RICE S.W.C.D.
BOARD MEETING MINUTES
March 12, 2014 – 9:00 AM

PRESENT:  Jerry Courson, Robert Duban, Jim Purfeerst, Steve Pahs, Ashley Tabery, Debbie Skarupa, Tom Coffman and Rice County Administrator Anthony Murphy.

ABSENT:  Gary Wagenbach and Dale Neirby

Chairman Jim Purfeerst called the meeting to order at 9:00 am and introduced Rice County Administrator Tony Murphy. He spoke on watershed plans maybe being the right thing to do, but difficult to achieve as Rice County has three different watersheds. He intends to talk strategic plans and department work plans and weave the SWCD activities into the Hwy and Planning and Zoning Departments. The Board thanked Mr. Murphy for attending our meeting.

DC REPORT by Tom Coffman:

1. Farm Bill and Program Activity. Things have been at a standstill as far as EQIP program activity due to the new Farm Bill. We are busy planning, but cannot make any contract rankings or approvals.

2. Rice Soil Health Initiative. Put March 20 on your calendar for a local meeting at the 4-H building at 4:00 pm. We will discuss what we have learned from past winter meetings/conversations and what our plans are for the upcoming season.

MINUTES:  Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to approve the February 12, 2014 board meeting minutes. Ayes: Courson, Duban and Purfeerst. All aye. None Opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT:  Motion by Jerry Courson, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the January and February financial reports and bills payable subject to audit. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:
STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING NOTES:  Steve Pahs has been working with Jenny Mocol, and DNR Hydrologist Dan Giralamo may speak to the Rice County Commissioners about the 50 foot buffer requirements. Steve will set up a meeting in April.

DAY AT THE CAPITOL:  Steve has set up three out of the four appointments with legislators. Steele and Rice will have a joint meeting with Representative Patti Fritz and hopefully Senator Vicki Jensen. Appointments are at 11:00, 12:30 and 1:00 pm. Steve will
probably not be attending. Jim and Gary plan on attending the evening Legislative Briefing and will coordinate rides.

**NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT FEE STRUCTURE CHANGES:** Tabled from February 12, 2014. Proposed fee changes for manure and nutrient plans were reviewed. Changes would be based on acreage and similar to fees charged by Fillmore SWCD. Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to approve the Nutrient Management Fee Structure based on acreage beginning with new plans started after March 12, 2014. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**SWCD POSITION ON ONE WATERSHED ONE PLAN FOR CANNON AND ZUMBRO:** Beth Kallestad from CRWP has asked if Rice SWCD would be the sponsor for the Cannon River Watershed Partnership. Discussion followed. CRWP wants to develop a plan for the whole watershed. Legislature wants state to go in the direction of one watershed one plan and BWSR will give bonus points for grants if you have a watershed plan. Discussion followed.

Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to be supportive of the Zumbro Project and if other counties/swcd’s support the Cannon Watershed Plan, we would be supporting participants. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**APPROVE 2013 CONSERVATION DELIVERY GRANT CLOSE OUT FORM:** Motion by Jerry Courson, seconded by Bob Duban to approve and sign the 2013 Conservation Delivery Grant Closeout form for $22,940.00. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**APPROVE 2013 EASEMENT DELIVERY GRANT CLOSEOUT FORM:** Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to approve and sign the 2013 BWSR Easement Delivery Grant close out form for $3,217.00. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**2013 ACTUAL BUDGET REPORT:** Steve reviewed the actual budget report. District lost $41,947.00 in 2013. Steve felt it was primarily due to Flood Relief projects not being completed due to the weather, personnel changes, and a truck purchase. T&A for cost share projects had been at a 20% flat rate and now is charged by time. Financials were reviewed.

**ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK FOR 2014:** Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to approve the 2014 Annual Plan of Work. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**2014 ANNUAL REPORT:** Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to approve the 2014 Annual Report. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Report is due to BWSR by March 15.

**STEWARDSHIP INSERTS:** Board would like the same number of Stewardship Inserts as last year. Deb will order.
SUPERVISOR CANDIDATE FILING: Filing is May 20 – June 3 for supervisor filing. Jim Purfeerst and Jerry Courson plan on filing. Dale Neirby is also up for re-election.

MASWCD ELECTION BOUNDARY OPTIONS: Board reviewed boundary options: one supervisor per township or go with the commissioner districts which are based on population. Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to continue with the current boundaries in place for supervisor districts. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MASWCD FUNDING INITIATIVE: Taxes on RIM land were discussed. RIM land is now being taxed at cropland rates but there is a bill coming to repeal that. Discussion followed. MASWCD Legislative Report handout was discussed. Steve spoke on Ad Valorem levy for T&A. MASWCD is seeking authority for SWCDs to raise their own revenue through one or more of these mechanisms. No action taken.

