Rice Soil and Water Conservation District

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RICE S.W.C.D.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY – January 8, 2020 - 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 Tim Little called the meeting to order at 9:00 am.  A quorum is present.

MINUTES:  Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Dick Cook to approve the December 11, 2019 minutes.  All aye.  None opposed.  Motion carried.

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

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

Discussion: the interseeder and no-till drill expenses and income will be reflected on separate lines on the financial report moving forward.

OLD BUSINESS: none

CONSENT AGENDA:

   A.  Hilary Scheffler cover crop payment – WMO#18-33 - $2,080.00
   B.  Travis Scheffler cover crop payment – WMO#18-30 - $1,830.00

A motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the consent agenda items listed above.  All aye.  None opposed.  Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS:

ELECT OFFICERS FOR 2020:

A motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to approve the election of officers for 2020. All aye. None opposed.
COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS FOR 2020:
A motion by Tim Little, seconded by Jim Purfeerst to accept the 2020 committee assignments. All aye. None opposed.

2020 IRS MILEAGE RATE REIMBURSEMENT ESTABLISHMENT:
A motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Dick Cook to accept the 2020 IRS mileage reimbursement rate of .575. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

DESIGNATE FARIBAULT DAILY NEWS AS THE OFFICIAL NEWSPAPER:
A motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Mike Ludwig to approve the Faribault Daily News as the Official Newspaper. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

DESIGNATE FIRST UNITED BANK AS THE OFFICIAL DEPOSITORY:
A motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Mike Ludwig to approve First United Bank as the Official Depository. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

MASWCD ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP:
A motion by Jim Purfeerst, seconded by Dick Cook to approve payment of the 2020 MASWCD Dues of $5,056.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

2014 MINNESOTA FLOOD RELIEF GRANT CLOSEOUT – FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT, RETURN FUNDS - $9,984.08:
A motion by Dick Cook, seconded by Mike Ludwig to approve the final financial report and return of $9,984.08 unused funds to BWSR for the 2014 Minnesota Flood Relief Grant. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

2018 BUFFER LAW ($20,000.00) GRANT CLOSEOUT – FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT:

2019 BUFFER LAW ($20,000.00) GRANT CLOSEOUT – FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT:
A motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the closeout and final financial reports for the 2018 and 2019 Buffer Law Grants. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

2017 LOCAL CAPACITY GRANT CLOSEOUT – FINAL FINANCIAL REPORT:
A motion by Tim Little, seconded by Dick Cook to approve the closeout and final financial report for the 2017 Local Capacity Grant. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

OPERATIONAL HANDBOOK UPDATES: updates to the operational handbook for 2020 include; changing language regarding Holiday office closing to coincide with the Federal Government Offices if they are closed, as well as clarification about our office remaining open in the event of a Federal Government shutdown due to lack of funding. Adding language regarding discount for non-profits on tree orders. Adding language regarding the interseeder program. Also updating Appendix A to include interseeder rates. Removing staff member who no longer works in our agency from the manual.
A motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Mike Ludwig to approve the updates to the operational handbook as listed. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**ENGINEERING JOB APPROVAL AUTHORITY FOR EMMIE PETERS:**

**DIANE BAUER COST SHARE CONTRACT CS20-01 APPROVAL:**

A motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Dick Peterson to table the Engineering Job Approval Authority for Emmie Peters and the Diane Bauer Cost Share contract CS20-01 approval until the next meeting. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**CRWP COST SHARE CONTRACT FOR MARK LEGVOLD – COVER CROPS $822.50:** this is a one-year contract for one field, funded by CRWP.

A motion by Mike Ludwig, seconded by Dick Cook to approve the CRWP Cost Share cover crop contract for Mark Legvold - $822.50. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**2019 AUDIT ENGAGEMENT LETTER – PETERSON COMPANY LTD - $3075.00:**

A motion by Dick Cook, seconded by Dick Peterson to approve the 2019 audit engagement letter with Peterson Company Ltd for $3,075.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**FINAL MARKETING REPORT:** Teresa DeMars presented her final marketing report for 2019. There has been an overall increase in interest to our website and social media sites.

**SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**

Mike Ludwig: Mike had a recent conversation with Ed Terry, who is the Ag teacher at Randolph high school regarding their crop test plots planned for the spring. Mike suggested this would be a great chance to get involved with cover cropping, interseeder and soil health and bringing it to the student level. He will visit more with Ed. Enjoyed the holidays with family.

