

RICE S.W.C.D.
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
August 18, 2010

PRESENT: Bob Borchert, Bob Duban, Richard Huston, Gary Wagenbach, Steve Pahs, Tom Coffman, Nancy Gruchow, Dale Neirby, Danielle Waldschmidt, Adam Arndt, Debbie Skarupa and Ben Hellerstein from Carleton College.

ABSENT: Wally Hildebrandt

Chairman Borchert called the meeting to order at 1:00 PM.

AGENDA: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to accept the agenda. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to approve the July 21, 2010 board meeting minutes. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Hildebrandt, Huston and Wagenbach. All aye -None opposed - Motion carried.

FINANCIAL: Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Dick Huston to approve the revised June Program Record subject to audit and the July Program Record subject to audit. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All aye -None opposed - Motion carried.

Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Dick Huston to approve the bills payable subject to audit. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

RICE SWCD SIGN STATUS: Sign to be installed off Bagley Avenue near Hazelwood on Monday, August 30. Bob Borchert and Dick Huston will meet at the office at 10:00 AM.

VEHICLE STATUS: Steve Pahs passed out a vehicle report. 1994 GMC has 131,000 miles, 2002 Chevy has 115,000 and 2005 has 44,000 miles. Discussion followed. We do not have to use state bid, as may not be the cheapest. Considering minivan as can transport items and/or more people. May consider used car option. Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Dick Huston to refer the vehicle purchase to a committee of three. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried. The committee will be Steve Pahs, Bob Duban and Gary Wagenbach.

FARM BILL TECHNICIAN CHANGES: Waseca SWCD has discontinued their portion of the Farm Bill Agreement as of July 1. Steve Pahs would like to change to a 50% Rice and 50% Steele SWCD position. Discussion followed. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to go with 50% time at Rice SWCD and 50% time at Steele SWCD for the 30% portion of the Farm Bill grant. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FALL SWCD TOUR: Fall tour set for October 21 at 1:00 PM. Reserve 25 seat bus. Hope to get commissioners and legislators to attend. Possible stops: Fred Becker's, lakeshore restorations, fall construction, ditches. (Larry and Betty Harmsen on Cannon Lake)

RICE CO. BUDGET MEETING PRESENTATION: Steve Pahs showed a PowerPoint on the budget that he will present to the Rice County Commissioners on August 24. Without Rice SWCD, the Natural Resources Conservation Service would not be here. Discussion followed.

Dale Neirby came in at 1:45 PM.

NEW BUSINESS:

ORGANIC CONVERSION POLICY: Ben Hellerstein from Carleton College gave a presentation on why he felt Rice County should adopt a five-year tax abatement policy for organic farmers. The three main benefits are water quality, soil enhancement, and combating climate change. Organic farmers must meet standards set by the USDA prohibiting chemical pesticides and herbicides for at least three years, keep detailed records and be inspected yearly. Maximum tax loss would be \$50,000 per year capped at \$10,000 per person. Ben is hoping for a letter of support from SWCD board at the September 15 board meeting. Contact hellersb@carleton.edu with any questions.

SEMN WRB GRANT AGREEMENT #5: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the SE MN WRB Grant Agreement V for \$28,317.00 for small feedlot fixes. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MN BWSR 2011 GRANT AGREEMENT: Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Dick Huston to approve the BWSR 2011 Grant Agreement for a total of \$39,929. Amounts have decreased again this year. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

DISTRICT CAPACITY AWARD: Steve Pahs and the Board completed the District Capacity Award on the overhead projector. Award period is from June 2009 through June 2010. Continued on to the next agenda item until numbers were totaled. See below.

SEMASWCD FALL MEETING: SEMASWCD Fall Meeting will be held September 16 at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch in Stewartville from 9:00 – 3:00 PM. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to approve paying \$15.00 registration fee for supervisors and staff who attend. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Bob Borchert encouraged everyone to attend and mentioned dues will need to be increased.

CONSERVATION DELIVERY IN MN: A Conservation Delivery in MN fact sheet by the Mn Department of Ag was briefly discussed.

STATE FEEDLOT COST SHARE VOUCHER: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to approve the final feedlot cost share payment to Scott Marik as follows:

CSF#080818-Scott Marik-17691 LeSueur Ave-Kilkenny-\$9,375.00-Shieldsville Sec18-Ag Waste Management System. (\$29,679.88 was paid to Scott Marik on November 21, 2008.)

