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

PRESENT: Jerry Courson, Robert Duban, Dale Neirby, Jim Purfeerst, Gary Wagenbach, Steve Pahs, Ashley Tabery, Spencer Herbert, Colin Schoenecker, Debbie Skarupa, Tom Coffman, Karen Anderson from Rice County Extension and Bridgewater Township Official Kathleen Doran-Norton.

ABSENT: None

Chairman Jim Purfeerst called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. Extension Educator for Rice and Steele Counties, Karen Anderson, and Bridgewater Township Official Kathleen Doran-Norton were introduced.

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

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS: A revision has been made to the Annual Report. Motion by Dale Neirby, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the revision to RIM in the Annual Report. Ayes: Duban, Courson, Neirby, Purfeerst and Wagenbach. All aye. None Opposed. Motion carried. WCA may be harder to match this year so we decided to charge one-half the expenses monthly so that the match is always covered up front. January and February program record summaries were revised to show additional RIM and one-half of WCA expenses. Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the January, February and March financial reports and bills subject to audit. Ayes: Duban, Courson, Neirby, Purfeerst and Wagenbach. All aye. None Opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

BRIDGEPWATER TWP WATERSHED ANALYSIS: Bridgewater Township Official Kathleen Doran-Norton showed on a map the flooding issues in Bridgewater Township. Over the past five years there have been three rainfall events over five inches. The township is looking to the district for help. Steve Pahs explained possible future projects using flood relief funds. Gary said insurance companies say in the last five years, we’ve had seven 100-year storms in Mn. Landowner easements, steep slopes, temporary ponding, low impact development, rain gardens. WSB plan, grant dollars, and soil health were also discussed. Kathleen thanked the board.

DAY AT THE CAPITOL and LEGISLATIVE BRIEFING. Jim and Gary attended the Legislative Briefing and Bob, Jim, Gary and Ashley went to the Day at the Capitol. They spoke with Representative Patti Fritz, Senator Vicki Jensen, Representative David Bly and Senator Kevin Dahle. MASWCD did a good job of lining up the legislative briefing and
handout. Ad Valorem taxing and other funding sources were explored to provide consistent funding sources. Only 70% of districts have decent funding and MN Association of Counties would be supportive of us going on our own.

**ENVIROTHON:** Just a reminder that the Envirothon will be May 7 in Faribault. Bob and Gary will be judges.

**SHORELAND BUFFERS AND SOIL ORDINANCE UPDATE:** Steve met with County staff to discuss shoreland rules and enforcement. County wants to handle this on a complaint basis. Discussion followed. Board would like to set up a meeting with county commissioners in the next two months. Steve to contact the county to set up a meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

**ACCEPT COLLIN SCHOENECKER’S RESIGNATION:** Collin Schoenecker gave his two week resignation notice and his last day will be April 17. He has taken a district technician position at Carver County SWCD. Collin thanked everyone for the opportunity to work here. Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Bob Duban to accept Collin Schoenecker’s resignation effective April 17. Board thanked Collin and wished him well in the future.

**WETLAND CONSERVATION ACT ADMINISTRATION:** Steve would like to wait to hire another WCA person and has talked to Tim Labs about contract work to fill the gap. Steve will discuss further with staff and put topic on May agenda. WCA workload is down.

**FARMBILL ASSISTANCE PARTNERSHIP APPLICATION:** Motion by Bob Duban, seconded by Jerry Courson to apply for the half-time Farm Bill Assistance Partnership Grant position starting July 1, 2014 to June 30, 2015. Ayes: Duban, Courson, Neirby, Purfeerst and Wagenbach. All aye. None Opposed. Motion carried.

**BIENNIAL BUDGET REQUEST (BBR):** This is the second time BWSR is requesting a biennial budget. Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Bob Duban to approve sending in the Biennial Budget Request after Steve puts the numbers together. Ayes: Duban, Courson, Neirby, Purfeerst and Wagenbach. All aye. None Opposed. Motion carried.

**STEWARDSHIP INSERTS:** Soil Stewardship inserts have been received by all the supervisors. Soil Stewardship Week is the last week in April and the first week in May.

