RICE S.W.C.D.
REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES
Wednesday, January 13, 2016 - 9:00 AM

PRESENT: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, Gary Wagenbach, Steve Pahs, Bridget Evers, Travis Hirman, Justin Fuchs, Thomas Coffman, Nicole Schaffer, Debbie Skarupa, BWSR BC Jenny Mocol-Johnson, Commissioner Jake Gillen, Commissioner Jeff Docken, and Rice County Administrator Tony Murphy.

ABSENT: None

Chairman Bob Duban called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

OLD BUSINESS:

MINUTES: Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Richard Cook to approve the December 9, 2015 board minutes. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL/BILLS PAYABLE: December 31, 2016 financial statements are not available because of year-end.

SOIL HEATH TOPIC: Tom Coffman spoke about the monthly NRCS Soil Health updates. Several soil health related articles, videos, links etc. are available for viewing. National Geographic did a first ever “Status of the World’s Soil Resources.” Panel came to disturbing conclusion – majority of the world’s soil resources are in only fair, poor, or very poor condition. A farmer in Colorado had more positive results with only 17” of rainfall, using cover crops to increase soil structure and wildlife. Other links available on that website. There is a workshop on Soil Health in Owatonna on January 19. Rice County Commissioner Jeff Docken and Administrator Tony Murphy arrived at 9:10 am. Gary Wagenbach spoke on the St. Charles area fish kill.

OLD BUSINESS:

BUFFER LAW STATUS: Discussion. Travis Hirman has been updating maps identifying landowners with potential 1 rod (16.5’) buffer requirements. He spoke with Technician Michael Schultz from LeSueur County. Their FSA, NRCS, Planning and Zoning and SWCD put together a plan and basic letters went out in October. A new employee was hired and they focused on the ditch systems needing one rod. CRP is in high demand.

Other comments: Ask Todd Piepho how shoreline rule was decided. Could cause issues if it means the whole ditch. Need timeline for local review. Tom Coffman drew an example
of waterway/ditch/ditch/waterway on the blackboard. Is that a ditch now? What do you buffer? Gary - Yes, some would say that a buffer would be needed. Bob Duban spoke about two miles of private ditch south side of Fox Lake on Wolf Creek. Private ditches could benefit and have their ditches be public so maintenance is paid for. Jeff Docken said there will be sensitive issues and some landowners may be petitioning for a public ditch to get costs paid for one rod buffer. After mandated, it won’t be paid for.

No-one likes to enforce. Gary spoke on Olmsted County’s successes with only one or two enforcement issues. Richard Cook asked about surrounding counties, some landowners have been fudging too close to protected waterways and not in the best interest of the public. Jeff Docken-Farmers for the most part are willing to comply, but could have gray areas.

Jake Gillen felt a high percentage of highly erodible land (HEL) is being moldboard plowed causing sediment in the water and ditches. He felt we wouldn’t need buffers if land was not moldboard plowed. He felt it was the SWCD’s responsibility to see what’s going on in the ditches. In his area, County Ditch 6 clean out last fall had a lot of sediment from moldboard plowing. Black ground warms up faster in the spring, thing is to get rid of excess moisture in the spring. Could tell difference in soil compaction between bare ground and soil where grass came through the herbicide. Is part of soil health.

Richard Cook said legislation is evolving with movement toward better conservation. We are looking for a unified front with the county. Bob Duban spoke on the Farmer’s Union possibly having a resolution on government payments to landowners and Ditch Attorney Deter’s comments for funding. Could have corrective measures. Jenny MJ - SWCD could do implementation schedules. Tony Murphy-If we do educational campaign, it must be accurate or lose credibility.

County ditch redetermination could be accelerated. County ditch system rules are clear. Deadlines are firmly in place and DNR is expected to meet its map deadline. Protected waterway maps were done long ago – could look at those. DNR has said they probably won’t change those protected waterways. Tom Coffman sited examples where protected waterways have errors – ravines, bare cropland, etc. GW-Need to use the district knowledge. Dick P-need to move ahead with what we know. Jenny Mocol-Johnson said BWSR approved the Failure to Implement Policy on December 16. Deb left to make copies of that policy.

Loss of dairy farms meant fewer pastures on HEL and fewer small grains. How many buffers are required on private vs public ditches? Travis – Too early to tell. There will be a Farm Bureau meeting at Truckers Inn on February 16 at 9:30 am. Travis will speak on buffers at Crops Day at 4-H Building on February 24. Tony M-Need clear rules and responsibilities. R Cook-Could we have a public work session with Rice Co. to get started? Tony M-More helpful if we had a draft implementation plan. R Cook-Good first step to show we’re in this together and want to solve it together. Tony M-He’d prefer there be one voice on buffers and highly erodible land, and prefers that the SWCD take the lead role and the county, the secondary role. When get to enforcement, we will look at it further. Jenny M-If county issues a conditional use permit, will need relevant buffer conditions to meet the timeline of the buffer rule. Tony hopes draft implementation has goals and responsibilities. He wants SWCD to take the lead with Rice County supporting. R Cook- Will County be willing to sit on a steering committee to do implementation plan before we meet in public arena? Steve will put together a steering committee. Dick Peterson volunteered to be on it
and Richard Cook could fill in for Gary Wagenbach if need be. Julie Runkel from Planning and Zoning and Travis Hirman should be on it. Tony Murphy left at 10:00 am.

