

RICE S.W.C.D.
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 16, 2011 – 1:30 PM

PRESENT: Robert Duban, Dick Huston, Dale Neurby, Jim Purfeerst, Steve Pahs, Tom Coffman, and Debbie Skarupa.

ABSENT: Gary Wagenbach

Vice Chairman Robert Duban called the meeting to order at 1:37 PM.

AGENDA: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the agenda. Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neurby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MINUTES: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Dale Neurby to approve the February 16, 2011 board meeting minutes. Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neurby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL: Motion by Dale Neurby, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to accept the January financial report subject to audit. Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neurby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to accept the February financial report and bills payable subject to audit. Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neurby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

DAY AT THE CAPITOL: The legislative briefing the night before was attended by Dale Neurby and Danielle Waldschmidt and Steve, Dick, Dale, Gary and Danielle attended the day sessions. Discussion followed on the meetings with the legislators. Dale felt Danielle did a great job speaking on behalf of SWCD's and suggested we invite legislators to our board meetings. Representative Fritz, who is on the Ag Committee this year, has come to a few board meetings and also to our bus tours. ____Al Dekrife couldn't meet with us due to testifying, ____Kelly Woodard met us in the hallway, and we met with Senator Mike Parry and Representative Patti Fritz.
STEVE????????????????_____

STEWARDSHIP INSERTS: Stewardship Week is the last week in April and board members were given their inserts on Forestry. Extras are available if needed.

INTEREST RATES: Current interest rates were briefly discussed. Fran Windschitl had mentioned Castle Rock Bank had 2.83% for a 60 month CD and Affinity Plus Credit Union had 2.5% for 60 months. In-town rates are currently lower. Item was tabled until the April board meeting for Gary Wagenbach's input.

NEW BUSINESS:

SEMASWCD SPRING MEETING: The supervisor's Southeast MN Association of Soil and Water Conservation District's spring meeting will be held Tuesday, March 29 at Ironwood Springs from 9:00 – 3:00 PM. Registration fee is \$15.00. Jerry Groskreutz and Janet Kubat-Willette will be speaking on "Giving Good Interviews" in the morning. Dick, Bob, and Dale plan on attending, and Steve will drive from the office.

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT GRANT: Discussion followed. Steve said a 25% required match will be made by charging fees. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the 2011 Nutrient Management in the Lower Mississippi River Watershed Program Grant running from January 1, 2011 to December 31, 2012 for \$80,000 and authorizing Steve Pahs to administer this grant. Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neirby and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

TRUCK ACCESSORY PURCHASES: Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Dick Huston to approve the purchase of a folding aluminum hardcover topper, floor mats, and bed liner for the new 2011 Dodge Ram pickup. Aye: Duban, Huston, Neirby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

2010 BUDGET SUMMARY and 2011 BUDGET UPDATE: Steve Pahs passed out the 2010 budget summary and reviewed it. Steve explained that we are tied to the USDA computer system and NRCS pays for licensing of software, repair issues and IT services. Most of our computers are four years old or older and Steve will try to put them in the 2012 budget.

EARTH DAY EVENT: Northfield is doing an Earth Day event on April 30. Steve and Danielle will try to sell more native plant kits. We are not selling rain barrels this year as CRWP is doing a rain barrel event this spring. Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Dale Neirby to approve the \$15 registration fee for the Northfield Earth Day event on April 30. Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neirby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SPONSOR OPPORTUNITY GRAZING FIELD DAY: Hiawatha Valley Resource Conservation and Development is having a grazing education workshop on June 18 at the Dan Coughlin farm. This is a grass-fed beef operation and county ditch 32 runs through the farm. June 18 is also "Dairy Day at the Farm" on the Paul Duban farm. Tom will talk to John Zinn about rescheduling the grazing workshop. Motion by Dale Neirby, second by Jim Purfeerst to generally support the Dan Coughlin grazing workshop. Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neirby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

CLASSROOM EDUCATION PROGRAM STATUS: Currently 32 classes are scheduled for second and fifth graders in Rice County. Most of the staff has participated in these sessions on forestry.

