



Clearwater Soil & Water Conservation District

312 Main Avenue North, Suite 3, Bagley MN 56621 • (218)694-6845 • www.clearwaterswcd.org

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS REGULAR MEETING AUGUST 27, 2009

MEETING MINUTES



Board Members Present:

Robert Bilden, John Gunvalson, Paul Rydeen, Leonard Stinar & Harlan Strandlien

SWCD Staff: Stacy Cooper & John Knisley

Guests: Cari Rebeschke, NRCS
John Nelson, County Commissioner

The meeting was called to order at 8:10 a.m. by Chair Bilden in the Clearbrook City Council Chambers. The Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Chair Bilden commented on the success of the Annual Pioneer Farmer's show that was held over the past weekend and the weather even cooperated.

Agenda: Chair Bilden called for additions or corrections to the agenda. A motion to accept the agenda as written was made by Rydeen, 2nd by Stinar. Motion carried 5-0.

Minutes: The Minutes of the regular July meeting were reviewed. A motion to accept the July Minutes as written was made by Strandlien, 2nd by Rydeen. Motion carried 5-0.

NRCS: Cari Rebeschke started by stating the fact that she'd been back in the office full time since July's end and that she and baby Brennen are doing just fine. Rebeschke noted that Brooke Knisley and Jenny Burrack did a good job while she was on maternity leave.

Rebeschke announced that the EQIP sign up initiated & funded 18 contracts totaling over \$200,000; now the status reviews are currently being evaluated and payments are being processed. It was also noted that there were a total of 4 WHIP contracts, resulting in over \$15,000 worth of agreements to manage.

Rebeschke talked about the new CSP program that is currently in progress and available to producers. It pays producers for the conservation practices implemented on their land. The average payout is \$18 an acre. Postcards have been sent out to over 700 producers hoping to generate a good amount of interest in the program. There are informational meetings scheduled for 9/3/09 in Clearbrook and Fosston and the application deadline runs until 9/30/09.

Rydeen questioned where the CSP money would be coming from and Rebischke stated that it's a product of the '08 Farm Bill passed by legislation. She also added that this CSP program is now nationwide and there is a checklist available to review for eligibility.

Resource Technician's Report: John Knisley, District Manager, read the Resource Tech's report as Kathy Rasch was on vacation leave.

Water Plan Projects: It was reported that ob wells are continued to be monitored, the SWCD is still testing lakes and will wrap up testing in September as will the Citizen Lake Testing which is currently in process.

Conservation Cooperator: It was announced that Jim and Doreen Aakre have been chosen by the SWCD office for Conservation Cooperator of the Year. The Aakre's have implemented several conservation practices and continue to maintain these practices.

WCA: Rasch has also been working on the Wetland Plant Density inventory around the stormwater ponds for the City of Bagley. This data is collected for the NPDES permitting process. Rasch also noted that she met with a landowner on Long Lake regarding screening, erosion control and restoration work on the landowner's shoreline property.

State Cost Share Projects: Rasch noted that the Silver Creek cost share contract was signed approximately 2 months ago and is now waiting for a final estimate from the JPB on the Silver Creek and Lost River project sites; work is scheduled to begin this fall.

The reason for the project delay is because of JPB employee turnover. There has been some transition and a new assistant is being trained in.

Conservation Farm: Knisley reported that Roy Abraham is scheduled to spray the knapweed at the Conservation Farm sometime during August. Jonathan Auker was there in July manually cutting the thistles and burdock. It was decided that for next year, the spraying should be done in June. Knisley mentioned that he will schedule next year's spraying now to ensure that it is done in a timely manner.

Forest Stewardship:

RIM: Rasch & Knisley are currently waiting to hear of resolution to leaking embankment toe in the Pine Lake Township. It was discussed that BWSR has been out to the site and done surveying and has paid for engineering plans, but now is requesting that NRCS pays 75% of the repair costs. Rebischke noted that she is unsure of the status right now as it is still being deliberated who should pay what. The site that is receiving the unwanted water has hydric soil and is able to produce hay and provide pasture, but none-the-less, the landowner is not happy with its current state. Rydeen noted that waiting for resolution takes up precious time in an already short season and any temporary fix should expect residual problems later.

Knisley will be setting up a meeting with BWSR, NRCS and the SWCD Board in the near future to discuss a solution to the problem.

Other: Rasch attended her last Leadership Training Session and did a presentation on forest easement which she will summarize for the Board in the future. In addition to the training, Rasch also took Wetland Delineation test and passed and is now certified to create delineation plans.

With August comes the County Fair. It was noted that a booth was set up at the fair on behalf of the SWCD during the first week of August displaying information on working trees for agriculture and working trees for wildlife. A kiosk was shipped from National Agro-Forestry Center for both Beltrami SWCD and the Clearwater SWCD to use. The only expense incurred was the shipping cost to send it back to the Forestry Center; the cost was split between both SWCD's. Also displayed at the booth were informational brochures about the working trees as well as the most recent publication of the SWCD newsletter. Strandlien was pleased with how good the booth looked.

Water Projects/Technical Reports

Water Plan: Knisley reported that he is currently combing through the old water plan to see what was achieved and what was not since the plans conception. Knisley is comparing concerns with those of the Red Lake Water Shed District and developing action plans for each priority concern by gathering all the information and resources available or will be available to achieve the goals for the new water plan.

Northwest Minnesota Foundation: The SWCD staff met with Jim Steenerson of the Northwest Minnesota Foundation to discuss the foundation's grant opportunities under the Healthy Lakes & Rivers initiative for the lake associations within Clearwater County. In the past, this program has only been extended to those within the Mississippi River Basin - never really including the county of Clearwater before - which has now branched out into Clearwater. Knisley and Steenerson have met with the Pine Lake and Long Lake Associations to try to find interest in the program - which has proved successful. Long Lost Lake Association has already signed up for consideration for the program.