Jim Purfeerst: attended the Conservation Tillage conference in St. Cloud. Felt it was a good presentation and made some connections. Working with 2 different reporters on pros and cons of interseeding and cover crops. Asked if any staff will be attending the upcoming FarmBill trainings.

Dick Cook: enjoyed the holidays abroad with family. Takes what he has learned from being a board supervisor and looks at practices while abroad with family. Sometimes sees some discouraging practices. 1W1P meeting on January 15th to establish the Joint Powers Board for the implementation phase. May decide on fiscal and administrative responsibilities.

Dick Peterson: pretty quiet since last meeting, however, did attend the Zumbro 1W1P meeting. They handed out a priority rankings list and groundwater/drinking water is #1 priority.

Tim Little: attended the St. Cloud Conservation tillage conference. Felt it was a good conference. Looking for a different venue for the next meeting; maybe something further south, like Minneapolis area. Feels this would be a good conference to send the District Conservationist Award Winner to. He
said the keynote speaker is a soil scientist from Manitoba. This speaker said the issues they are facing now is that the topsoil is no longer on top of the hills but now at the bottom. Had fun working with reporter for the article in the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

NRCS REPORT presented by Chris Schmidt, Soil Conservationist:

**General:**
- Chris and Leslie each spending a day/week in Jordan FO
- Conservation Desktop training has started, additional trainings to be held-replaces customer service toolkit

**Farm Bill Updates:**

**EQIP:**
- All unfunded 2019 EQIP applications have been deferred to 2020-mailed letters
- 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:**
- General CRP sign-up started Dec 9-Feb 28
- CCRP started as well Dec 9
- New MOA for NRCS & FSA-NRCS will certify 100% of new seedings, 100% on-site establishment status reviews in year 2, and 100% on-site O&M verification for all CRP contracts within 1-3 years of contract expiration

**WETLAND/HEL:**
- Rice County has 14 drainage requests awaiting a certified wetland determination from the wetland team

**ACEP (WRP/RIM):**
- Sticha WRP contracts wetland restoration completed and invoice submitted-Leslie will be submitting for C/S reimbursement, inter-seeding still to be completed

**CSP:**
- No 2020 dates announced yet
- Working on mods and 2019 annual payments-3 contracts in Rice County still need 2019 payment
- MN still hasn't received all CSP funds for obligations and payments

**Upcoming Events/Deadlines:**
Chris attending part 2 Conservation Desktop training Jan 10 in Gaylord
Joint NRCS/FSA CRP training Jan 16

**DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT:** met with Jeff Schultz from South Central College regarding learning more about the economics of farming. Jeff may be able to give a presentation at a future meeting. Also interested in helping establish cover crop plots for demonstration and educational purposes.

Received a report from the nitrate sampling at the Rice Creek Project. Data shows that where the cover crops are planted, the nitrate concentration is significantly lower in the tile lines compared to non cover crops. Steve will have Al Krause summarize at an upcoming meeting.

On February 6th, there is a Cover Crop 101 meeting at 6:30 pm at the Forest Town Hall. The meeting is geared toward beginner farmers. Will advertise by word of mouth and targeted mailing.

Next week has a meeting with NRCS and someone from the State Office to discuss the building lease.

There is a parcel of land for sale next to Caron Park. About 70 acres. How could we get that land wrapped into the county to expand Caron Park. It would make a great addition to the park. Steve will speak with Gary Wagenbach.

**STAFF REPORTS:**

Emmie Peters: attended some trainings. Working with Nichole on job approval authority. Planning a meeting on February 10th for beginning farmers. Working with FSA, SWCD, NRCS. Working on two Circle Lake Projects. Seeking opinions on one of the projects.

Jarett Spitzack: working on delineations and some replacement plans. Questions about the dos and don'ts of wetlands are increasing.

Teresa DeMars: took some time off over the holidays. Has a meeting in Mankato for outreach efforts. 4 events coming up in February so working on the promotional materials, etc. Will be speaking at the Rotary meeting on Feb 5th.

Travis Hirman: attended a meeting for the Water Quality Program. Collected info for the Rice Creek Project. Used vacation time.

Jeff Docken: took vacation over the holidays. Feels that working with Ed Terry at Randolph High School would benefit our county because students from Northfield attend Randolph. He has a great program.

**ADJOURN:** Motion by Dick Peterson, seconded by Mike Ludwig to adjourn the meeting. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Time 10:42 am.

Submitted by:

Sue Erpenbach – Admin. Assistant

Board Member – Tim Little