SUPPORT FOR SE MN SOIL HEALTH COORDINATOR: Fillmore SWCD received a Clean Water Fund grant to promote soil health. Discussion followed. Motion by Jerry Courson, seconded by Bob Duban to support Fillmore SWCD with $300 per year for four years for the SE MN Soil Health Coordinator to provide technical assistance to Rice County. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

TECHNICAL APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR SPENCER AND COLLIN: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to approve Technical Approval Authority Ecological Sciences levels for Spencer Herbert and Collin Schoenecker. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SCOTT COUNTY C-S AND TECH SERVICES AGREEMENT: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to approve the Scott County cost share and technical services agreement for the Sand Creek Watershed areas in Rice County. Compensation will be at hourly billing rates with 75% cost share for practices. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OTHER REPORTS:

SUPERVISOR REPORTS: Bob Duban received paperwork on the State of Water Conference May 1-2 at Cragun’s Resort in Brainerd sponsored by the Freshwater Society, U of M Extension, BWSR, MPCA, DNR and others. Registration is $130 and rooms are about $84. Discussion followed. Motion by Jerry Courson, seconded by Bob Duban to approve a supervisor attending the State of Water Conference May 1st and 2nd at Cragun’s for up to $300.00 towards registration and room. Ayes: Courson, Duban, and, Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Bob may carpool with someone else.

DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs: Steve said tree sales were good the last week in February and we only have about 1000 left to sell. Will distribute out of the beer garden this year as conservation building is full of 4-H display cases. There are a fair amount of projects to do when the weather allows and a number of ditch projects. Spencer Herbert is interviewing for CRWP position as a contracted employee through Rice SWCD and if he gets it, District will develop a contract with CRWP. Bob said Spencer would be ideal as he has a feel for farmers and ag. Ditch projects, DNR permits, core samples, were discussed. Employee meeting will be March 19 at Whitewater State Park. Steve will probably not be
attending the Day at the Capitol March 24 and 25. Northfield Home and Garden is April 5 and we’ll have a booth with CRWP to promote native plants. Northfield Earth Day is April 26. Don Buckhout wants to meet with District Board and Water Plan Committee after the April Board meeting. Board will meet here at 9:00 am for the regular board meeting, then Board is on their own for lunch and the Zumbro PRAP meeting with Water Plan Committee, District Board and Don from BWSR will be at the Government Services Building at 1:00 pm.

FARM BILL TECHNICIAN REPORT by Ashley Tabery:

Past Month:
- Furlong pre-con meeting with contractor
- KDHL radio show on SWCD and Trees
- Whispers of Hope tree and native plants planning
- Webinar by Water Resources Center on state of MN Waters
- Created shoreland owners mailing list, sent out 238 letters and native plant order forms for Cannon-Wells, Cedar and Mazaska
- Computer issues, working with HR and IT to regain access
- Attended SWCS annual meeting in Northfield
- Toolkit training in Rochester
- Assisted with many tree orders, phone calls, etc.
- Prepared display, and attended Pheasants Forever Banquet
- Prepared for Northfield Home and Garden Show
- Attended Soil Mechanics-1 training March 10th and 11th
- RIM applications for Poplar Grove Farms

Upcoming:
- Needs and planning for DeGrood and Gary Donkers for EQIP
- Continue to explore grant options (LCCMR and DNR)
- Soil health workshop March 12th
- SEMACDE meeting on March 19th at Whitewater State Park
- May attend Day at Capitol
- Preparing for Spring snow melt edge-of-field monitoring
- Continue to promote tree sales and native plant sales

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST’S REPORT by Spencer Herbert:

I completed new plans for Nick Hanson (Rice) and Paul Strand (Goodhue). I completed a yearly update for Jerry Kelm (Rice). I met with Casey Leonhardt (Wabasha) to discuss plan, gather records, and calibrate spreaders. I also met with Micah Dicke (Goodhue) who needs a MMP completed.

In addition to plan writing, I worked on various other activities. I attended MDA’s Nutrient Mgmt Conference in Mankato, which provided a lot of good updates and information. I have been working on comprehensive maps for each county I cover that show which parcels of land are covered under a nutrient management plan. Steve and I met with BWSR, MDA, and others to discuss possible agreement to help fund my position. MDA is developing a proposal with conditions.
Looking ahead: Complete plans for Leonhardt, Dicke. Wabasha Co may need some EQIP updates, depending on 590 contract scheduling. I will be attending a Soil Mechanics training, and a couple field days in the coming weeks.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST REPORT by Collin Schoenecker:

Past:
- Basic engineering training.
- RIM buffer enrollment webinar.
- Minnesota’s water webinar.
- Staff meeting.
- Radio Show on KDHL w/ Ashley.
- Meeting with landowners for tree sales.
- Worked on PWP easement split (12 new owners).
- Took ATV to get maintenance for spring.

Upcoming:
- Finish PWP easement split.
- Farm Technology Training.
- SEMACDE Meeting.
- Work with landowners to determine RIM eligibility.
- Continue to answer wetland related questions.

Clear out Monitoring site

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE:

UPCOMING EVENTS: Day at the Capitol – PRAP Meeting April 9 at Government Center.

ADJOURN: Chairman Jim Purfeerst adjourned the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, April 9 at 9:00 am. PRAP meeting at Government Services Building at 1:00 pm.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

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Jerry Courson - Board Secretary