Native Buffer Cost-Share: Knisley is working on seeking landowners interested in working with the SWCD on the Native Buffer Cost-Share Grant. So far, Knisley's efforts have been fruitful by establishing a couple of contacts interested in adding buffers around their fields.

Clearbrook Urban Runoff Project: It has been determined that the Gourmet House Stormwater Pond project is on hold because one landowner involved is having property issues and is not able to sell at this time. The stormwater project that is planned to be installed in the City Park is on schedule and will break ground this fall. Knisley is working with the RLWSD on obtaining permits from the City and the MPCA- since there is no wetland located in the city park, a WCA permit is not required. Knisley spoke of his plans to attend a City Counsel Meeting in the near future to aid in the communication between RLWSD and the City of Clearbrook.

AWR Grant: Knisley spoke of his efforts to contact the livestock producers within the sub-watershed district to discuss operations in correlation to the SWCD's goals. The meetings have been a great tool in reaching out to local landowners to listen and voice concerns. Other information has been

obtained and to give to the EERC for modeling purposes. Results from this data will be available sometime in September and hopefully will be available for the September Board Meeting.

Site Visits: Knisley did a final inspection site visit on the RIM contract for Jerome Snobeck. It was reported that everything seemed up to par as per program requirements.

District Manager's Report

Financial Reports: The financial statements showing all revenue and expenditures for the month of July were presented to the Board for review. Knisley reported normal payment of the bills for the month of July. It was duly noted that July's plat books sales were up \$78.87. Also the 3rd quarter County Appropriation and the WCA & Water Plan expenditure reimbursements were received. Since the WCA & Water Plan were collected in August, they did not show up on July's profit and loss statement.

A notice was received from MCIT that a dividend payment will be sent to the SWCD office in November in the amount of \$1,519.

Cost-share money was encumbered in July for administrative expenses, thus closing out the fiscal year 2008. Knisley reported that July was a slow month for finances but a busy month in the field. A motion to accept the financial reports was made by Rydeen, 2nd by Strandlien. Motion carried 5-0.

Leonard Stinar was called away from the meeting at 9:35.

Checking/Deposit Report: After review of the checking report for July, it was noted that the final cost-share payment was made to Les Stenerson for his shoreline restoration project done on Roy Lake. Final payment was also made to the JPB for survey and design work done on the Silver Creek project. It was also mentioned that a bill payment to Overmoe & Nelson was made due to some software support received for Quickbooks questions. Strandlien inquired about the telephone & postage expense this year thus far. Knisley reported that the figures shown include the cell phone and the Roy Lake project mailings as well as the office phones.

2010 Budget Planning: The 2010 proposed budget was given to the County Board on July 30th during one of their work sessions. They seemed relatively pleased with the budget proposal and did state that there would be budget cuts in all county programs - so there could be a decrease in funding; but nothing dramatic. Nelson stated that there may be a decrease in residential and land values coming in the future as well.

'09 Area VIII Fall Tour & Meeting: The tour dates are fast approaching - just 2 weeks away. It was reported that the final details are to be completed and a sign up of approximately 35 people so far. Knisley reported that it's not the number we had originally hoped for but still a good number of registrants. It was also mentioned that there may be a slight increase than budgeted for printing costs and office supplies due to packets for the participants of the tour. A final agenda has been submitted by the MASWCD for the Friday, September 11th Area Meeting.

Other: The NRCS rental agreement was a topic of discussion. Rebischke confirmed that there is no change in the agreement from last year and she also reported that the NRCS will pay rent for the SWCD and get reimbursed by September 3. For the year of 2010, the national office is changing things so that NRCS cannot enter into a reimbursable agreement with SWCD anymore. It will be the responsibility of the SWCD to work with the landowner/building owner on a rental agreement and pay them directly. However, the NRCS will continue to pay for 1 district employee. Rebischke also noted that the District will have to budget \$3,200 to use USDA network for anything over two computers/users.

Spent/unused office equipment: Knisley reported of the unused computers that are taking up valuable storage space. At the beginning of 2010, the SWCD can take the unused computers off the Electronic Data Processing list and donate computers. Knisley noted that it would be more cost effective to donate rather than entering into an advertising/bidding process. The Board agreed. Strandlien voiced his interest in any computer that is not spoken for.

Knisley ended his reporting by speaking briefly about the items that need signatures. Knisley touched down on the specifics of BWSR's Base Grant Agreement and informed the Board of the intention of the agreement to offset the general operating costs of the SWCD office. Chair Bilden signed the grant.

Knisley spoke of the completion of the evaluation form for SWCD of the year award program on the district's behalf for submission to MASWCD. Knisley reported that Clearwater is eligible for Honorable Mention this year but next year will strive for a superior rating.

Knisley reported that the Certificate of Deposit held by Riverwood Bank came up for renewal on 8/23/2009 which will automatically renew for another year if left untouched. After checking into rates at local banks, it was decided to keep the CD with Riverwood Bank. Also upon research, it was communicated that the contact names/ information had long expired. Office Manager Cooper was unable to obtain any information regarding the CD for the purpose of relaying to Knisley or the Board for that matter. Cooper was told that a new, signed Corporate Resolution is needed for this information release. The paperwork was completed and signed so that two current Board Members - both Stinar and Bilden - and the District Manager have access to the CD's account information. The Office Manager has the authority to only acquire account information. The resolution was signed by Bilden, Stinar's signature will be obtained at a later date. Gunvalson and Rydeen signed the Resolution as witnesses.

A motion to adjourn the meeting at 10:15 was made by Strandlien, 2nd by Gunvalson. Motion carried 4-0.

Paul Rydeen, District Secretary