FLOOD RELIEF COST SHARE CONTRACT: Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the following BWSR Flood Relief Grant Cost Share Contract:

FRCS#110710 – Harris Bauer – 10300 220 St Kenyon Richland Sec10 – 2 grade stabilizers - \$4634.75

Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neirby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Tom Coffman said supervisors could tour any project beforehand if he gets permission from the landowner. Board could come with engineering staff when they are working there. A before and after picture was suggested. Bob Duban suggested going out to view the project after a board meeting. Tom Coffman will talk to Harris Bauer about a Freedom of Information Act form.

CLEAN WATER FUND VEGETATIVE BUFFER STATUS: Steve explained the vegetative buffer grant jointly entered into with Goodhue, Steele, Rice, and Waseca SWCD's. They had intended to meet match requirements through rental rates but can't use CRP rental rates as a match so may have to use some of the 20% technical and engineering fee to get match requirements. Landowners can put land into CRP and get incentive for vegetative buffer at \$600/acre. Second option is \$800/acre for harvestable buffer to maintain grass for the ten-year contract. Staff is working out details and may get an extension.

Motion by Dick Huston, seconded by Dale Neurby to approve the following CWF (Clean Water Fund) vegetative buffer contracts for Steele County:

VBS-2010-15 Curtis Johnson-7302 SW 89 Ave-Ellendale-Lemond Sec 8 - .3 acres x \$60/10 yrs = 180.00

VBS-2010-16 Mary Johnson-316 Hilltop Ave-Owatonna-Lemond Sec 8 – 2.9 ac x \$60/10yrs = 1,740.00

Ayes: Duban, Huston, Neurby, and Purfeerst. All Aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

RE-SIGN VEGETATIVE BUFFER CONTRACTS: Rice SWCD is administering the BWSR Clean Water Fund Vegetative Buffer Contracts and BWSR Board Conservationist Mary Kells said Rice SWCD Board should also sign the contracts. All previous contracts were signed.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ROUNDTABLE POSITION: Steve explained that staff time is needed to work on proposed projects before grants are approved. The Clean Water Fund must reference a TMDL. Every county has a water plan so those are referenced in the application to make them more efficient. The TMDL process was explained. Rice County's Water Plan in on their website at www.ricecounty.gov. Possible nongovernment solutions for gully erosion on the west side of Circle Lake were discussed.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS: Dick Huston spoke on retiring farmers in Colorado selling their water rights to land developers and golf courses. Water is a world-wide issue. An Idaho dairy is using 365 million gallons of water a year for 20,000 cows. Dairy Today has an article on ethanol from a dairyman's perspective. Reliance Bank is putting in a rain garden on the west side. A 9th grade class in Wisconsin is learning about animal welfare. Store and restaurants are setting the standards for agricultural products now. Bob Duban said it bothers him that we buy from other countries where less than 6% of food products are inspected. Jim Purfeerst said he will go to the RC&D meeting on the 28th.

D.C. REPORT BY Tom Coffman:

1. Budget – Budget cut rumors have talked about the complete elimination of the Resource Conservation & Development (RC&D) program.
2. EQIP 2011 & 2010 – A bar chart comparing number of applicants by category/resource concern was passed out. The chart shows that, as in other years, the great majority of our signup is for erosion control. We had 26 EQIP applicants by the March 4th cutoff. Presently working on estimates and ranking. Would need \$400,000 to fund them all.

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT by Steve Pahs:

Activity this past month has been focused on many different subjects. We have been working on completing the match requirements for the Clean Water Fund buffer strip grant, which has proven to be a bigger challenge than first thought. Meetings with BWSR staff and the partner districts have taken place and we have come up with a plan, although we likely won't be able to use as much funding from the grant for technical costs as we planned. We sold the 1994 pickup and received the new truck last week. Tree sales have been a little slow lately, and we have reduced our total order to 18480 with about 9000 currently sold.

I have also spent considerable time lining up visits with teachers in the 2nd and 5th grades in Rice County. So far, we have 32 classes scheduled.