NEW BUSINESS:

**ROTATE SUPERVISOR POSITIONS:**

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<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chairperson</td>
<td>Robert Duban</td>
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<td>Vice Chairperson</td>
<td>Jim Purfeerst</td>
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<td>Treasurer</td>
<td>Richard Cook</td>
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<td>Secretary</td>
<td>Dick Peterson</td>
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<td>Public Relations &amp; Information</td>
<td>Gary Wagenbach</td>
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**SUPERVISOR PER DIEM RATES:**
Bob Duban reviewed supervisor per diem rates for the southeast 11 counties. Most were at the highest rate allowable ($75) with Rice being the lowest paid. Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Richard Cook to increase the supervisor per diem for 2016 to $75.00 per meeting. Discussion on half day rate or all the same. Motion passed as stated. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

**TRAVIS POSITION CHANGE:** Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to convert Travis Hirman’s position title from Nutrient Management Specialist to District Technician. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

**APPROVE IRS MILEAGE RATE:** Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to approve the 2016 IRS mileage rate at $.54 per mile. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

**BWSR CLEAN WATER FUND LOCAL CAPACITY FUND GRANT:** Board authorized Steve Pahs to sign this grant in November, but he would like the board to sign it. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve and sign the Clean Water Fund Local Capacity Grant Agreement for $100,000.00. Still have some changes to work through. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

**DESIGNATE FIRST UNITED BANK:** Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Richard Cook to designate First United Bank as the official depository. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

**VEHICLE SUMMARY REPORT:** Steve explained the vehicle summary report. Putting on approximately 25,000 miles per year per vehicle. 2005 Chevy is the oldest truck. Put four-year rotating purchase plan in 2017 budget.

**MASWCD LEADERSHIP FOR PROBLEM SOLVING:** Leadership Workshop information was mailed out and is similar to past leadership classes. Staff and supervisors are eligible. Young staff are good candidates for training. Cost is around $2,300.00 per person. Steve can look into the financial status and grants. Discuss further in February.
APPROVE SCOTT WMO #15-14 BEN BARTUSEK: Discussion. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the following WMO paid Voucher Payment:

WMO#15-14 Ben Bartusek-305 Sunrise Ave No. New Prague Wheatland Sec 3-Sediment Control Basin - $11,639.00. Scott WMO will make the payment.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

APPROVE STATE C-S PAYMENT HERMAN TRANSBURG: Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the following 2016 regular state cost-share contract:

CS16-01 Herman Transberg-10366 James Trail-Northfield-Northfield Sec#27-1 sediment control basin-$1935.65.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

BWSR SPRING PARK SPRING PARK SUBWATERSHED ANALYSIS GRANT: Rice SWCD will receive some administration dollars for administering this City of Faribault Spring Park (SW side of town) grant.

Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to authorize Steve Pahs to sign the BWSR Spring Park Subwatershed Analysis Grant when received for $62,398.00.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

RENTAL LEASE AGREEMENT: We have been operating without a lease. Currently, short of space with 2 additional people coming. Can terminate lease with 120 day notice. We share space with NRCS and if NRCS shuts down, we would not be allowed to enter the space we paid for. Good to have NRCS and SWCD in the same building. SWCD currently pays for 865 square feet of space. NRCS is allowed 150 square feet per person, but that includes a portion of the break room, conference room, etc. Are Soil and Water Conservation Districts allowed to own their own buildings? Mower is constructing their own.

Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the SWCD rental lease agreement with Ron Carlsen for 865 square feet of space for $14,555.75 through December 31, 2019.

All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

ADOPT RICE COUNTY WATER PLAN: Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the resolution to adopt the Rice County Water Plan with addendums as the Rice SWCD Comprehensive Plan.
All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

**APPROVE 2016 ANNUAL DUES:** MASWCD dues increased by more than $1300.00. Their dues are figured on a formula basis. MASWCD has paid for a lobbyist in the past, trainings, convention, etc. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the following 2016 dues:

- MASWCD $4519.34
- NACD $775.00
- SE JPB $500.00
- Envirothon $175.00

**AGRI-NEWS SUBSCRIPTION:** Agri-News supports districts and covers valuable information. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Gary Wagenbach to approve a two-year subscription to Agri-News for $69.33. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Ayes: Cook, Duban, Peterson, Purfeerst, and Wagenbach.

