

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 Cerwinski to hold your place in advance. susan.cerwinski.wabashaswcd@gmail.com or 651-560-2053

**Wabasha Soil and Water Conservation District
District Regular Board Meeting
February 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 8:15 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
On Phone: John Benjamin, NRCS, Sue Cerwinski, Bookkeeper/Admin. Asst.

II. **PLEDGE ALLEGIANCE**

III. **AGENDA**

A. Meeting Statement – Terri Peters

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.

Motioned by Zabel and seconded by Ross approve the agenda

Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

IV. **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Dave Balcom, Editor of Wabasha County Herald

Interested in doing a story about 1W1P and would like more information.

Too much government conversations, not enough human being talk.

He has met with Terri Peters

V. CONSENT AGENDA -Board Action

- A. 2019 – Buffer Law (Wabasha SWCD) Grant ID# P19-2506
- B. 2019 - State Cost-Share Fund (Wabasha SWCD) Grant ID# P19-2247
- C. 2020 - Conservation Delivery (Wabasha SWCD) Grant ID# P20-5074
- D. FY 2018 Cooperative Weed Mgmt. Grant ID# C18-7114
- E. 2018 – State Cost Share Fund (Wabasha SWCD) Grant ID# P18-2837
- F. SE MN Well Sealing Program Grant ID# C19-2001. Regional Grant Return unspent funds \$12,117.17
- G. Root River SWCD MAWQCP Amendment to change contract expiration date from 1-01-2020 to 12-31-2020, to 1-01-2021 to 12-31-2021 – **Signature Needed**
- H. Olmsted SWCD MAWQCP Amendment to change contract expiration date from 1-01-2020 to 12-31-2020, to 1-01-2021 to 12-31-2021 – **Signature Needed**
- I. Winona County SWCD – MAWQCP Additional \$2,500.00 funds with contract date 1-01-2021 to 12-31-2021 – **Signature Needed**
- J. Travis Danckwart Contract 19-Capacity-6 Amendment to contract install date to 11-01-2022 from 11-01-2021 – **Signature Needed**
- K. Travis Danckwart Contract 19-Capacity-7 Amendment to contract install date to 11-01-2022 from 11-01-2021 – **Signature Needed**
- L. Travis Danckwart Contract 19-Capacity-8 Amendment to contract install date to 11-01-2022 from 11-01-2021 – **Signature Needed**
- M. Rice SWCD MAWQCP Amendment to change contract expiration date from 1-01-2020 to 12-31-2020, to 1-01-2021 to 12-31-2021 - **Signature Needed**
- N. Goodhue SWCD MAWQCP Amendment to change contract expiration date from 1-01-2020 to 12-31-2020, to 1-01-2021 to 12-31-2021 – **Signature Needed**
- O. Environmental Troubleshooters, Inc. Payment Voucher 1 (Invoice# 9837) \$39,944.78 for contractor work up through 2-11-2021 for Zumbro Stream Restoration
- P. Environmental Troubleshooters, Inc. Payment Voucher 2 (Invoice# 8418) \$84,802.40 for contractor for work up through 2-19-2021 for Zumbro Stream Restoration

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

Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

Zabel mentioned that he would like to see the Environmental Troubleshooters Inc. project specs for seeding. Terri Peters will get that information to him.

VI. SECRETARY'S REPORT

- A. January 28, 2021 Meeting Minutes-Board Action

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

Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

VII. TREASURER'S REPORT:

A. District Financial Statements-Board Action

Motioned by Klennert and seconded by Zabel to approve the Treasurer's Report

Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

VIII. PAYMENT OF MONTHLY BILLS

A. Monthly Bills in the amount of \$161,191.13 -Board Action

Motioned by Thiesmann and seconded by Ross to approve payment of the monthly bills

Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

IX. DISTRICT REPORTS

A. Chair Report – Terry Helbig

Introductions of Board staff to Dave Balcom, Editor of Wabasha County Herald. No additional meetings attended.

Terry stated we should rethink our programs, Conservation Days, Forestry Days, Tours. Instill Conservation in students.

Discussion:

Terri mentioned that 5th grade teachers have an environmental class in their curriculum. Conservation cubes have been sent out to the schools. Things they can do in the classroom.

Zabel stated that more impact on 5th graders than high school students. High school students are set in their ways. Technical school or college.

Theismann agreed with Zabel. Make an impression on the younger kids.

Terri stated that a few years ago changed things up. Visited a dairy operation, stations on soil, forestry and fish stocking at the stream. Schools seem to appreciate it. Nice to get kids outside to experience nature and farming. Tried Envirothon, but no interest from local schools.

Agreed by all to put on agenda to take a look at our programs.

B. County Commissioner – Bob Walkes

1W1P is a concern.

Don Springer was elected as Vice-Chair of committee for Greater Zumbro 1W1P Went to Whitewater JPB meeting. Got a lot of insight there. Visited with Terri and Sheila Harmes after meeting. He is working to learn how agencies/groups work together and how the funding works for programs.

C. District Manager Report – Terri Peters

Got through January BWSR monthly reporting.

Waiting on January program report until 2020 approved and closed out.

Partners reporting, different than BWSR reporting

1W1P Great Zumbro, 1W1P Winona La Crescent work group and policy meetings.

N.Fork at Mazeppa stream restoration project moving along. Rock ripple put in. Important to get work done while ground is frozen. Completion before April 1. Looks like they should be done mid-March. Larry mentioned he would like to go see the construction on the project.

Met with Luke Lunde of WSB, working with City of Mazeppa on other sections of river, damaged by flooded of 2010. Talked about working together to complete that section over the next couple of years. Area is more upstream , by the city. Terri has map that identifies the section. DNR paying extra for time-lapse and drone photography of the project. Henry is photographing and Beau Kennedy is flying the drone.

