



## 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 – June 11, 2025 – 8:00 am

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

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

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

#### **Change of Supervisor Positions:**

Chairman Roger Bongers wishes to step down as current board chair.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to elect a new board chair person. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

#### **Nominations for new Board Chair:**

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson to nominate Richard Peterson as the board chair for the remainder of this year. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried. Richard Peterson abstained from voting.

#### **Open Secretary position:**

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson, to appoint Roger Bongers to the open position of Secretary. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

At this point, Richard Peterson took over as newly elected Chairman.

#### **May Board Minutes:**

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the May board minutes as written. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

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

The district manager reviewed the financial statement and bills payable for May.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson to approve the May financial statement, subject to audit. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson to amend the previous motion to include bills payable for May, subject to audit. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**OLD BUSINESS:** No old business.

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

- A. Sommers Farms LLC, no-till/strip-till, continuous green planting - \$2,250.00
- B. Richland Dairy, no-till/strip-till, cover crops planting green - \$1,000.00
- C. Kuball Dairy, reduced tillage, strip/till, 1-year - \$1,150.00
- D. Leslie Ross SHD 25-05, cover crops planting green - \$170.00
- E. Tony Kuchinka 23-RC-003, no-till, all 3 years - \$585.00
- F. Tony Kuchinka 23-RC-006, perennial crops, all 3 years - \$1,001.40

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Roger Bongers to approve the consent agenda items. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

A. **Affinity Plus 30-month CD matured in May 2025 – rolled into new 18-month CD - informational:**

The 30-month CD at Affinity Plus matured in May. It earned \$1,906.07 in interest. The decision was made by the District Manager to roll it into an 18-month CD at 4% interest.

B. **Edward Jones CD expiring in July 2025 - action:**

This CD was set up as a 12-month CD and is set to expire in July 2025. Interest will be posted at maturity. District Manager recommends re-enrolling into a new CD at the highest interest rate for about a year.

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Roger Bongers to roll this maturing CD into a new CD at the best possible rate and optimal terms. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

C. **Chris Donkers 23-RC-008, grassed waterway - \$18,932.27 - action:**

This is for a grassed waterway in a high priority area of the Cannon River Watershed. Because it is in a high priority area, it can be cost shared up to 90%.

A motion by Roger Bongers, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the Chris Donkers 23-RC-008, grassed waterway contract for \$18,932.27. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

D. **Joe Jirik 23-RC-009, three-year cover crop contract for \$14,445.00 – action:**

This contract is a 3-year cover crop contract on 107 acres for \$14,445.00.00. Funded thru the Cannon River Watershed Joint Powers Organization.

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the Joe Jirik 23-RC-009 three-year cover crop contract for \$14,445.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

E. **RCPP program update - informational:**

The RCPP program is likely going to happen. SWCD staff have been working on a ranking sheet for potential sign-ups. The district manager reviewed the ranking sheet stating the first 5 items are required by NRCS. Additional ranking items can be added as needed. Questions were asked about what defines “sensitive” areas in regard to groundwater on the ranking sheet. It was recommended that the word “sensitive” be removed from item #6 on the ranking sheet. This ranking sheet will be reviewed by NRCS.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the RCPP ranking sheet with the word "sensitive" removed from item #6. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**F. Rotary Award - informational:**

The Rice SWCD was presented with a Certificate of Appreciation at the June Rotary meeting for their work with the "Pocket of Prairie" project in Rice County schools. The project was created by Richard Huston, former SWCD board member.

**G. Melvin Korbel 25-RC-002, well decommissioning - \$2,000.00 - action:**

This contract is for a well decommissioning. Location is in the Lower Minnesota River East Watershed. Funding is from the Lower MN River East Watershed.

A motion by Al Malecha, seconded by John Larson to approve the Melvin Korbel 25-RC-002 well decommissioning contract of \$2,000.00. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

**NRCS REPORT:**

Cody Holubeck presented the following report in Taylor O'Bryan's absence:



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 through 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

Chris Schmidt NRCS shared some additional staffing updates. Wrapping up CSP obligations. CRP deadline extended.

## 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: June 2025 Board Meeting

### Old 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.

### New Business

#### COC Elections - Nomination Period Opens June 16, 2025

- Must reside in the Local Administrative Area (LAA) and be an eligible voter in the LAA to be an eligible candidate.
- Rice County - LAA 1 is up for election
  - Erin, Forest, Webster, Wheatland

#### 2023/2024 Supplemental Disaster Assistance

- The American Relief Act of 2025 signed into law on Dec. 21, 2024, provided funds toward disaster recovery assistance.
  - Emergency Commodities Assistance Program (ECAP)
    - Signup open now through August 15, 2025.
    - Applications will be pre-filled with 2024 certified acreage for eligible commodities.
  - Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) for Drought and Wildfire
    - ELRP payments will be made to livestock producers who have an approved 2023 and/or 2024 Livestock Forage Program (LFP) application on file for grazing losses due to eligible droughts.
  - Emergency Livestock Relief Program (ELRP) for Flooding
    - Provide assistance for losses due to flooding, currently requires more time due to software changes.
    - *Target sign-up date of August 18, 2025*
  - Supplemental Disaster Relief Program
    - Provide assistance to producers for necessary expenses due to losses of revenue, quality or productions of crops due to weather related events in 2023 and 2024.
    - *Target sign-up date of July 7, 2025, for indemnified losses*

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### Farm Service Agency

USDA is an equal opportunity provider, employer, and lender.

