

## Rice Soil and Water Conservation District

302 1<sup>st</sup> Ave NW Faribault, MN 55021  
Phone: (507) 332-5408 [www.riceswcd.org](http://www.riceswcd.org)

RICE S.W.C.D.

### REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY – May 14, 2025 – 8:00 am

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT:** Roger Bongers, Richard Peterson, Al Malecha, Gene Kuntz

Others in attendance: Steve Pahs, Al Kraus, Teresa DeMars, Commissioner Charlie Peters, Commissioner Jim Purfeerst, Taylor O'Bryan NRCS, Cody Holubeck NRCS, Taylor Carlson FSA

Absent: John Larson

Meeting called to order at 8:00 am by Chairman Roger Bongers.

#### **April Board Minutes:**

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the April board minutes as written. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

#### **April financial statement and bills payable:**

The district manager reviewed the financial statement.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the April financial statement and bills payable, subject to audit. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:** No old business.

#### **CONSENT AGENDA: (payment approval):**

- A. Jack Schwab SHD 25-06, continuous no-till and strip-till - \$1,480.00
- B. John Becker CRP 24-08-CC, cover crops - \$3,617.25
- C. John Becker CRP 24-09-CC, cover crops - \$700.00
- D. Joe Hollinger SHD 25-02, cover crops - \$1,950.00

A motion by Al Malecha, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the consent agenda items. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

#### **NEW BUSINESS:**

- A. **Tyrone David LC23-02-CS, WASCOB \$10,575.00 – cancel contract - action:**

Landowner passed away, rental agreement is ending, family looking to sell land, so Tyrone is asking to cancel the project.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to cancel the Tyrone David LC23-02-CS WASCOB

contract for \$10,575.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**B. Dan Forcelle 25-RC-001, 3-year cover crop contract - \$2,970.00 - action:**

This is a 3-year cover crop contract on 22 acres. Funded thru the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the Dan Forcelle 25-RC-001 3-year cover crop contract for \$2,970.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**C. Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-003, 3-year no-till planting - \$585.00 - action:**

This is a 3-year no-till planting contract on 13 acres. Funded thru the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-003 3-year no-till planting contract for \$585.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**D. Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-004, 3-year cover crops - \$1,755.00 – action:**

This contract is a 3-year cover crop contract on 13 acres for \$1,755.00. Funded thru the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

A motion by Al Malecha, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-004 3-year cover crop contract for \$1,755.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**E. Steve Devney CRP24-22-CC, 1-year cover crop contract - \$2,597.00 - action:**

This contract is a 1-year cover crop contract on 74.2 acres. Funded thru Clean River Partners.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the Steve Devney CRP24-22-CC 1-year cover crop contract for \$2,597.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**F. Charlie Albers CRP24-23-CC, 1-year cover crop contract - \$3,920.00 – action:**

This contract is a 1-year cover crop contract on 112 acres. Funded thru Clean River Partners.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the Charlie Albers CRP12-23-CC 1-year cover crop contract for \$3,920.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**G. Acoustic panel purchase - \$1,222.06 - information:**

The District Manager spoke with the building owner who has agreed to pay for half of the cost of the panels. Panels were purchased and installed.

**H. Well sealing policy - action:**

The Lower MN River East Watershed has well-sealing as a work plan item, however, the LGU's are to use their own well sealing policies. The District Manager reviewed our policy with the board.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the well-sealing policy with changes to the first sentence of abandoned wells on abandoned farms, and 75% up to \$3,000.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**I. Sponsor Northfield Envirothon Team at State Competition - action:**

The Northfield High School Envirothon Team placed 2<sup>nd</sup> at the area competition and will be competing at the State Competition to be held at the Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center. The area SWCD employee's group is sponsoring \$300 per team.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to match the Area SWCD group's sponsorship of \$300.00 to the Northfield High School Envirothon team for their trip to the state competition. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**J. Grant authority to District Manager to approve soil health practices - action:**

The District Manager is requesting the authority to approve soil health practice contracts that are time-sensitive. Contracts that are not time-sensitive would still be brought before the board for approval. Time-sensitive contracts approved by the district manager would be listed under consent agenda on the next board meeting.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to grant authority to the District Manager to approve time-sensitive soil health practices contracts on a trial basis, for the remainder of this year. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**K. Review eligible practices for RCPP grant - information:**

RCPP eligible practices were reviewed. Some of the practices were removed because SWCD staff do not have job approval authority to sign off on those practices. The list will be reviewed again.

