Rice Soil and Water Conservation District
1810 30th St. NW  Faribault, MN 55021
Phone: (507) 332-5408  www.riceswcd.org

RICE S.W.C.D.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY – November 13, 2019 - 9:00 AM

BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT: Mike Ludwig, Dick Peterson, Dick Cook, Jim Purfeerst and Tim Little.

Others in attendance: Steve Pahs, Travis Hirman, Chris Schmidt, Jarett Spitzack, Teresa DeMars, Jeff Docken

Absent:

Chairman Dick Peterson called the meeting to order at 9:00 am. A quorum is present.

MINUTES: Motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Tim Little to approve the October 9, 2019 minutes. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

FINANCIAL/BILLS PAYABLE: October program summary was reviewed. October bills payable reviewed.

Motion by Dick Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the October program summary and October bills payable, as presented, subject to audit. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OLD BUSINESS:

CONSENT AGENDA:

A. Faribault Woolen Mill – DRAP 14-02 - $90,000.00: request tabling this item until December Board meeting as some itemized expenses are waiting approval from BWSR.

A motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Dick Cook to table the consent agenda items listed above until the December Board meeting. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

B. Scott WMO – Ben Bartusek – approve CS payment - $415.00
C. Scott WMO – Ben Bartusek – approve Conservation Cover payment - $3712.50
D. Anthony Kuchinka – approve 2nd cover crop payment – LC18-09 - $408.00
E. Roger Bongers – approve 1st cover crop payment – LC19-02 - $1680.00

A motion by Dick Cook, seconded by Tim Little to approve the consent agenda items listed above. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:
ERIC DEBRUZZI CONTRACT – APPROVE: it has been requested that this contract be tabled until the December Board meeting.

A motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Tim Little to table the Eric DeBruzzi contract until the December Board meeting. All aye. None opposed.

MASWCD STATE CONVENTION DEC 8-10, 2019: Who is planning to attend part or all of the State Convention? This is an excellent opportunity for networking and luncheon on Tuesday is to honor the outstanding conservationist award winners. Registration deadline is November 27th.

GRANT CLOSEOUT – 2018 BUFFER CS - $200.00 RETURN TO BWSR:

A motion by Dick Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the 2018 Buffer CS grant closeout and return of $200.00 to BWSR. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

CRWP ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES - $50.00:

A motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Tim Little to approve the annual CRWP membership dues of $50.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

2017 CS GRANT EXTENSION REQUEST: a grant extension request has been filed with BWSR because there is one project that will not be completed due to the early cold temperatures. The grant extension paperwork was not received before the board meeting so District Manager is asking for authorization to sign that paperwork when it is received from BWSR.

A motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Tim Little to authorize the district manager to sign the 2017 CS Grant extension when it is received from BWSR. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

TIM WOLFF – CS17-04, $3900.00 – CONTRACT AMENDMENT: this cost share contract will not be completed before the grant deadline due to the early cold temperatures. This contract end date will be amended upon approval from BWSR to extend the grant. The District Manager is asking for authorization to sign the contract amendment upon approval from BWSR on the grant extension request.

A motion by Dick Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to authorize the District Manager to sign the contract amendment pending approval from BWSR on the grant extension. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MDA GRANT OPPORTUNITY FOR CANNON RIVER AG COLLABORATIVE: $25,000: there is a group working together to develop a working relationship between public and private entities to promote conservation.

A motion by Dick Cook, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to authorize the District Manager to enter a partnership with MDA for the Cannon River Ag Collaborative once the contract language is received. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

AUTHORIZE MANAGER TO SIGN SUB-RECIPIENT AGREEMENT WITH SE JPB: A sub-agreement is needed because the funds currently go to the SE JPB and Rice SWCD works with the producer. Rice SWCD would pay the producer when the funds are received from SE JPB>
A motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Tim Little to authorize the District Manager to sign the sub-recipient agreement with SE JPB when it becomes available. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**INTERSEEDER PROGRAM: DISCUSS 2020 PROGRAM DIRECTION:** The 2020 Capacity Grant workplan will be submitted in December. If the cover crop grant gets approved, some of that money can be used to expand the interseeder program. If the cover crop grant does not get approved, then 2020 Capacity money will need to be used.

The cover crop grant funding status should be known around mid-December. Funding could be all or partial.

Discussion about upgrading the interseeder from a broadcast type to a drill type seeder. A drill type seeder would be about $25,000.00. There currently isn’t enough demand to support two interseeders.

The current machine is easy to operate, does a nice job, easy to maneuver so crops aren’t run over. It is felt that the current machine needs to be run another year or two and focus on increasing the acreage in the program.

District Manager will bring back more recommendations to the December meeting. Capacity money is not allowed to be used for existing services, must be new.

**JARETT SPITZACK – PROBATIONARY PERIOD ENDS: CONSIDER FULL TIME PERMANENT STATUS:**

District manager informed the board that Jarett has been doing very well since he started working with us. Jeff Docken, Rice County Commissioner, reports that he has heard favorable comments about Jarett from the community regarding his knowledge and how he conducts himself. District Manager sees no reason to not move Jarett to full-time, permanent status.

A motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Dick Cook to move Jarett Spitzack to full-time, permanent status. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**PERSONNEL COMMITTEE: SCHEDULE ANNUAL REVIEWS:** The District Manager would like to complete all staff annual reviews by the December Board meeting. He will work with Personnel Committee to schedule a date and time.

**SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**

Mike Ludwig: attended the workshop at Mike Peterson’s in October. Representatives from various state departments were in attendance. Discussion about climate change. Great demonstrations. Attendees seemed very interested and involved.

Dick Cook: meeting with 1W1P, trying to keep the process moving forward. This grant could provide more opportunities on the ground. The next meeting is in January.

Tim Little: also in attendance at Mike Peterson’s in October, nothing more to add. Had to cancel his speaking engagement with Carleton college due to a conflict. John Becker was asked by Representative Todd Lippert to see his farm and conservation practices. He seems to be very interested in what we are doing.
Jim Purfeerst: no-till beans running about 8/10ths less than conventional tillage. Was looking on our website for contractors to seed water-ways. Goodhue County has a crimper to rent that will help anchor the mulch. Asked if anybody was planning to attend the conservation tillage workshop in St. Cloud on December 17th and 18th. Tim Little spoke at this workshop last year when it was held in Fargo.

Dick Peterson: been a fairly quiet month other than the Zumbro 1W1P meeting in which he participated in a prioritization exercise. There are regional meetings planned in December. The next committee meeting will be in December.

**NRCS REPORT presented by Chris Schmidt, Soil Conservationist:**

**General:**
- New SE Area Engineer, Nichole Sternquist, started 11/12/19
- Chris and Leslie each spending a day/week in Jordan FO
- Conservation Desktop training has started-replaces customer service toolkit
- MN NRCS state Conservationist was scheduled to be in Rice County Nov 7, had to cancel due to another meeting that came up

**Farm Bill Updates:**

**EQIP:**
- All unfunded 2019 EQIP applications have been deferred to 2020-mailed letters
- The 24 unfunded cover crop for fallow fields applications were mailed a letter
- No 2020 EQIP dates have been announced yet

**RCPP-EQIP:**
- New five-year RCPP-EQIP agreement for MN approved for $9 million for MAWQCP

**CREP:**
- 2 CREP applications received and both were approved-being processed

**CRP:**
- Potential general sign-up in December

**WETLAND/HEL:**
- Rice County has 16 drainage requests awaiting a certified wetland determination from the wetland team

**ACEP (WRP/RIM):**
- Sticha WRP contracts wetland restoration completed a couple weeks ago, inter-seeding planned for Fall 2019, ownership change and contract transfer are complete

**CSP:**
- No 2020 dates announced yet
- Working on mods and annual payments

**Upcoming Events/Deadlines:**
- Chris is attending an NRCS/FSA joint CRP training in Alexandria Nov 18 & 19
- Geology investigation training Nov 20 in Stewartville
- Chris will be attending the MASWCD convention Dec 9 & 10

**DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT:**

Since the last meeting, I’ve been working on a variety of things. I spent some time on putting together a cover crop grant application for the Cannon Watershed. I’ve also been doing a little drainage work, and
several meetings on the One Watershed plans for the Cannon and Zumbro. I attended BWSR Academy and picked up a lot of useful information that I will incorporate into my budgeting, policy updates, and much more. I’ve also been helping plan the December 5th event on groundwater and soil health. Jarett Spitzack will complete his six-month probationary period on November 13th, and I am recommending he be granted permanent full-time status.

Other meetings and events I attended are:
- MN Dept of Ag media event at Mike Peterson farm
- Carleton College educator event at Legvold farm
- Train the Trainer session for Lawns to Legumes program in Mankato

Coming up is the Zumbro water plan meeting on the 14th, a Crop insurance incentives meeting on the 15th, and I may attend the statewide managers meeting next week. Into December, more 1W1P meetings, the state convention, which I will also be attending the leadership summit on Sunday, annual employee reviews will be completed before the next meeting, and I will continue to track the budget and recommend a final budget in December.

Doug Nopar from Land Stewardship Project has been inquiring if we want to partner with them on a workshop this winter. General consensus is no, as the last workshop didn’t go as expected.

The repair on the wetland structure near Ahlman’s gun Shop in Morristown has been completed.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Teresa DeMars: attended BWSR Academy where she attended some good sessions. Presented a session and received good feedback. Spoke at 1st Career Day in front of 300 9th graders. It went well. Two more presentations left. Working on materials to launch the 2020 tree sales in December. We are mailing a postcard and the information will be in the Rice County Newsletter.

Travis Hirman: attended Lawns 2 Legumes training with Emmie and Steve. Helped CRWP sample biomass from Jim Purfeerst’s farm. Worked in Freeborn County, moved the drill some and took a couple vacations.

Jarett Spitzack: attended BWSR Academy where he learned quite a bit. Found the experience neat. Helped CRWP harvest biomass at Jim Purfeerst’s farm. Caught up on delineation reviews. Will be hunting out of state next week.

**ADJOURN:** Motion by Tim Little, seconded by Mike Ludwig to adjourn the meeting. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Time 10:55 am.

Submitted by:

Sue Erpenbach – Admin. Assistant

Richard J. Peterson

Board Member – Richard Peterson