**2014 AUDIT COPIES:** Bound copies of the December 31, 2014 audit were passed out. Will be a February agenda item.

**MN CONSERVATION CORPS INTERN:** An intern was approved for Rice SWCD this summer starting May 20 and ending in July. Work plan will be developed.

**FREEBORN SOIL WORKSHOP:** Freeborn SWCD will host a Soil Health Workshop at the Owatonna Eagles on January 19 for $20.00.

**SUPERVISOR/OTHER REPORTS:** Gary Wagenbach has suggested getting the 11 county SWCD Chairpersons together to talk about needs and collaborate. CRWP has a full board, finances are ok, hiring an office affairs ag related outreach person. Jim said CRWP is working on five – 40 acres sites for cover crops this year. In long-term, helping erosion and building soil. Gary-Contacts are very important and collaboration is essential. BWSR has media templates on buffer and soil erosion topics. Jim-Zumbro Watershed focusing on treating stream pollution and flooding before it hits the City of Rochester treatment process. Richard Cook thanked the Rice County Commissioners for coming and said it’s good to hear the farmers’ perspectives on mold board plowing. Good to have a partnership between the county and the district.

**D.C. REPORT by Tom Coffman:**

1. **Leadership Meeting and MASWCD Convention:**
   State Conservationist Cathlee Pullman will be promoting new operational agreements with SWCD’s. NRCS budget is down 20% and looking to exchange computer systems/tech support ($4500/computer), office copy machine, and supplies etc. for District staff time. It was a pleasure to accompany the Sommer’s at the convention. They were a big supporter of the auction.

2. **Personnel:**
   a.) Acting Area Conservationist is now Tim Wilson. Tim is the AC from Area 4. 120 day max period.
b.) Nikki Schaffer is back in Rice after her detail to Wabasha.
c.) “Ultima Employee.” We are expecting a full-time Ultima employee soon who will do mainly clerical duties.

3. **Workload:** We’ve recently reduced our 1026 workload in half from 120 outstanding 1026’s in the 2015 year. Wetland team in Marshall has done quite a few, now the wetland teams in other areas are helping as well. EQIP 2016-Deadline to get applicants eligible was December 11. We have 26 eligible applications.

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs:**
Newsletter is on website. Mark Root from Department of Ag Certification will visit us tomorrow. Edgebrook and Robert Gill projects are mostly complete. May do a partial payment next month. Gary, Bob and Richard are up for re-election this year with filing around May. Justin out next week.

**DISTRICT TECHNICAL REPORT by Bridget Evers:**
- CRP General Training
- CRP contract writing in Toolkit
- Scott County WMO projects
- Surveyed with Colin
- Needs with Tom
- Ditch work with Steve
- Worked on C/S projects
- E-link training in Owatonna with BWSR

**Upcoming:**
- General CRP Sign up Dec. 1 - Feb. 24
- GIS mtg. January 14th
- Soil Health Day in Owatonna January 19th
- Farm bill assistance meeting Willmar January 29th (tentative)

**NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REPORT by Travis Hirman:**
- A significant amount of my time was spent identifying and mapping out landowners who may need to be contacted for buffer compliance, as was displayed during the December board meeting.
- One landowner was helped with buffer questions. He worked with Bridget to look into CRP.
- I reported on the FY2012 NMP grant to close it out. Rice SWCD utilized all remaining funds in April.
- I performed a self-evaluation and participated in the year end employee review process.
- Attended a meeting for MDA in Preston.
- Attended the BALMM meeting in Oronoco.
• Looking forward: MMP updates for Bauer & O’Connor, winter meetings for producers who took part in the MDA N BMP outreach program, and continued buffer work.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST REPORT by Justin Fuchs
• Staff Meeting.
• Attended the Cannon River Watershed WRAPS meeting.
• Worked on the Rice SWCD 2016 Winter Newsletter.
• Worked on ArcGIS files and templates.
• Meeting about possible WCA Violation, in progress.
• Meeting regarding Reinvest in Minnesota Wetland embankment erosion.
• Meeting regarding Agriculture Wetland Banking and credits program.
• Site visit about WCA Violation, in progress.

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE: Jake Gillen complimented staff for getting $300,000 to $500,000 in contracts this year. Gary and Dick Peterson mentioned half or one page project picture with descriptions and locations put on website. Could do Scott WMO project before and after pictures. Pattern tiling and 1026 process explained. Need to ask for permission through Freedom of Information Act form to see this information. The many reasons for increased tiling, finding tile lines in alfalfa, and nitrogen application were discussed. Justin Fuchs explained pictures of Fox Lake Watershed (phosphorus levels, soils, and HEL etc.)

ADJOURN: Chairman Bob Duban adjourned the meeting at 11:40 a.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

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Dick Peterson – Board Secretary