PRESENT: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, Gary Wagenbach, Steve Pahs, Travis Hirman, Ashley Gallagher, Tom Coffman, Nicole Schaeffer and Debbie Skarupa. Rice County Commissioner Jeff Docken came in for the buffer discussion.

ABSENT: None

Chairman Gary Wagenbach called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

MINUTES: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Richard Cook to approve the January 14, 2015 board minutes as presented. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the December Program Summary. A friendly amendment was made and adopted to add, “and bills payable subject to audit.” Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

DEW DROP DRILL: Steve Pahs said the Dew Drop Drill will come next Friday. A picture of the drill is on the website for people interested in using it.

DAY AT THE CAPITOL: Richard Cook and Gary Wagenbach attended the Legislative Briefing on January 26 and Steve joined them for Day at the Capitol on January 27. A comment was made there that no levy authority will be made to unelected persons (supervisors are elected.) In general, felt legislators don’t support ad valorem. Discussion followed on building relationships. Representative Bly is on the Ag Committee and went to the MN River Valley Conference. Generally, felt tax authority wouldn’t be approved by County Commissioners. Some SWCD’s are struggling as they don’t get much county financial support.

Buffers are not a one size fits all. Bob discussed lobbyist’s preparation of numbers. Steve said buffers are required protected waters. Tom said a buffer isn’t needed if you have an adequate conservation plan. CRWP has protected waters data from five to six years ago. Is this a county or state responsibility? State wrote the statute.

STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING: Steve would like to review the mission statement, vision statement and long range goals. Discussion followed. Facilitator Mary Laeger-Hagemeister could facilitate on March 24. Steve could ask for bio. Another option: Donna Rae Shepherd has her own company. Marion Anderson and Gene Kuntz were possible suggestions. Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to explore hiring Mary Laeger-Hagemeister, if bio checks out, as facilitator for the Strategic Planning Meeting on March 24. Discussion followed. What are SWCD statutory obligations? Put on draft agenda. Motion on the table. Further discussion. Richard Cook added a friendly amendment, “to authorize up to $600 for facilitator to continue the process.” Friendly amendment adopted. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert
Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**ADOPT RICE CO WATER PLAN:** Board approved accepting the extended Rice Co. Water Plan as their Comprehensive Plan last month, but BWSR wants a resolution format. Resolution was read. Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Robert Duban to approve Resolution #2015-1 to adopt the Extended Rice County CLWP as its Comprehensive Plan for 2015. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**APPROVE 2015 ANNUAL PLAN OF WORK:** Steve went over the 2015 Annual Plan. He has a different vision for the 2016 Annual Plan. Gary W suggested thinking about priorities, funding, local capacity and groundwater. Prioritize-targeted-measurable. Staff could generate measurable outcomes from eLink. Gary talked about the NRCS Client Gateway program. Freedom of Information Act forms can be requested from St. Paul for permission at the county level. Further discussion was held on climate change, privacy, Spring Creek Projects and DNR website’s 23 examples of climate change. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the Annual Plan of Work and to further discuss it at the Strategic Planning Meeting. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**2014 BUDGET REVIEW:** Steve reviewed the 2014 budget versus actual costs line by line. We are only using 50% of WCA costs to meet our match right away. County doesn’t care to allow SWCD to use any Rice County time towards a WCA match. We are sitting better financially because we used 2012 2013 and 2014 flood relief T&A dollars in 2014. Rent and the possibility of Rural Development moving, MCIT insurance, and the open WCA position were discussed.

**SUPERVISOR POSITION ROTATIONS FOR 2015:** Supervisor position sheet for 2015 was mailed to supervisors.

**2015 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:** Revised Committee Assignments for 2015 was mailed to supervisors.

**ANNUAL DUES:** Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the additional 2015 Annual Dues as follows:

- Cannon River Watershed Partnership $50.00
- Zumbro Watershed Partnership $35.00
- SEMACDE $40.00
- MACDE $80.00

Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Steve thanked board for paying for employee dues.
RICE CO FARM FAMILY OF THE YEAR:  Motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Bob Duban to nominate our Outstanding Conservationists for 2014 - Clyde and Bryan Eggum. Ashley will get more information from the Eggum’s and complete the form. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NRCS MEMO OF UNDERSTANDING: Nicole Schaffer reviewed the NRCS Memo of Understanding it has with the district. These are long standing agreements with the district that are reviewed yearly.

STEP BUMPER FOR 2012 PICKUP: Purchasing a LaVerne step bumper for the 2012 truck was discussed. This type may have issues. Item tabled to the next board meeting and Steve will check into other options.