**L. Jack Schwab SWCD 25-01, 1-year cover crops - \$1,192.00 – action:**

This is a 1-year cover crop contract on 29.8 acres. Funded thru SWCD Aid money.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the Jack Schwab SWCD 25-01 1-year cover crop contract for \$1,192.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**M. Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-005, 1-year cover crops - \$300.00 – action:**

This contract is a 1-year cover crop contract on 7.5 acres for \$300.00. Funded thru the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-005, 1-year cover crop contract for \$300.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**N. Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-006, 3-year perennial crops - \$1,001.40 – action:**

This contract is a 3-year perennial crops contract on 16.69 acres for \$1,001.40. Funded thru the Cannon

River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the Tony Kuchinka 25-RC-006, 3-year perennial crops contract for \$1,001.40. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**O. Jesse Kuchinka 25-RC-002, 3-year perennial crops - \$576.00 – action:**

This contract is a 3-year perennial crops contract on 9.6 acres for \$576.00. Funded thru the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the Jesse Kuchinka 25-RC-002, 3-year perennial crops contract for \$576.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**P. John Thomas CRP24-20-CC, 1-year cover crop - \$1,799.00 – action:**

This contract is a 1-year cover crop contract on 51.4 acres. Funded thru Clean River Partners.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve the John Thomas CRP24-20-CC, 1-year cover crop contract for \$1,799.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**Q. John Thomas CRP24-21-CC, 1-year cover crop - \$2,100.00 – action:**

This contract is a 1-year cover crop contract on 60 acres. Funded thru Clean River Partners.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the John Thomas CRP24-21-CC, 1-year cover crop contract for \$2,100.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**NRCS REPORT:**

Taylor O'Bryan presented the following report:



May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2025

## NRCS Report for the Rice SWCD Board Meeting

### **General:**

- ⇒ Taylor, Cody, and Lucas are working out of the Faribault Office
- ⇒ Chris is working out of the office a few days a week, will be in other offices in our team the rest of the time.
- ⇒ Staffing changes in NRCS team - going to 3 planners per team
- ⇒ State Conservationist Troy Daniel toured Kelm's Dairy on April 30th
- ⇒ Marlene's last day was two weeks ago
- ⇒ Cody and Taylor went to Planting Green training at the Legvold family farm on May 5th
- ⇒ Taylor went to Tree/Shrub site Preparation Establishment training on May 8th

### **Farm Bill Updates:**

#### **CSP:**

- ⇒ FY25 Sign Up 1 Deadline is past, we are taking applications for sign up 2
- ⇒ CSP SU1 Ranking Deadline was March 21<sup>st</sup> – 13 applications selected in Rice county

#### **EQIP:**

- ⇒ EQIP sign up 1 deadline is past. Producers can still sign up under sign up 2 for potential funding this year.
- ⇒ All IRA applications from this year on hold – can not make contracts. Rice county has 10 selected applications affected. – rumblings this money could come back
- ⇒ All contracts that can be obligated have been in Rice County

#### **CRP:**

- ⇒ Until a new Farm Bill or other legislation is passed, CRP applications and approvals are at a halt.
- ⇒ We are beginning year 3 and expiration spot checks that will continue though the summer.

#### **WETLAND/HEL:**

- ⇒ Rice County has 20 requests awaiting HEL determination for new land from the compliance team
- ⇒ Rice County has 21 requests awaiting a certified wetland determination from the compliance team

#### **Upcoming Events/Deadlines:**

- Making a new contract between SWCD and NRCS – in the works – waiting on final approval

## **FSA report presented by Taylor Carlson:**

Taylor presented the following report:



### **Rice County, Minnesota**

2800 1<sup>st</sup> Avenue NW, Suite 500  
Faribault, MN 55021  
Taylor.Carlson@usda.gov  
(507) 332-7418 ext 108

TO: Rice County Soil and Water Conservation District Board

FROM: Rice County Farm Service Agency

SUBJECT: May 2025 Board Meeting

### **Old Business**

#### Emergency Commodity Assistance

- These payments help producers mitigate the impacts of increased input costs and falling commodity prices.
- The acreage is taken from the reported 2024 acres.
- Open now until August 15, 2025.

#### Producer Changes

- Farm ownership or operator changes should be reported to FSA in order to update records. County assessor and county recorder to not notify federal offices of these changes.
- Bank account updates can be made by providing a voided check to your local FSA office.
- Contact information can be updated in-person or electronically by the individual.