- Target sign-up date of September 15, 2025, for uncovered losses

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.
- July 30<sup>th</sup> at 8:30 AM is the next Le Sueur COC Meeting.

### **DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT:**

District Manager shared that the Legislative session has ended. Shane, from BWSR shared that the Clean Water Funds, which affect the Cannon and Lower MN River watersheds, will have a slight increase in funding. Competitive grants will not be seeking RFPs for this year but will be combined with next year. Soil health funding will see a decrease in the next biennium.

The No-Till drill has been seeing a lot of use. The Dew Drop Drill was in need of some maintenance work.

The interseeder is slow to get rolling due to prior obligations being delayed for the Peterson's. Hoping to get started with our interseeding this week.

The interseeder demo scheduled for June 12<sup>th</sup> has been postponed until the next week.

District Manager conducted a county-wide tillage survey with assistance from Ryan Lermon 4-H extension educator, Al Kraus, and Brian McFadden. The last survey was done approximately 10 years ago. Results were shared and discussed and a comparison will be put together to better see the changes from survey to survey. These results will be used for future outreach.

### **SUPERVISOR REPORTS:**

**Richard Peterson:** no report.

**Al Malecha:** attended the Lower MN River East Watershed meeting, to approve some CRP funding.

**Roger Bongers:** attended the Rotary lunch and presentation of the Certificate of Appreciation to the SWCD.

**Gene Kuntz:** was invited to the Cedar Lake Association annual meeting, but was unable to attend.

**John Larson:** no report.

### **Staff Reports:**

**Al Henderson:**

Past Month:

- WCA and Buffer site visits
- WCA Application reviews
- Helping with Pocket a Prairie
- MPCA Harmful Algal Bloom (HABs) sampling weekly

Current/Next Month:

- Week long wetland delineation training June 9-13
- WCA applications coming in frequently now
- Continuing HABs sampling
- WCA site visits
- Buffer Monitoring, prep for letters

#### **Alan Kraus:**

- Soil Health Incentive Programs – RCPP Funding
  - RCPP Funding is waiting for confirmation
  - Continued discussions with Rice & Steele SWCD staff on outreach & program details
- Rice SWCD Cover Crop Interseeder
  - Cover crop interseeding field day scheduled at Mike Peterson farm – Set for June 12<sup>th</sup> 1:00-3:00PM
  - 10 farmers signed up for interseeding – 1003 acres
- Bridgewater Streams project
  - Presented project results at Cedar Lake Assoc Annual Meeting
  - 13 farmers, 983 acres are signed up for cover crops in 2025
- Rice-Steele Soil Health Nitrogen Rate Project
  - 8 farmers are in the project
  - All plots are established and corn is planted
  - Held group meeting with Liz Haney and farmers to refine N rates on the plots
  - 2-day Haney Soil Health Testing Masterclass is set for Aug 20-21
  - Invitations were sent to 95 people
- MDA & Great Lakes Cover Crop Project
  - Collected and submitted 10 cover crop samples
  - Analyzed for N, P, K & Carbon
- Soil Health Trailer
  - Planning to use it at 2 events this summer
- Looking ahead
  - Collect soil trays for rainfall simulator
  - Assist farmers in N rate project
  - Prep details for Masterclass, Passport to Agriculture & Honken Farm Field Day
  - Prep for RCPP funding opportunity

#### **Teresa DeMars**

##### **Past Month**

- Pocket of prairie presentations
- Prairie planting at Jefferson and Divine Mercy
- Native plant sale
- Peterson Interseeding Field Day Planning/Marketing
- June newsletter

##### **Next Month**

- Outstanding conservationists interview/article
- Rice County Fair prep
- July newsletter
- CRWJPO video media planning
- Peterson Interseeding Field Day
- Vacation

**Commissioner Jim Purfeerst:** The county is working on budgets. Anticipating another big levy increase due to Legislative action. Work on JD6 is looking very nice. Update on the Conservation Building: had one engineer look at it and the support posts inside are all dry-rotted at the bottom. Engineer suggested they could be supported with concrete pillars. Work most likely would happen this fall.

**Commissioner Charlie Peters:** a lot of ditch work happening: cleaning, spraying, tree trimming. Work on JD6 has begun. Future meeting on JD5 is planned. Wild Parsnip in full bloom.

**OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE:** Zumbro Watershed next meeting will be a field tour.

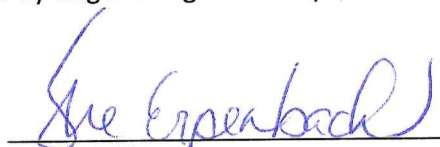
Reminder that the area Resolutions meeting is on June 23<sup>rd</sup>.

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

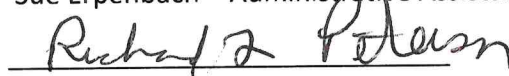
**ADJOURN:**

Motion to adjourn by John Larson, seconded by Roger Bongers. All aye, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:37 am.

Submitted by:



Sue Erpenbach – Administrative Assistant



Board Member –