



Clearwater Soil & Water Conservation District

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING March 19, 2008

MINUTES

Present: Harlan Strandlien, Robert Bilden, Leonard Stinar, John Gunvalson, Paul Rydeen

Staff: Kathy Rasch & John Knisley

Guests: Cari Rebeschke -- NRCS, John Nelson -- County Commissioner

The meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Chair Bilden in the Bagley USDA Service Center. The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Chair Bilden introduced to staff and supervisors and noted that spring is finally on its way.

Agenda: Chair Bilden called for additions or corrections to the agenda. Knisley asked for an addition to the NRCS report to include information on the revisions to the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). A motion to approve the agenda with changes was made by Stinar, 2nd by Strandlien. Motion carried 4-0.

Minutes: Minutes of the regular February meeting were reviewed. A motion to approve the February Minutes was made by Strandlien, 2nd by Stinar. Motion Carried 4-0.

Paul Rydeen entered meeting.

NRCS- Cari Rebeschke reported that the EQIP sign up will be scheduled for the end of April. She noted that they have been doing a lot of contracts for tree planting projects with producers in the last few weeks. Cari noted that she, Brooke, John, and Harlan attended the Annual Gizibii RC&D meeting on February 25th. Cari reported that there were changes to the Freedom of Information Act and informed the board of those changes. The NRCS is asking the SWCD boards and employees to sign a statement that says they are aware and will abide by the new FOIA rules. The supervisors present signed the agreement.

Resource Technician Report-

Water Projects: Rasch reported that she has contacted the MCC (Minnesota Conservation Corps.) is to complete the Clean Water Legacy Streambank Stabilization site by planting trees/shrubs along the repaired streambank to further its stabilization. The Clearwater SWCD still has \$300-\$600 left to use from the Clean Water Legacy Grant to plant these trees/shrubs along the Streambank Stabilization site.

Rasch noted that she is currently working with agencies to receive the required permits needed to host the Shoreline workshop at Roy Lake this summer. A brochure and registration for the Restoration/Shoreline Protection workshop will be put in local papers for anyone in the public who is interested in attending the workshop.

WCA: Rasch reported that she recently attended a meeting in Grand Rapids for guidance on WCA rule changes and more clarification on what can constitute a Forestry Exemption under WCA regulations.

Cost Share: Rasch reported that she has received a plant list from Mary Blickenger for plants that can be planted in the Roy Lake Shoreline Stabilization project and has sent that list to Les Stenerson to look at for his choices of plants to be ordered. The Roy Lake project has three (3) different planting zones that will be utilized to complete the project. Rasch also noted that she has been working with BWSR on guidance for the new Forestry Cost-Share Docket; she stated that she has already been in contact with two (2) interested landowners about getting Cost-Share projects for shelterbelts around their properties and possible tree plantings around wetlands.

Tree Program: Rasch reported that the Clearwater SWCD has been fielding many tree orders and questions from inquiring parties.

Forest Stewardship: Rasch reported she needs to complete and send Stewardship certification materials to the State Forest Stewardship Coordinator. After the certification materials have been received and examined she will receive word back on whether or not she will be certified to write Forest Stewardship plans.

Envirothon: Rasch reported that she recently attended an Area VII Envirothon Meeting in Bemidji on March 18th. The scheduled date to the Area VIII Envirothon will be held on April 22nd, 2009 at Lake Bemidji State Park.

Rasch reported that she had attended the final Civic Leadership session in Washington D.C. during the first week in March. During that session she was able to meet with Congressional staff and aides to discuss local conservation issues and potential legislation that could affect Conservation Districts. Leonard Stinar asked if there were any materials that she had brought back to share with the Board. Rasch stated that there are plenty of materials that she could show the board, but the important thing she learned was how to work with legislators and committees.

Program Technician's Report:

Water Plan Update: Knisley reported that the SWCD has received agency reviews for the Priority Concerns Scoping Document (PCSD) from the MDH, MPCA, DNR, BWSR and MN Dept. of Agriculture with no major changes being requested. The PCSD will be reviewed by the North Region Local Water Management Committee on April 8, 2009 at the Beltrami County Administration Building board room. The North Region Local Water Management Committee will either approve or not approve the PCSD.

