PRESENT: Richard Cook, Tim Little, Jim Purfeerst, Steve Pahs, Travis Hirman, Justin Fuchs, Teresa DeMars, Debbie Skarupa, Leslie Diaz-Alvarez, Jenny Mocol-Johnson from BWSR and Rice County Commissioner Jeff Docken.

ABSENT: Mike Ludwig and Richard Peterson.

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

MINUTES: Motion by Tim Little, seconded by Richard Cook to approve the August 10, 2017 board minutes. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL/BILLS PAYABLE: Steve reviewed the financial statements. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the August Program Record and bills payable subject to audit. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:
FOREST STEWARDSHIP AWARD: Gary and Linda Wagenbach were presented the Forest Stewardship Award for 2017 for their woodlands in Nerstrand. They started 12 years ago with 27 acres in CRP Forest Legacy. Both seedlings and direct seeding were used and wildlife abound. Board congratulated Gary and Linda for their achievements. They will be nominated at the state level. Board received a copy of a write-up about the Wagenbachs from the August 2017 USDA Profiles in Conservation Newsletter.

75TH ANNIVERSARY TOUR: A bus tour was held August 24 showing conservation practices on the land to about 30 attendees. Teresa had a special tab made by the Faribault Daily News to insert in the newspapers that was paid for by contractors. It was very well received and tour was well done.

GOVERNOR DAYTON’S 25% BY 2025 WATER QUALITY GOAL: Travis Hirman went to the Mankato meeting and felt it had a good mix of people and discussions. Governor Dayton was there. More meetings are scheduled.

NEW BUSINESS:
APPROVE HIRING NEW TECHNICIAN: Motion by Tim Little, seconded by Richard Cook to authorize hiring Emmie Peters as the district technician starting at Range 24, Step 1 as of September 29 with a six-month probationary period. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.
**JD#6 DITCH CONCERN:** Jim Purfeerst was contacted by Brian Gillen about a private ditch crossing concern with backing up and washing out occurring at heavy rain events. Pipes were put in when 35W was built. Aerial photo was displayed. Discussion. Steve has invited Steele County Ditch Inspector to view it tomorrow. Steve will check with Kurt Deter about landlocking rules, will get two quotes and take to the Rice County Commissioners, as they are the Drainage Authority.

**CD RENEWAL RELIANCE BANK:** CD at Reliance Bank matured August 24. Rates were checked at four banking institutions and CD was renewed at Reliance bank on August 28 for 25 months at 1.28 percent interest.

**BWSR 2018/2019 PROGRAMS GRANT:** Some general grants are being done on a two-year basis now with 2019 grants being paid next year. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the BWSR 2018-2019 Programs and Operations Grant Agreement. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**BUFFER POLICY C-S RECOMMENDATIONS:** Steve reviewed a Buffer Policy sheet that some districts are using. Discussion. The word “native” seeding was taken out and rates were changed to $300/ac for natives and $150/ac for grasses. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the Buffer Cost-Share Policy with revisions to seeding requirements and different rates for native/regular grasses. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**SUPERVISOR COMPENSATION:** Supervisors are paid a per diem for meetings, committee meetings, our tours, etc., but local soil health group meetings have not been paid for. Other cover crop and soil health tours/meetings have been gray areas and clarity is needed. Discussion. Jenny Mocol-Johnson suggested not exceeding the training budget. Local soil health group meetings will continue to be unpaid. Supervisors can put other meetings/tours on their timesheets for payment or enter “0” if they choose not to be paid.

**BWSR WORK ORDER CONTRACT FOR RIM/CREP $3,550.00:** BWSR is changing how SWCD’s are reimbursed for easement work. More reporting is being required and invoices will be sent in. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the BWSR Work Order Contract expiring 01/31/22 for RIM/CREP for $3,550.00 for easement delivery. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**CANCEL RAIN GARDEN C-S CONTRACTS:** Pete Fryer suggested not doing two of the rain gardens due to infiltration issues. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to cancel the following two rain garden cost-share contracts:

- RG17-09 Dante Rand-8415 Hennepin Way Morristown-Rain Garden - Up to $1,000.00.
- RG17-07 Dan & Karen Rasmussen-1217 Mitchell Drive-Faribault-Rain Garden-Up to $1,000.00

Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. This was 2017 District Local Capacity Funding.
SCOTT WMO #16-35 CURT OLSON PROJECT CERTIFICATION FORM: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the Project Certification Form to Scott WMO for:

WMO16-35 Curt Olson-4195 40 St. W-Webster-Section 4-Native Grasses-13.2 acres-1st half incentive payment $16,300.00.

Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

WCA FY 2016 CLOSEOUT: Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the Fiscal Year 2016 WCA Grant for $24,238.00 closeout form. New reporting is being required. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

AREA 7 SEMASWD FALL JOINT MEETING: The Area 7 SEMASWCD Fall Joint Meeting will be held at the Hormel Nature Center on September 20, 2017. Contact Steve Pahs if you’d like to attend or carpool.

MASWCD RESOLUTION BALLOT: Supervisors to vote on resolution ballot so master ballot can be returned to MASWCD before the November 1st deadline.