**ELECTION FILING DATES May 20 – June 3:** Dale Neirby does not intend to run for re-election. Jim and Jerry will apply. Steve will put something on the website.

**AERIAL APPLICATION COVER CROPS:** Tom Coffman said they had 11 (seven were farmers) people in attendance at the last Soil Health Meeting at the 4-H building. Scott Churchill’s helicopter service could do about 200-300 acres per day for approximately $16 per acre. Our office could organize and put program together for a sign-up but farmers will contract with the helicopter service. May be able to get CRWP money for Rice Creek.

**SWCD POSITION ON STATUTE 273.117 CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROPERTY TAX REDUCTION:** A year ago legislature changes had conservation easement lands and cropland assessed at the same property tax rate. This will have a
negative effect on programs. Assessors in different counties handle this differently. Rice County CRP ground values and woodlands are less than cropland. Discussion followed.

**CRWP ENVIRONMENTAL CONSULTANT SERVICE CONTRACT:** District is trying to extend the BMP Nutrient Management Agreement for one year to extend funds as new application was not approved. CRWP has offered opportunity to do 220 target maps and other items in Rice and mainly Goodhue County totaling about 740 hours at $27.00 per hour covering $20,000 over the contract life. CRWP will reimburse for mileage and there is a 30 day opt out clause. Motion by Gary Wagenbach, seconded by Bob Duban to approve the Environmental Consultation Service Contract with CRWP. Ayes: Duban, Courson, Neirby, Purfeerst and Wagenbach. All aye. None Opposed. Motion carried.

**OTHER REPORTS:** None

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs:**
The past month has been busy with a variety of work. The MN Dept. of Ag. Water quality monitoring site has required several trips during snowmelt to collect samples. There has been many meetings, and some ditch activity has been taking place, mostly preparing for upcoming projects. I’ve been meeting with Rice County officials to discuss meeting with the County Commissioners later this year to discuss various topics including buffers, soil erosion, and water planning.

Other activity this past month:

- JD 6 meeting in Owatonna (two meetings)
- Soil Health meeting
- SE MN employees meeting in Altura
- Met w/Steve Penkava with JHS to review several ditch projects
- Met w/Julie Runkel to discuss soil erosion, buffers, etc.
- CD 9 construction check
- Met w/Kluver to plan basin layout for farm
- Used two days of vacation time
- Preparation for upcoming tree day
- Guest speaker at St. Olaf College class
- Set up booth at Northfield Home and Garden Show

The next month will hopefully be busy with ditch project work, tree distribution, and spring construction work. I will also continue to stay on top of budgeting, staff needs, etc. Northfield’s Earth Day on April 26th is another opportunity we will have to promote the district and I am planning to set up a display.

Steve also spoke on the structure for Bridgewater Township and DNR hydrologist’s map.
D.C. REPORT by Tom Coffman:

1. New Area Conservationist Dave Copeland began duties. He visited the office with all staff last Thursday. We look forward to working with him. He did offer his services to the board anytime they may want additional NRCS information.

2. Soil Health Issues:
   A.) Other topics at March 20th local group meeting were summer tour, crop insurance issues, possible no-till into PP acres.
   B). NRCS has national funding to perform soil tests for biology parameters, ie: the Haney Test. We have two farms submitted for Cannon City Twp Section 2 on the Pat Brown and Mark Bauer farms. We plan to take samples this spring prior to planting.
   C.) Dan Olson, MPR, contacted me yesterday about doing an in-field radio interview on soil health and water quality.

3. Honey Bee Pollinators: We recently received several documents on NRCS’s EQIP Honey Bee Pollinator Initiative.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS: Bob Duban has made reservations for the State of Water Conference May 1-2 at Cragun’s Resort in Brainerd. Gary said Gene Kuntz, retired ag business instructor from the vo-tech, will be starting at Cannon River Watershed Partnership. Legislature asked MDA to address the bee decline. Gary may have education meeting for SE Area Meeting on pollinators presented by Nancy Schumacher from the Northfield Garden Club and areas could be included in field tours. Tom said Curt Piper and Morris brothers have CSP pollinator enhancements and discussed docket for pollinators. Bee decline was discussed. Jim passed around the Steele County calendar. Jerry will attend the next BALMM meeting. Dale Neirby spent two weeks in Israel and spoke on food production, hoop houses, solar water heaters, and irrigation there.