MPCA Stream monitoring/assessment. Met with Sheila Harmes to redo budget.

Met with Dave Balcom for story on 1W1P

Working with staff planning spring projects

Put in priority request to NACD for funding to help fund JPB Technical Assistance and help with EQIP projects in SE area. Help in training staff.

DNR contracted to have walk-in access program. Henry completed training. Program will be offered to landowners as an option. DNR will pay \$250.00 per enrollment and they will take over after that.

MAWQCP – have a regional conservation partnership program with NRCS. This round there is a pot of money to apply for EQIP projects, TAA funds for area technicians and engineers. New agreements for that program.

Working on setting up Supervisor's emails on tablets. County IT initially set up as county rather than Wabasha.org

SWCD works in partnership with NRCS – use CADD program for techs. Emails in their Outlook system. Staff need to maintain a federal email for that system.

Comprehensive plan for West Indian Creek 319 project. Plan will become grant application. MPCA funds 60% and want us to find other ways to match. The SWCD has brought multiple partners into this planning process and they have committed to implementation. We continue to develop those partnerships.

- D. NRCS Report – John Benjamin, **Report Board Packet**
- E. Ecological Technician Report – Henry Stelten, **Report in Board Packet**
- F. District Technician Report- Matt Kempinger, **Report in Board Packet**
Gorman Creek project and Hydro-stem modeling for W.Indian Creek 319 Project
- G. Bookkeeper/Administrative Assistant -Sue Cerwinske, **Report in Board Packet**

A. OLD BUSINESS

Lynn Zabel – Conservation Project Report

Lynn stated that he has been working on some ideas on how to do a better job with soil conservation. He thought first the answer could be found with the federal farm program, but after a lot of research it became clear that the answer was not there. The 1985 farm program was supposed to link farm payments to conservation but according to a 2003 GAO report that is not the case. He covered nearly everything on the GAO cover page, it is a lot of information, but at least then anyone reading will correctly understand.

We should concentrate on the local level where the SWCD could do the inspections because we know the county and area. We had the idea that possibly people who are already doing all the correct conservation practices could get a small property tax

deduction. The county would have to handle the property tax assessments and the SWCD would find funding from various sources to reimburse the county. It would be a voluntary program for landowners that are willing to or already are doing an excellent job of conservation.

NEW BUSINESS

B. Selection of auditor for 2020 audit – Board Action

- i. Smith, Schafer & Associates LTD (Bid \$5,100.00)**
- ii. Hawkins Ash CPAs (Bid \$9,500.00)**

Motioned by Theismann and seconded by Klennert to approve Smith, Schafer & Associates LTD for auditor for 2020 audit of financial statements for the bid of \$5,100.00.

Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

C. Upcoming Events:

- i. MASWCD Legislative “Day on the Hill” virtual meeting – March 18, 2021
*Lynn and Terry are available to attend by conference call. Can do at the SWCD break room. Terri brought it up to Beau from Goodhue SWCD about doing conference call together. Terri stated we should just do ourselves. Schedule our own appointments with some of the legislators especially with Lynn’s property tax proposal. Will need state funding. Terri will talk to Beau again. Will get more information to Lynn and Terry.
Bob Walkes would like to sit in.***

X. Board Reports

- A. Whitewater JPB – Lynn reported that they
*picked officers. Excellent report on cash balance history from March, 2011 through December, 2020. Over years with fluctuation of funding, the reserve balance is \$86,737. Approved the Whitewater Drinking Protection amendment for 3-year cover crops from 12/31/2022 to 12/31/2023***
- B. Zumbro 1W1P - Larry reported he attended 2/11/21 meeting.
*Elected officers. Approved payments. Went through timeline. March to submit draft plan for formal review. Later Mar-April formal review period. May-June public comments, revise plan, hold public hearing. June-July, Submit to BWSR for 90-day review. Aug-Sept. BWSR approve plan. Aug- Sept finalize plan, ready for local adoption.
Terri commented that once the plan is approved on that timeline, funding would come, what we would get. Work group would need to create work plan for 1st year and that would have to be approved.***
- C. 1W1P Winona La Crescent – Terri reported final memorandum of agreement signed. Finish up by-laws, adoption, housekeeping items at next policy committee**

meeting. Sheila wants to talk about what kinds of things the work group would be looking for in a consultant. Larry Gates has interest in this project, he requested a meeting with Sheila, Terri. Bob stayed for this meeting. Past presentation, public input, outreach. Make sure what they have already done in past, be brought into this plan.

- D. SE SWCD Technical Support JPB – *Larry no report. Only meet a couple times a year.*
- E. County Board Meeting – *Larry no report*
- F. Hiawatha Valley RC&D – *Terry commented that he hopes they will send us a letter acknowledging of payment of dues. Meet bi-monthly in Rochester. May be able to help with Lynn’s proposal about property tax. Terri commented that they meet less often now, hiring a replacement. Bob is primary for Wabasha County. Only one dues are paid for county and SWCD paid it this year. Program partly funding along with Nature Conservancy to fund outreach work done on Lower Zumbro which Jen is working on. Hope to get NACD help with that working land project.*

XI. Adjourn – Board Action

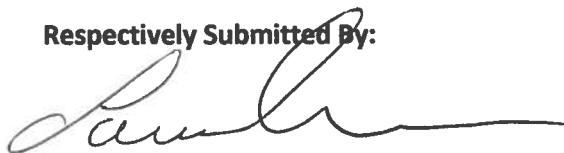
Motioned by Theismann and seconded by Ross to adjourn the meeting at 9:27 am

Affirmative: Helbig, Zabel, Theismann, Klennert, Ross

Opposed: None

Motion Carried

Respectively Submitted By:



Larry Theismann, Secretary