALITY IN COUNTY LAKES, RIVERS AND STREAMS

Goal 2: Improve water resources that are listed as impaired.

Goal 3: Maintain and improve water quality in County lakes, rivers and streams.

Priority Concern 3: PROMOTE AND EDUCATE THE PUBLIC ABOUT THE COUNTY'S WATER RESOURCES

Goal 1: Promote programs currently in place to enhance our water resources.

Goal 2: Educate the public on how to be good stewards of the land and water.

These goals contain action items aimed at increasing technical and financial assistance to county landowners to boost conservation practice planning and implementation. Continued development of 1Watershed 1 Plan projects will further refine priorities for conservation work specific to the 4 major watershed of Carlton County, Nemadji River, St. Louis River, Upper Mississippi River Grand Rapids, and Upper St. Croix – Kettle River.

In addition to this locally developed and adopted plan many watershed and regional plans also contain identification of goals and action items related to the SWCD's conservation implementation of BMPs with private landowners. These include:

- a. Nemadji River WRAPS Report, June 2016. Pg 54, Key Strategy Table
- b. St. Louis River Watershed Monitoring and Assessment Report 2013. Midway River Section Pg. 126.
- c. Lake St. Croix TMDL Implementation Plan 2012. Pg. 14 NONPOINT SOURCES Shoreline/Riparian
- d. Big Sandy Lake Watershed TMDL Implementation Plan 2013
- e. NE Landscape Plan 2014 Revision
- f. Fisheries Management Plan For The Minnesota Waters Of Lake Superior, Third Edition 2016 – 2025.

Project Selection and Cost share Program Procedures:

Technical assistance will be provided to land occupier by qualified SWCD staff. Appropriate SWCD staff will conduct a site visit to determine the resource concern and the landowners' ideas to address them. SWCD staff with the appropriate TAA will develop a practice plans for implementation consistent with priorities identified in the plans listed in this policy. The SWCD will complete needed practice inspections as per Cost Share program rules on all practices implemented. The SWCD's Technical Representative will be the Ag Technician. The SWCD Board will approve all new contracts for cost share. Approval and signing of supporting program documents is delegated to the District Manager as necessary to expedite processing and payments. Final payment approval will be made by the SWCD board.

Current District staff qualifications to manage ECWMP:

Conservation Technician, Kelly Smith

Training: Various technical trainings in 1997 – present

Technical Approval Authority, via NRCS, 2007, on file.

Education: MS, 1991, U of MN, Forest Hydrology

Experience: Managed Carlton County SWCD State Cost Share Program 1997-2016

Water Resources Technician, Melanie Bomier

Training: ARC GIS 2000 FDL College fall 2015

Various lab safety and procedure trainings 2011 – present

Education: BS 2006, U of WI Lacrosse

Experience: project management 2015-present

District Manager, Brad Matlack

Training: MASWCD Leadership Cohort 2006

Various technical trainings in WI and MN 1984 – present

Conservation practice planning, implementation, and construction observation experience 1984-2000

Grant writing and administration experience 2000-present

Administrative Assistant, Julie Radovich

Training: SWCD administrative trainings 2011-present

Various Excel and Database training 1993-present

Human Resources trainings

Education: BS 1989, BSU

Administrative and HR experience 1993 – present

Conservation Technician (Ag), Alyssa Alness

Training: Various technical trainings 2014-present

Technical Approval Authority via NRCS 2017 on file.

Education: BA. 2010, Environmental Sciences, University of MN Duluth.

Experience: Managed various conservation projects, 2011-present

Technical Service Area 3 Staff. Licensed professional engineer and technical staff

Program Implementation Details:

1. District cost share maximum rates shall be equal to rates set by the State BWSR Board. Regular State Cost Share and Capacity project funding will be used for all practices at 75% of actual costs.

Maximum flat rates for in-kind services and materials provided by land occupiers. All in-kind labor MUST have dates, times and activities and be documented

1. General Labor: \$25/hour
 2. Heavy Machinery (Skid steer, tractor, backhoes) use, with operator: \$90/hour
 3. Cost Share will not be used for used materials.
 4. Earth Fill, not including movement of: \$2/cubic yard
2. Practice standards for design, construction, operation, and maintenance shall follow the NRCS Field Office Technical Guide, MPCA Stormwater Manual, NRCS or professionally accepted engineering or ecological practices. Design standards for all practices shall include specifications for operation and maintenance for the life of the given practice, including an inspection schedule and procedure. Practices where runoff or sediment from the contributing watershed prevents the practice from achieving the intended purpose with normal operation and maintenance are ineligible. Vegetative practices shall follow the BWSR Native Vegetation Establishment and Enhancement Guidelines. <https://bwsr.state.mn.us/vegetation-establishment-and-management>

Because about ½ of the land in Carlton County is forestland (265,000ac.), and 55% of that forestland is privately owned, BMPs implemented on these 145,750 acres of Non-Industrial Private Forest acres contributes significantly to water quality in Carlton County. In addition to the established NRCS practices, the SWCD will also provide financial assistance to landowners implementing several forestry practices found through SWCD experience and professional peer review to be effective in establishing trees for conservation benefits.

1. Due to the significant challenges to tree establishment and limited landowner resources and experience in tree establishment on difficult sites, the SWCD will offer extended establishment services to landowners implementing tree establishment practices. These services will be available to landowners for up to 8 years after planting as needed to assure planting success. Each tree establishment site in the extended establishment services program will be assessed annually for needed upkeep. Materials and labor to perform the needed upkeep shall be paid for with grant funds. All riparian zone tree establishment practices shall be implemented in accordance with Carlton County Zoning ordinances.

2. Natural regeneration can be an effective method of tree establishment for conservation benefits. Some research has shown that specifically deer prefer the nursery stock planted for conservation projects over the adjacent natural trees on or near the same site. Deer Exclusion fencing has proven effective at getting either nursery stock or natural generation up above the devastation deer browse can have on undergrowth. Exclusion fencing will be paid for on natural regeneration and planted sites to fence deer out of patches of tree establishment. Size of patch and height of fence will be based on professional forester, peer reviewed information including Carlton County Land Department demonstration projects and other regional success documented on places such as "Great Lakes Silviculture Library"

Effective Life

All structural and vegetative practices must be designed and maintained for a minimum effective life of ten years. The effective life of non-structural land management practices that have a 1 year lifespan, according the NRCS Minnesota Index to Practices Standards (sept.2018), will be noted on the landowner agreement.

3. Contract noncompliance. Within 10 working days of discovery of noncompliance district staff shall notify the contract landowner and land occupier by certified mail of the steps to be taken to bring the contract back into compliance, and a schedule as to when steps need to be taken. If the schedule is not met district staff shall bill, net 30 days, the contract land occupier for up to 150% of the cost share amount. The BWSR Board Conservationist shall be kept abreast of the status of contract non compliances

Staff reviewed and Recommends approval as presented.

M/S Fox/Dalen to approve Carlton SWCD Combined Erosion Control and Water Management Program (ECWMP) policy and Nonstructural Land Management Practices (NLMP) policy-FY 2021 as presented.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

M/S Dalen/Dahl to Adjourn

Meeting adjourn at 9:32 a.m.

Roll Call Vote:

Fox - Aye

Dahl - Aye

Dalen - Aye

Samuelson - Aye

Motion carried

Submitted by: Julie Radovich

Date Approved:

Chair: Russ Kurhajetz

Secretary: Rick Dalen