FARM BILL TECHNICIAN REPORT by Ashley Tabery:

- Monitoring Site: Many visits to capture snowmelt runoff, download and upload data and pictures, etc.
- SEMACDE meeting at Whitewater State Park
- Meeting with Rice County Planning and Zoning on buffers, soil loss ordinance and other topics
- RIM application for Ohlsen’s
- Estrem’s survey with Elizabeth, permit application to MN DOT submitted and approved
- Legislative Day at the Capitol with Supervisors
- Farm Bill Assistance Partnership webinar, discussion on grant, and started gathering information for grant application
- Table at the Northfield Home and Garden Show
- Presentation to St Olaf students on the District’s purpose, and role as an LGU
- Training on working with women landowners and hosting workshops

Upcoming:
- Spring construction: Estrem, Klapperich, Strouth, Furlong, Sherwin, Donkers, Larson, Hoefs
- Submit FBAP application by May 9th
- Continue to collect samples and data from monitoring site
- Plan for, and start, No-till drill deliveries
- Finish RIM applications (site visits) for Ohlsen and Nielsen
- Presentation for Lonsdale Elementary Arbor Day celebration
- Assist with tree delivery and sorting
- Organize workshop on Pollinator Habitat…?

**NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST’S REPORT by Spencer Herbert:**

Over the last month I completed one new MMP for Micah Dicke (Goodhue). I have made significant progress on the plan for Casey Leonhardt (Wabasha), which is a new MMP. Casey may be applying for cost share for CAP 102 and 590 through EQIP, which would add a few steps. I should have the plan completed within a few days either way. I met with David Buck (Goodhue) who is in need of a new MMP for a new facility, along with an update of his current plan on his existing facility. I also spoke on the phone with Matt Hanson (Rice), who needs a new MMP. He is currently gathering records for me to prepare the plan.

I attended a two day Soil Mechanics training in Rochester, which proved to be valuable information. Along with Steve and Collin, I went to Fillmore County and attended their farm technology tour. We visited a dairy and also CPS in Harmony. I thought both stops were very beneficial and informative. Additionally, I attended CRWP’s Soil Health Day here in Faribault. It was a good gathering of farmers and agency employees, and provided great networking opportunities. Lastly, I was invited to attend and speak about nutrient management at a gathering in Wabasha County. They are forming a soil health advisory committee with local agronomists and crop advisors, who were in attendance as well. I spoke to them about nutrient management as seen from NRCS and what opportunities are available. I met with CRWP and have taken steps towards doing some contract work for them in order to extend my current grant funding dollars. Pending board approval, everything sounds like a go. I will be putting in approximately 40 hours a month on two main projects. I also found out that I passed my second and final CCA exam, which I took in February. I now need to complete some credentials documentation that will be sent to a local board for review and final approval.

Looking ahead: I should complete the Leonhardt plan soon. I will begin working on the plans for Buck and Hanson as well. I still need to get names from Wabasha on who needs 590 updates for this year. I will be helping with tree sorting as needed later this month. I also will help with any survey or layout needs, as spring construction season will be getting busy soon.

**RESOURCE SPECIALIST REPORT by Collin Schoenecker:**

**Past:**
- Finished PWP easement split, Sent to BWSR.
- Farm Technology Training.
- SEMACDE Meeting.
• Worked with landowners to determine RIM eligibility.
• Cleared out Monitoring site.
• Read MN DNR Obwells
• Staff meeting

I want to thank all of the board members for giving me the opportunity to be part of such a great staff.

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE: None

UPCOMING EVENTS: Tree Day will be April 25 at the Beer Gardens at the fairgrounds.

ADJOURN: Chairman Purfeerst adjourned the meeting at 11:30 am.

NEXT BOARD MEETING: Wednesday, May 14 at 9:00 am.

Respectfully submitted by:

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Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

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Jerry Courson - Board Secretary