2014 CONSERVATION DELIVERY GRANT CLOSEOUT: Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Bob Duban to sign and closeout the 2014 Conservation Delivery Grant for $22,940.00. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

2014 BWSR RIM GRANT CLOSEOUT REPORT: Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Bob Duban to sign and closeout the 2014 Rim Easement Delivery Grant for $3,209.00. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

STAFF TITLE UPDATES: Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to designate Deb’s position as administrative assistant in all required places and on the website. Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NACD CONVENTION UPDATE: Gary Wagenbach attended the National Association of Conservation District’s National Convention in New Orleans January 31 – Feb 2. Jim Gephardt also attended. Gary gave the board a sheet of highlights from the convention and reviewed some issues. Cuts of $600 million could affect programs. RCPP (Regional Conservation Partnership Program) may be cut. Gary wondering where $9 million in Mn goes. Tom could look at his emails. Gary left staff an NACD pollinator education packet. NRCS website also has pollinator info. Staff to check on Farm to School grants. Nerstrand schools may be interested in pairing with a high school. Native seed dealers, pollinators at River Bend Nature Center, the rain garden at the fairgrounds, native vegetation along lakeshore property, milkweed seed availability, road ditch broadleaf spraying and Iowa prairie strips, were also discussed. Put DNR Roadside for Wildlife on Strategic Planning Meeting agenda. Jim Gephardt went to Soil Health session and was excited about it. Ashley said Soil Health will be a topic at the area meeting March 26. We have soil partners with Dean Thomas from Fillmore and Gene Kuntz with CRWP.

APPROVE PHASE 2 FLOOD RELIEF C-S CONTRACT: Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the Flood Relief Phase #2 Cost Share Contract #FR13-019 as follows:

Ayes: Richard Cook, Robert Duban, Dick Peterson, Jim Purfeerst and Gary Wagenbach. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**DISCUSS 50’ BUFFERS:** Articles from the Star Tribune, Agri News and MASWCD were mailed out. One size doesn’t fit all. Northern lake lots are on rock right on the edge, some landowners have half an acre, some have higher land near streams, others waterways. Staff would need to work with landowner to make judgment calls. Landowners need the will to do it. Rice County Water Plan and state statutes are on the books. If the laws on the books were enforced, it would go further. Pheasants Forever Summit had 500 people in attendance and where the Governor’s announcement originated. Discussion followed on permissions needed on private lands, benefits of buffers, Olmsted County PowerPoint, timeline and process they took without referrals to county attorney, status of buffers at Rice County Planning and Zoning, lakeshore property in Rice County, Planning & Zoning handling violations, cost, volunteer aspect, citizen complaints, etc. Tom mentioned that an approved conservation plan is a way to work with Ag and still comply with the law. There are several kinds of buffers. Discussion continued on lawsuits, using scoping to determine situation, county mapping, what’s worked for other counties, etc. Jeff Docken felt most commissioners would entertain discussion on buffers and be open to a work session. Rice County is hiring a planner soon. DNR flyovers, harvestable filter strips - challenges all over the board. Need guidelines and framework to proceed. Protect soil and water and other benefits will follow. Jeff Docken left at 11:25 pm.

**SUPERVISOR/OTHER REPORTS:** Jim Purfeerst said Hiawatha Valley RC&D (Rural Conservation and Development) has been working at Fugle’s Mills Site. Soil Health Meeting at Goodhue on March 25. Bob Duban and Steve went to JPB (Joint Powers Board) meeting January 29 and reviewed insurance policy, grants and new work for two engineers. Dick Peterson spoke on the FFA Forestry Contest that started 25 years ago as a good way to get youth involved. Richard Cook commented on black dirt on the snow in ditches. Bob Duban saw black dirt in North Dakota where they were mowing ditches. Bob asked Steve to follow up with Commissioner Jeff Docken and county commissioners and Planning and Zoning. If plan now, will state change requirements in a year? Tom suggested giving landowners a year to comply and monitor with aerial photos in two years. Discussion on how Rice Co. Farmer’s Union stands. Jim P suggested meeting with township officials for a brainstorming sessions before meeting with commissioners. All township boards meet at the 4-H building on March 10 so could get opinions and general concept. Steve, Bob Duban and Richard Cook to meet in a month to structure gatherings over the buffer issue. Draft plan before the March board meeting. Put something together and send rep to township meeting. Will call township official for meeting date.

**D.C. REPORT**

Nicole Schaffer gave the following report.

