PRESENT: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, Jim Purfeerst, Steve Pahs, Justin Fuchs, Travis Hirman, Bridget Evers, Leslie Diaz-Alvarez, Rice County Commissioner Jeff Docken, and Debbie Skarupa.

ABSENT: Richard Cook

Chairman Jim Purfeerst called the meeting to order at 9:00 a.m.

MINUTES: Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Mike Ludwig to approve the February 8, 2017 board minutes. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL/BILLS PAYABLE: Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Tim Little to approve the March bills payable subject to audit. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:
ANNUAL REPORT: Discussion. Motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the financial section Annual Report as printed pending update/completion. Report is due to BWSR March 15. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

1W1P (ONE WATERSHED ONE PLAN): Rice SWCD is fiscal agent and will pay contractors. Dakota SWCD is administering agent and will do most of the fiscal reporting. Discussion. Motion by Dick Peterson, second by Tim Little to approve the One Watershed One Plan Grant Agreement for $235,923.00. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & INFO SPECIALIST: Personnel Committee (Mike, Dick P. and Steve) interviewed three very good candidates last week. All had wonderful qualifications. Discussion. Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Mike Ludwig to hire Teresa DeMars effective with the execution/start date of the Local Capacity Grant. Rate is $20 per hour for this half-time position with no benefits. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NRCS PHONE SYSTEM CHANGES: The Natural Resources Conservation Service is changing their phone system policy and would like to take ownership of the separate SWCD phone number. NRCS would pay for the (332.5408) line or SWCD could purchase all new phones and a line. We could not transfer calls to others in the building
with a new line. If Government shutdown happens, SWCD could not access any phone line. If SWCD moves we would need to buy a new phone number. Discussion. Motion by Tim Little, seconded by Dick Peterson to transfer our SWCD phone line to NRCS. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

2017 RATES FOR SPINNER SPREADER AND GREAT PLAINS DRILL: CRWP purchased a broadcast seeder, modified it and donated it to the SWCD. It is stored at Bob Duban’s. Discussion was held about charging a fee to cover time and maintenance or considering cost as part of promoting cover crops. Discussion on rates, storage location and GPS trackers.

Discussion on no-till drill fees which are currently at $100 delivery and $10 per acre. Buffers, acreage, discounted rate for converted no-till drill, keeping rates low enough for landowners to try cover crops, and fees vs hiring work done, were discussed. Motion by Tim Little, seconded by Dick Peterson to table the rate discussion on the no-till drill and spinner spreader until the April board meeting. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

RAIN GARDEN PROGRAM POLICY: Steve Pahs explained the new Rice SWCD Rain Garden cost-share program. We have $10,000 to do rain gardens at 75% cost share with a max of $1000.00 per project. Motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the rain garden program policy. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

BWSR 2017 LOCAL CAPACITY WORK PLAN: Steve Pahs explained the amounts and categories for the work plan. Will need to prioritize land adjacent to waters. Maximum caps, crop rotation, and NRCS procedures were also discussed. Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Tim Little to approve the work plan for the 2017 Local Capacity Grant. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

BWSR 2017 NON-STRUCTURAL LAND MANAGEMENT PRACTICES POLICY: Steve Pahs explained the practice policy. Motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Tim Little to approve the BWSR Nonstructural Land Management Practices (NLMP) Implementation Plan request form for FY 17 District Capacity Grant. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

BWSR 2017 EROSION CONTROL AND WATER MANAGEMENT POLICY: Steve explained the above policy. Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Tim Little to approve the 2017 Erosion Control and Water Management Program Policy. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

STATE C-S CONTRACT APPLICATION: Discussion. Motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Tim Little to approve the following state cost-share contract application:

CS16-05 John Lang 11870 230 St. E. Kenyon Richland Sec. 11- Grassed waterway $2070.00.
Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. This will be taken out of regular 2016 state cost share grant at 50% cost share.

**ZUMBRO ONE WATERSHED ONE PLAN APPLICATION:** Districts in Zumbro Watershed met February 21 to discuss applying for One Watershed One Plan. If approved, it would start this fall. Steve said it is challenging to do more than one 1W1P at a time. Currently, doing a plan for Cannon Watershed. Zumbro Watershed Partnership wants to put in an application. Discussion. Work group meets once a month for 18 months. Board felt it was better to wait for one year to apply for Zumbro 1W1P.

**PERFORMANCE MGMT TRAINING:** Steve would like to attend a MCIT Performance Management Training in St Cloud, but it is on the same day as our next board meeting. Next board meeting will be Thursday, April 13 at 9:00 a.m.

**SUPERVISOR REPORTS:** Mike Ludwig and Tim Little attended the New Supervisor Orientation in Rochester and felt it was a good session. Dick Peterson attended the Zumbro Watershed Partnership meeting on One Watershed One Plan. Mike, Steve and Dick Peterson did job interviews. Jim asked about cap on CRP acres for the buffers. Bridget felt there would be more acreage available by October.

**BUFFER UPDATE:** Travis Hirman pulled up the BWSR website on the big screen TV and explained the buffer program updates. Five alternative practices will be coming out next month.