### **New Business**

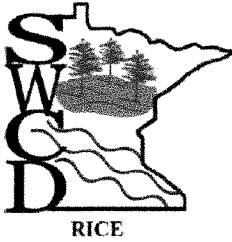
#### Acreage Certification

- Maps can begin to be requested by producers by email, phone or in-person pick up.
- July 15<sup>th</sup> is the reporting deadline, but we appreciate early completion.

#### County Committee (COC) Meeting; Regular sessions are open to the public (0:15-0:30)

- June 10<sup>th</sup> at 8:30AM is the next Rice COC Meeting.
- May 14<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM is the next Le Sueur COC Meeting.

**DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT:**



**Rice Soil and Water Conservation District**

1810 30<sup>th</sup> St. NW Faribault, MN 55021  
Phone: (507) 332-5408 [www.riceswcd.org](http://www.riceswcd.org)

May 2025 District Manager's Report

The past month has been busy with preparation for the tree distribution, tree week, and preparing for spring work including interseeding and new soil health contracts. We picked up the soil health trailer from BWSR and I'm working on getting the title transfer done. We held an open house on April 30<sup>th</sup> and had light attendance.

Other activity this past month:

- Completed US Census wage report
- Sold the Chevy Traverse and received \$2250 more than the trade value
- Took delivery of the new Chevy Silverado
- Met with Conservation Agronomist Dean Frank to collaborate on advancing conservation work
- Collected and tested 32 water samples for nitrates
- Attended Lower MN-East JPB mtg
- Attended the Cannon JPB mtg
- Attended the Zumbro watershed mtg
- Attended the Zumbro streams analysis meeting
- Completed two AGBMP Loan applications-one for a septic system and one for conservation tillage equipment

The next 30 days will focus on getting the interseeding program rolling, preparing for the new RCPP program that is now set to roll out in July, preparing for the 2026 budget, preparing for field days, and keeping up with the usual meetings. I will also attend the area resolutions meeting June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Respectfully submitted,

Steven Pahs

## **SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**

**Richard Peterson:** attended the Zumbro 1W1P meeting. The first grant is almost completely spent and lining up projects for the second grant.

**Al Malecha:** attended the Lower MN River East Watershed meeting. Many good projects set to get started.

**Roger Bongers:** attended the French Lake Association meeting. Received information about a lake water quality monitoring system to help clear up the water.

**Gene Kuntz:** attended the May CRWJPO meeting.

## **Staff Reports:**

### **Teresa DeMars:**

#### Past Month

- Earth Day Events
- Tree Day
- Envirothon
- May newsletter
- Pocket of prairie planning

#### Next Month

- Pocket of prairie presentations
- Prairie planting at Jefferson and Divine Mercy
- Outstanding conservationists interview/article
- Native plant sale
- June newsletter

### **Al Henderson**

#### Past Month:

- WCA Applications
- Buffer and WCA site visits with landowners
- Tree sale prep and tree day
- Started MPCA Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) sampling

#### Current/Next Month:

- WCA and Buffer site visits
- More buffer letters to be sent
- Helping with Pocket a Prairie
- Agronomy Training in Staples, MN – 05/14
- Continuing HABs sampling weekly
- Well monitoring
- Week long wetland delineation training in early June

### **Al Kraus**

Working on cover crop and interseeding contracts. Attended an event at the Legvold Farm. The Nitrogen Rate Trials test plots are all set and soil samples taken. June 12<sup>th</sup> is an interseeding event at the Peterson Farm.

**Commissioner Jim Purfeerst:** Highway projects approved for Cty Rd 46, 27 and 50. May is Social Services Foster Care month. State has new regulations regarding property forfeiture. Courthouse is getting all new LED lighting.

**Commissioner Charlie Peters:** great job on Tree Day.

**OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE:**

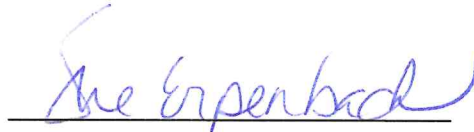
**UPCOMING EVENTS:** keep checking our website for event information:

June 4th, 10 am to 1 pm Winter Camelina Event Dan Coffman's field St Peter MN

**ADJOURN:**

Motion to adjourn by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz. All aye, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:45 am.

Submitted by:



Sue Erpenbach – Administrative Assistant



Board Member –