Other activity this month:

- Feedlot evaluation for J. Derham
- On site with Brian and Randy Hanson to discuss buffers, ditch maintenance, and erosion control
- Attended the Renewable Energy Conference in Fairmont, MN

- Day at the Capitol-met with Fritz, Woodard, and Parry
- RIM WRP training session
- CRP signup training session
- SE MN Employees meeting at Stewartville
- Upper Cannon meeting
- Ditch inspector report to County Commissioners

Looking ahead, I will be attending a statewide ditch inspector's meeting, a MASWCD meeting, a Wetland Reserve meeting in Jordan, and helping at the Northfield Home and Garden show. We will continue to be busy with trees, class presentations, and some field work (if the snow melts). Katie Richards will reach the 6-month employment mark on April 25th, so we should be holding a personnel committee meeting prior to the April 20th board meeting to review her performance and consider removal from probationary status.

Steve gave the annual ditch inspection report to the county commissioners. Redeterminations were discussed. Landowners are paid for the 16 foot mandatory buffers from the county ditch program. State law requires a one-time payment to landowners where ditches run through their property. Rice County Ditch # 4 and #20 are up for reassessment this year.

DISTRICT PROGRAM MANAGER'S REPORT by Tim Labs:

- ❖ Completed RIM/WRP easement applications and forwarded to BWSR. Five easements were processed.
- ❖ Reviewed Rice Co. CUP applications for wetland issues
- ❖ Completed two windbreak plans
- ❖ Attended the Southeast MN Association of Conservation District Employee's meeting in Stewartville.
- ❖ Attended a Cannon River Watershed Partnership (CRWP) meeting on Upper Cannon River initiatives in LeCenter.
- ❖ Attended Contractor's Meeting
- ❖ Wetland Conservation Act Activities:
 - Attended a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) Meeting on the Northfield Trail Project
 - Attended a Technical Evaluation Panel (TEP) Meeting at the Faribault Airport on a proposed new crosswinds runway.
 - Reviewed two wetland delineation reports on two Rice County Highway Dept. projects
 - Lots of misc. WCA activities

FARM BILL TECHNICIAN'S REPORT by Danielle Waldschmidt:

There is still some interest in the CWF buffer incentive. I have been working to promote the incentive by sending out proposals and contacting landowners about the incentive. I have been working with landowners interested in CRP. The RIM/WRP Floodplain Riparian Easement sign-up ended March 4th. Letters were sent to landowners that might be eligible for the sign-up. I assisted with the applications and maps for the sign-up. There will be a general CRP sign-up in March. We are partnering with Cannon River Watershed Partnership to have a booth at the Northfield Home and Garden Show on March 26th. I will be speaking about Backyard Conservation and promoting the plants that we have for sale.

Accomplishments Include:

- Completed proposals for CRP

- Worked with landowners that are interested in CRP
- Worked with RIM Buffer participates to complete paperwork
- Met with landowners about filter strips and CWF incentive
- Attended SEMACDE Annual Meeting in Stewartville
- Promoted RIM/WRP Floodplain Riparian Easements
- Attended NEPA Training
- Attended CRP Training
- Attended Sand Creek WREP Meeting
- Attended MASWCD Day at the Capitol and meet with local Representatives and Senators
- Met with Mary Kells about CWF Buffer Grant
- Organized booth with Cannon River Watershed Partnership for the Northfield Home and Garden Show

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST’S REPORT BY Katie Richards:

I’ve been working with other offices to determine their plan needs for the upcoming and ongoing 590s, potential new patrons and updates for plans. I attended the employee’s meeting at Ironwood Springs Christian Ranch and the Nutrient Management Conference in Rochester. The meeting in Rochester was very informative and interesting. I have fielded a few phone calls from interested growers from the feedlot meetings that I attended in February.

Plans I’ve been working on this month:

- *Johnson – Rice
- *Spindler – Steele
- *Beucler – Rice
- *MMP for Colin in Freeborn

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE: News articles.

ADJOURN: Vice Chairman Duban adjourned the meeting at 3:50 PM.

Respectfully submitted by:

Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

Dale Neirby – Board Secretary