**ACTING D.C. REPORT by Leslie Diaz-Alvarez:** Leslie reviewed her written report below. NRCS seeding rates were discussed. State office is updating the seeding rates. Many feel it is too much seed. Leslie will talk to the area office about reducing the rates.

**Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)**
- NRCS would like to keep promoting this program in Rice Co. The CSP helps you build on your existing conservation efforts while strengthening your operation. Whether you are looking to improve grazing conditions, increase crop yields, implement no-till to reduce erosion or develop wildlife habitat by adopting CSP enhancements, CSP will help you achieve a higher level of conservation.
- NRCS accepts CSP applications on a continuous basis.

**Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)**
- NRCS has 15 eligible applications, the ranking process was completed on February 24, 2016. Field Office is waiting to hear from the State Office to know how many applications have been pre-approved from Rice Co.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP-EQIP)**
- NRCS accepts RCPP-EQIP applications on a continuous basis.
- Received 1 application. Eligibility and Ranking process cutoff date will be on April 17, 2017.

**Conservation Compliance/Planning (Plans, tract splits, 1026’s)**
• Received 8 AD-1026 requests this month and addressed 3 previous/current AD-1026 requests
  o Completed 2 - Maintenance Requests
  o Completed 1 - Small Area Exception (Open land into Production)

Client Gateway
• The Client Gateway is a secure NRCS website which provides online access to conservation assistance for farmers and ranchers. Landowners can access conservation plans, practice implementation schedules, financial applications and contracts, documents and payment information. Instead of driving to your field office multiple times, Conservation Client Gateway enables you to request assistance, sign documents and interact with NRCS field staff online. START TODAY!!!! Visit https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/clientgateway

DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs: Busy winter. NRCS started an inquiry one and a half years ago on the Bob Gill project and will review it tomorrow. NRCS state office has a concern. Local Soil Health Meeting will be at Joe’s tomorrow and another Soil Health Workshop will be on the 30th at the Knights of Columbus in New Prague. Three appointments have been scheduled for Day at the Capitol on March 21. Carpooling and scheduling was discussed. Steve will send out agenda. We will have a BWSR grant reconciliation on March 23.

Mike Ludwig said One Watershed One Plan committee elected officers: Chair will be Steve Rolfe from LeSueur, Vice Chair, Brad Anderson, from Goodhue and Secretary will be Galen Malecha from Rice County. Rice County is 29% of the watershed.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST REPORT by Justin Fuchs: Justin did a CREP overview. Should be getting new RIM township rates for 2017. Justin explained the nitrate testing program for Morristown, Bridgewater, Northfield and Cannon City Townships. MN Dept. of Health has map of well numbers for the 3500 parcels in those four townships. He will get excel addresses and lab will send test kits.

• NRCS basic engineering training in Rochester area office.
• TEP meeting for the Rice County Highway Department Bridge 66J73 replacement.
• Meeting with Walcott Township about possible work with replacing a culvert and road stabilization in a wetland.
• Meet with future homeowner about building a house near a wetland.
• Board Meeting.
• Meet with Rice County about active pond permits.
• Staff meeting.
• Drainage and Wetland Conference in St. Cloud.
• Meet with real estate agent and client about conservation easement options.
• SE MN GIS User’s Group Meeting at the Rice County Office.
• Work on the Township well testing for Nitrates program.
• WCA site checks.
• Finished electronically filing all WCA records 1992-present.
DISTRICT TECHNICIAN’S REPORT by Bridget Evers:

- New CRP contracts
- State Cost Share projects Survey and Designs
- EQIP projects
- Scott WMO projects
- CREP Webinar
- RCPP Projects

Upcoming:
- Continue New CRP Sign ups
- Survey and designs for Cost share items and CRP program (wetland restorations)
- EQIP survey and designs with Colin
- Feedlot surveying with Kate (JPB Engineer)

NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT REPORT by Travis Hirman:
Travis said some DNR buffer map changes were made along Ditch #12 in Richland Township. Some waterways can be maintained as waterways and will not need a 50’ buffer. If waterway is old and needs to be rebuilt, they will need to get a DNR permit.

- Took a basic engineering training course at the NRCS area office.
- Attended the February BALMM meeting in Oronoco.
- Attended the annual Nitrogen Conference in Mankato.
- Continued to implement the buffer law. Landowners continue to trickle in since the 2nd round of letters. I performed one site visit.

SOIL HEALTH TOPIC VIDEO: Travis showed a University of Wisconsin Extension video about Winter Rye as a cover crop after corn silage harvest. Twenty foot size on new CRP filter strips and sign up bonus for pollinator seeds were discussed. Honey bee hives are not allowed on CRP.

OTHER: Steve said there are 3700 trees left to sell. Trees are coming April 18 to be handed out April 21.

ADJOURN: Motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Dick Peterson to adjourn. Ayes: Tim Little, Mike Ludwig, Richard Peterson, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Time: 11:05 a.m.

Submitted by: ________________________________
Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

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Board Secretary - Timothy J. Little