FURNITURE OPTIONS: Steve reviewed new furniture options. Can use 2017 Local Capacity Funding for Deb’s and Teresa’s desks. Costs would be approximately $1,500 per unit. A different building and separate spaces if NRCS has a government shutdown were discussed. Good to be in same area with NRCS and FSA. Motion by Richard Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the furniture purchase as decided by the manager and staff. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

BWSR ACADEMY TRAINING: Motion by Tim Little, seconded by Richard Cook to approve BWSR Academy Training for interested staff. Ayes: Richard Cook, Tim Little, and Jim Purfeerst. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS: Tim Little mentioned the aerial seeding happening this week. Rates for five-way mix are 16#s oats, 15#s triticale, 1# kale, 2#s rapeseed, and 2#s common vetch. They are mixing their own in semis. Worm activity is crazy with 3 to 4 hills per square foot. Increases in organic matter gains much greater drainage capacity.

ACTING D.C. REPORT by Leslie Diaz-Alvarez:

Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP-EQIP)
- Minnesota Agricultural Water Quality Certification- Funding pool
- Lower Mississippi River Feedlot Management in Minnesota- Funding pool
  - Application acceptance deadline for FY 2018 funding will be on Friday, March 2, 2018.

Conservation Compliance/Planning (plans, tract splits, 1026’s)
- Received 5 AD-1026 requests this month and addressed 54 previous/current AD-1026 requests
  - Completed 9 - Maintenance Requests
  - Completed 7- Small Area Exceptions (open land into production)
  - Completed 38- Highly Erodible Land determinations
Client Gateway

- We would like to keep promoting the Client Gateway. This is a secure NRCS website which provides online access to conservation assistance for farmers and ranchers 24/7.

Conservation Stewardship Program (CSP)

- NRCS accepts CSP applications on a continuous basis.
- 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. Adopting CSP enhancements can help to achieve a higher level of conservation. The CSP is a 5-year contract.

Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP)-

- NRCS is conducting site needs- structural projects

Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP) - Restore, protect, and enhance wetland.

- NRCS conducted 2 site monitoring’s- (Geo-Reference Points and Photos)

DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT by Steve Pahs:

Steve said workloads were changed a bit due to Bridget leaving. Travis Hirman is doing CRP evaluations and written contracts. We are looking forward to bringing on our new employee, Emmie Peters, who starts September 29. Steve rode in the Jessie James Day Parade and handed out seed packets. Board thanked him.

RESOURCE SPECIALIST REPORT by Justin Fuchs: Justin reviewed two restoration orders, the dirt bike issue, RIM/WRP project, and his report.

- Multiple meetings with landowner about wetland fill and on-site wetland replacement.
- Met with landowner about wetland concerns on property.
- Met with drainage company about a number of potential tiling projects in and around wetlands.
- Multiple meetings with wetland delineator about Heyer Solar Garden located in Morristown Township.
- Conservation tour.
- Met with homeowner’s association about four-wheeler trail near wetlands.
- Meeting with landowners about wetland restorations on degraded wetlands in Richland Township.
- A couple anonymous complaints about potential wetland activity.
- A number of inquiries about Rain Garden updates.
- DNR Well observations.
- A number of wetland questions from various landowners around the county.
NUTRIENT MANAGEMENT SPECIALIST by Travis Hirman:
  • Attended the two-day “dirt rich” soil health training.
  • Gave two presentations on buffer updates, one we hosted at the Faribault Public Works Building and one at the Rice Farm Bureau meeting.
  • Attended the 25 by 25 town hall meeting and MDA listening session in Mankato.
  • Rice SWCD 75th anniversary tour.
  • Began working on CRP contracts.
  • Continued to work with landowners to implement the buffer law.
  • Looking ahead: I plan to spend much of September working on CRP in Bridget’s absence. I will also continue to implement the buffer law which will include another round of letters.

Travis said he is focusing on CRP until the end of the month and will do another letter to about 105 landowners about the buffer deadline. Twenty or so attended the last buffer meeting. Jeff Docken said Travis did a nice job speaking at the last buffer meeting.

PUBLIC RELATIONS & INFO SPECIALIST: Teresa was commended for her work on the 75th Anniversary Tour and Ag insert in the newspapers. She will be speaking at the Historical Society. Plans to start school outreach this fall and get some subjects in the schools.

OTHER/ADDITIONAL STAFF COMMENTS: National Association of Conservation District’s Convention will be in Nashville this year. Jenny Mocol-Johnson mentioned BWSR Academy and grant allocations. Jeff Docken said public meeting for buffers will be October 5 at the Planning Commission level. Document copy will be on the Rice County website. Rice County Auditor Fran Windschitl will be retiring this month. Jeff Docken said some of Frans’s duties will be split. Fran did a great job and will be missed. Jenny Mocol-Johnson spoke on 1W1P updates and upcoming meetings.

UPCOMING EVENTS: Plowville Tour is September 19 from 8:30 to 3:00 p.m.

SOIL HEALTH TOPIC: Travis showed a video entitled “Soil Carbon Curious” about how grazing management affects climate change. They felt if cattle are moved more often onto cover crops, it improves soil health and animal health.

ADJOURN: Chairman Purfeerst adjourned the meeting. Time: 10:55 a.m.

Submitted by: ____________________________________________________________
  Debbie Skarupa – Admin. Assistant

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  Board Secretary - Timothy J. Little