Amy Dessner was the designated NRCS District Technical Representative. No other funds are being applied to the 2008 FY practice, meeting the high priority definition does apply to this practice, and 75% is the approved cost share amount. Slippage will be returned to BWSR.

MN BWSR FEEDLOT COST SHARE SLIPPAGE: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to approve \$2,414.63 (\$2195.12 and \$219.51 T&A) in slippage from the Scott Marik State Feedlot Cost Share Contract above to be returned to MN BWSR. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

HEALTH INSURANCE RATES: Steve Pahs and Adam are currently on the policy which renews September 1, 2010. Steve explained the \$1500/\$3000 family deductible, 100% coverage, high deductible plan. Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Dick Huston to renew the current health insurance plan with Preferred One. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Bob Borchert recommended the Personnel Committee have input on the health insurance next time.

CLEAN WATER FUND APPLICATION FOR NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST: Grant now requires a 25% match so we may need to charge a fee for the service. The Joint Powers Board will do the application. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to apply through the Joint Powers Board for the Clean Water Fund Nutrient Management Specialist grant application. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

ACCEPT ADAM ARNDT'S RESIGNATION: Adam will be taking a NRCS technician position in Mower County and his last day with Rice SWCD will be September 1. The board thanked Adam for a job very well done and Adam thanked the board for the privilege of working with the Rice SWCD and gaining experience. Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to accept Adam Arndt's letter of resignation in good standing. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

HIRING PROCESS FOR NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to authorize the district manager to begin the hiring process for the nutrient management specialist position. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Hiring period will be through September 10 and Personnel Committee will review applications before the October 15 board meeting.

Robert Duban took over the duties of the Chairman.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST SCORE SHEET: Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Dick Huston to adopt the Nutrient Management Specialist application material score sheet and select a maximum of five candidates to interview. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach.

REVIEW MISSION STATEMENT: Bob Duban read the current mission statement. We now provide services to more city, as well as rural land users. Item tabled until the September Board Meeting.

Chairman Borchert returned to the role of Chairman.

CONFERENCE ROOM CHAIRS: Some conference room chairs have duct tape on them and most don't match. Discussion followed. Originally, each of the four agencies in the building were going to purchase a chair or two or three, but not everyone can purchase them through the same supplier. Tom felt it was better to purchase a sturdy chair that will last. As of now, NRCS will contact the St. Paul office and see if eight chairs can be purchased through the federal program.

STATE C-S CONTRACT VOUCHER: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the following state cost-share voucher:

CS#090704-Kevin Hildebrandt-404 Forest St-Kenyon-Richland Sec 4 - \$729.95 – Grassed Waterway

Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Slippage of \$895.05 will be returned to MN BWSR.

STATE C-S CONTRACT CANCELLATION: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to cancel the Dave Judd 2010 cost share contract as requested by the landowner as follows:

CS100830-Dave Judd-21991 Lind Trail-Waterville-Shieldsville Sec 30-Two Terraces-\$6500.00

Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Dollars will be returned to the 2010 cost share fund.

BWSR ACADEMY: Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Dick Huston to approve staff who wish to attend the BWSR Academy Training October 26 – 28 at Breezy Point. Cost is \$291.00 per person for three days. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS: Dick Huston and daughter Karen will be doing a Christian mission trip to Burma. Gary Wagenbach said Cannon River Watershed Partnership will be having a two-hour field trip on the Cannon River on Wednesday the 25 from 6:00 – 8:00 PM. Bob Borchert said the state board met August 10 and NRCS hopes to continue to fund two computer systems. NRCS will have a special meeting at the MASWCD convention and also meet at the area meeting on September 16 at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch.

D.C. REPORT by Tom Coffman:

1. CSP 2010 – 2: We had seven signups with four accepted so far.
2. Construction is underway on pea land/pasture etc:
 - Waterway job done
 - Grade stabilization job done
 - Pasture pipeline beginning
3. Don Baloun and John Nicholson attended the CRWP Conservation Performance Incentives Meeting held at Boston’s Restaurant in July.

DISTRICT CAPACITY AWARD: Numbers totaled 1061 with an excellent rating needing 1100 points. Board suggested reviewing at the October meeting. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to accept the district capacity award due August 22 at MASWCD. Ayes: Borchert, Duban, Huston and Wagenbach. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT:

The past month I’ve been doing a variety of things from drainage ditch work and feedlot projects to budgeting and grant reporting. This will continue to be the focus of my time in the next month, with the added duty of hiring a new technician. I also met with an IRS agent who conducted a random compliance review on the SWCD. The agent found no glaring mistakes but did identify two things we should change. The first is clothing. Whenever the SWCD buys shirts or jackets, it is supposed to be a taxable item on wages. The other is lunches. They too are to be taxed unless you are working overnight out of town. We should consider changes to our operational handbook to address these concerns at an upcoming board meeting.