AWR Grant: Knisley reported that SWCD staff held a phone conference with the EERC on March 13, 2009 to discuss the data that needs to be gathered to fulfill the requirements needed to complete the model. The EERC suggested during that phone conference that the SWCD consider changing from the SWAT model to the APEX (Ag. Policy/Environmental eXtender). The reason to change would be due to the fact that the SWAT model tends to be used for larger watersheds than parts of the Silver Creek Watershed; whereas the APEX model is designed for smaller watersheds all the way down to single farm level modeling. The APEX model has been being used by the NRCS to model single farms and small watersheds. By changing the modeling we would need to provide more data input, but in return we would receive more of an accurate/realistic output.

Knisley has talked with Jeff Hrubes from BWSR and he did not see an issue with changing from the SWAT model to the APEX model because the switch would not really affect the Grant Contract, just a simple name swap. It should also be noted that the cost for the modeling process would remain the same and the agreement between the EERC and SWCD would remain the same with the change from the word SWAT to APEX.

Discussion was held on how engineers of Clearwater SWCD projects should be more accountable for their designs. Paul Rydeen reported that he has been past a few projects that look like they have not been working properly, and that if they are not working correctly, they should hold the engineer accountable. Paul stated that when we work on a project the public knows it and that is probably how they judge us here at the SWCD. Paul stated that we have spent a lot of money on some of these projects and they should be working and if the design was wrong it should be known by the engineer. John Gunvalson stated that in some situations the engineer is held to a set of guidelines they need to use to design a project, there could be laws or regulations that may limit them. John stated in the case of a culvert, there are regulations that limit them as to what size culvert they can actually put in. Commissioner John Nelson stated that because we do spend a fair amount of money on these projects that he thinks the engineers should be held accountable if the project is not properly functioning. Kathy Rasch noted that sometimes in a watershed there are different land uses that may change, in turn changing flow rates or flow directions of water in that watershed. She noted that when a project is designed it is like a snapshot in time, they cannot completely account for land use changes in a watershed because they are unknown. The discussion was ended by Commissioner Nelson and Paul Rydeen stating that they also think the engineer should listen closer to the landowner for some of their input.

Leonard Stinar noted that the oil in the SWCD Ford F-150 needs to be changed.

District Manager's Report- The financial statement showing all revenue and expenditures for the month of February was presented to the board for review. The financial report showing the Profit & Loss vs. Actual Report for FY 2009 was presented to the board for review. Because this is the 2nd month in the fiscal year, Profit and Loss shows a loss of -\$4,449.00. The total Accounts Receivable for FY 2009 was a total of \$31.99 for 1 plat book and a tree sale. Knisley presented the 2008 Clearwater Soil & Water Conservation District Annual Report. Points in the report were discussed and the report was evaluated. The report had been sent to the State Auditor and Bill Eisle of BWSR.

Following discussion a motion was made by Stinar, 2nd by Rydeen to accept the financial reports and approve all bills as paid totaling \$19,025.55. Motion carried 5-0.

Plan of Work: The 2009 Clearwater SWCD Plan of Work was discussed by the SWCD board. It was noted that there needed to be a change so the work days for each Priority properly corresponded with the work days on the Priorities and Objectives Page. Paul Rydeen stated that if we do a good job of the projects we work on it will reflect on all of the SWCD. Harlan Strandlien stated that we should do more reaching out to the public this year, through the newspaper and radio if it's affordable for the SWCD to do so.

Following discussion a motion was made by Strandlien to accept the 2009 Plan of Work with a change to the plan of work so the days worked correspond accordingly, 2nd by Gunvalson. Motion carried 5-0.

Office Manager Position: Discussion was held on the current economic situation of the State of MN and the possibility of losing funds due to the budget deficit. It was discussed that the new person we would hire for the Office Manager position should be aware that there is a possibility of losing funding which could in turn mean jobs could be in a tough situation. Commissioner Nelson stated that as of right now, Clearwater County does not foresee any cuts to the SWCD funding requests. Applications were reviewed at the meeting and 5 applicants were chosen to be interviewed on April 3, 2009.

JPB Meeting Update: The minutes of the February JPB meeting were reviewed by the SWCD board.

Interview Schedule Set-up: The board discussed possible dates for interviewing 5 of the Office Manager applicants. Dates to consider were March 25 and April 3, 2009.

Stinar, Bilden, Strandlien, and Knisley attended the Area VIII MASWCD meeting in Bemidji on March 20, 2009. Discussion was held on how these meeting were informative as to what rules/projects are being worked on at the state and local level.

A motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Strandlien, 2nd by Stinar. Motion carried 5-0.


Paul Rydeen, District Secretary