1. Staff attended an area meeting last Thursday in Rochester. Jay Fuhrer a former DC from Burleigh County ND, now Soil Health Specialist in ND, gave a good presentation on Soil Health. Seventy percent of Burleigh is no-till. Other speakers at the meeting included staff from MNPTAC (Pat Dotter) who is available for small businesses trying to pursue government contracts. This applies to farmers who have an entity that is required to have a DUNS number and a SAMS registration.

2. EQIP 15: Of the 37 applications, 29 were from sign-up #1. New applications won’t get considered for funding until 2016. DUNS and SAMS procedures were discussed.
3. Conservation Stewardship Program application deadline is February 27.

4. Joint NRCS/SWCD Area staff meeting is February 12.

Tom added that Area Conservationist Dave Copeland will be retiring on February 27, 2015. Also, an idea from Jay is to discuss a soil health topic at the beginning of each meeting so if alright with the board, office staff will take a turn at presenting a topic at the beginning of each meeting. The first monthly topic will be this month and we will show you a three-minute YouTube video entitled “A Year in the Life of CO².”

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs:**
Some good news to report this month! Our application for Clean Water Funds to continue the nutrient management work has been approved. This will provide us funding for another two years. The Dew Drop Drill has been ordered and is expected to arrive February 20th. We will need to purchase a trailer for it, but I plan to wait until the drill is here so I can get the right size. Staff has been working on completing many reports for BWSR throughout the month, and is now preparing for upcoming projects this spring. Tree sales are about normal, and should be busy throughout the month.

Other activity this past month:

- TEP meeting on Northfield Trail proposal
- WCA violation on James Kranz property near Mazaska Lake
- CD 17 tile camera exploration with Underground Technologies
- Mn Dept of Ag meeting to roll out the new program for nutrient management
- WCA site review-Lori Williams
- Day at the Capitol
- JPB meeting in Oronoco
- Picked up trailer for ditch program
- TEP meeting on Kranz violation
- Processing West Faribault Solar Facility WCA deminimus request
- Nutrient management conference in Mankato

Coming up are several ditch meetings, mostly on redeterminations, an area NRCS meeting, a meeting in St. Cloud to provide input into a new tool to prioritize local watershed planning and implementation efforts. I also have Wetland Conservation Act training scheduled, a Soil Health Summit, and planning for the next strategic planning session. Ditch work will be done if weather allows.
FARM BILL TECHNICIAN’S REPORT By Ashley Gallagher.

Past month:
- Completed eLink reporting for all cost-share grants and upload reports to website
- Farm Bill Meeting in St Cloud on January 30th
- Crop conference on February 9th
- Promoted RIM wetlands sign-up, assisted many with eligibility, and submitted 2 applications
- CRP odds and ends (questions, estimates, ownership changes…)
- Education presentations at Jefferson, Holy Cross, St Dominic’s and Bridgewater
- Attended the Soil Health Day in Freeborn County
- Trainings- required security training, Natural Heritage Info training
- Buckthorn conversations with Shaw, Langeslag, and Zielske
- Larson/Gill survey and planning
- Rohlfson layout and planning
- SEMACDE spring meeting planning
- Updated miscellaneous vendor list

Upcoming:
- Continue to try and schedule more education programs
- Needs and survey on many farms
- Promotion plan for Dew Drop Drill
- Promote native plant sales, attend garden shows?
- Finalize multiple project estimates and get money encumbered

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST’S REPORT by Travis Hirman:

- A new MMP was completed for Chris Kuball (Morristown). He is proposing a new swine finishing facility for 2400 head on 406 acres. Currently he raises no livestock on these for these acres.
- February 2nd was the deadline for the 2014 grant reporting period. I spent some time preparing a report that was submitted to eLink.
- I attended a manure management workshop in Northfield that focused on P management.
- The N BMP outreach program with MDA held a kick off meeting. Since then some time was spent on a flyer to help recruit producers into the program.
- I attended the Joint Powers Board annual biannual meeting in Oronoco.
- I am currently working on a new plan for Peter Klapperich in Mazeppa.
- I am in the beginning stages of establishing contacts for the N BMP outreach program.

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE: Three supervisors will be absent on March 11 so March 24 will be the next board meeting date. Board meeting will start at 8:00 a.m. and Strategic Planning Meeting will start at 9:00 a.m. Location to be determined.
A NASA video showing C02 in the jet stream during an entire year was shown. Red and orange signified more CO2 in the atmosphere during the months of less vegetation. Plants take in CO2 and put it into the soil as a food source for growing plants. Too much CO2 in air can react with water as acid rain.

**ADJOURN:** Chairman Wagenbach adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

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Richard Cook – Board Secretary