Other activity this month:

- Meeting in New Ulm on the Redetermination of Benefits process
- Review new health insurance quotes with Cates Ins.
- Rain barrel workshop at fair

- CRWP meeting on performance based incentives
- BWSR Clean Water Fund informational meeting
- CD 26 public meeting on ditch cleanout
- Feedlot fix plan for Rick Hager
- Complete Outstanding Conservationist award prep for MASWCD Convention
- Work on District Capacity Award

As mentioned, there is a lot of managerial work to do in the next month in addition to many technical duties, especially with the shortage of staff we will be experiencing. If you have any board meeting items that you would like to see on the next agenda, please let me know as soon as possible.

DISTRICT PROGRAM MANAGER’S REPORT by Tim Labs:

- ✿ Observation well readings taken.
- ✿ Attended monthly Plat Review Meeting and Planning and Zoning
- ✿ Attended a BWSR grant information meeting in Rochester
- ✿ Continued RIM/WRP and CREP easement processing
- ✿ Continued RIM, RIM/WRP and CREP annual reviews to determine easement conditions.
- ✿ Continued questions on the new Rural Preserves property tax program
- ✿ Wetland Conservation Action Activities:
 - Continued processing the Circle Lake Estates wetland banking application
 - Approve the Gordon Stafford and City of Northfield wetland delineation after the comment period.
 - Review and approval of the 140th St. bridge wetland mitigation report using the BWSR wetland replacement program.
 - Review of a joint waters/wetland application from the City of Faribault for a trail project in Alexander Park.
 - On site review of a wetland delineation on the Dan Hein property in Warsaw Twp. to determine hog barn wetland setbacks.
 - Review of the Martyr Ahlman wetland violation court case. A trial was scheduled but was later postponed until November.
 - Numerous wetland related questions and concerns dealt with.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST’S REPORT by Adam Arndt:

- Delivered no till drill to: Ernste, Rosckes, Westergren, Jirik, Borgmeyer, and Lurken.
- Seeded pollinator garden behind office.
- MinnFarms completed: Jim Schmitz, Richard Monnens, John Ross, Bob Smisek, and Dale Schwartz
- Attended Water Plan Tech meeting.
- E-link reporting and biannual report for nutrient management grant.
- Attended appreciation breakfast at the Rice County Fair.
- Opened conservation building at the fair and fielded questions from fair goers.

Nutrient Plans Started, Revised, or Completed Last Month:

- Cheryl Ptacek (Steele)
- Bob Nelson (Freeborn)

- Al Meyer (Rice)

Ditch Services:

- CD9 spot spraying.
- Attended meeting in New Ulm on Redetermination of Benefits for county ditches.
- Going over CD26 project details with Steve.

FARM BILL TECHNICIAN'S REPORT by Danielle Waldschmidt:

The USDA announced a general CRP sign-up for August. I have been contacting potential landowners. This sign-up will be competitive so I'm working with landowners to help them score well. I have been contacting landowners that have expressed interest in the past or have expiring CRP contracts. I have been working on completing mid-contract management modifications and completing plans. I am continuing to contact potential landowners for the CWF Buffer incentive.

Accomplishments Include:

- Completed proposals for CRP
- Worked with landowners that are interested in CRP
- Held Rice-Scott CWMA meeting
- Meeting with shoreline landowners about restoration projects
- Organized fair booth
- Held fair conservation workshops
- Attended invasive species training
- Attended CRP training
- Attended Steele County Conservation tour
- Attended MACDE Area Directors Meeting
- Staffed SWCD fair booth
- Attended Conservation Partners grant information session

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE: Adam Arndt thanked the board again for the opportunity to work in Rice County. Board and staff will miss him. Thank you letters were received from 4-H members who received 4-H awards sponsored by Rice SWCD. Reminder – August 24 at 8:50 AM is budget meeting with Rice County Commissioners. Nancy Gruchow suggested that might be a good time to ask a person who has benefitted from our services to speak for a few minutes. Steve Pahs asked Nancy Gruchow and Dale Nierby if they would speak on candidate issues on KDHL Radio before the election and both said yes. Jim Purfeerst will be asked also.

ADJOURN: Chairman Robert Borchert adjourned the meeting at 3:20 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

Robert Duban – Board Secretary