

Rice Soil and Water Conservation District

302 1st Ave NW Faribault, MN 55021
Phone: (507) 332-5408 www.riceswcd.org

RICE S.W.C.D.

REGULAR BOARD MEETING MINUTES

WEDNESDAY – April 9, 2025 – 8:00 am

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

Others in attendance: Steve Pahs, Allison Henderson, Al Kraus, Commissioner Charlie Peters, Commissioner Jim Purfeerst, Taylor O'Bryan NRCS, Cody Holubeck NRCS, Taylor Carlson FSA, Shane Bugeja BWSR, Eleanor Berg Pheasants Forever, Doug Lennartson, Peggy Keilen

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

March Board Minutes:

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

March financial statement and bills payable:

The district manager reviewed the financial statement.

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

OLD BUSINESS: No old business.

CONSENT AGENDA: (payment approval): no consent agenda items

NEW BUSINESS:

A. Outstanding Conservationist award – review staff recommendations:

The District Manager presented the nominees for outstanding conservationist awards that staff recommend. Richland Dairy and Dale and Tom Malecha.

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve nominate Richland Dairy as the 2025 Outstanding Conservationist Award Winner. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

B. Soil Health Trailer - action:

BWSR has a trailer they are looking to re-home. This trailer contains a rainfall simulator and other educational information. Rise SWCD staff feel it could be used for numerous soil health events and other educational events.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by John Larson to approve the acquisition of the Soil health Trailer from BWSR. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: It was suggested that the District Manager be given authorization to sign the necessary paperwork for the acquisition of this trailer.

The previous motion is amended to include the authorization of the District Manager to sign the necessary paperwork.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by John Larson to approve the amended motion. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

C. Mark Legvold CRP24-19-CC, one year cover crop - \$276.32 - action:

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Al Malecha to approve the Mark Legvold CRP24-19-CC contract for \$276.32. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

D. Clarence and Deloris Salaba Trust #25-RC-001 – grassed waterways - \$5,496.57 – action:

This contract is for three grassed waterways funded by the Lower MN East Watershed grant.

A motion by Richard Peterson, seconded by Gene Kuntz to approve the Clarence and Deloris Salaba Trust #25-RC-001 contract for \$5,496.57. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

E. Acoustic Panel Purchase - \$1,222.06 - action:

The District Manager spoke with a company out of the southern metro who, based on room dimensions, recommended approximately 10 panels for the conference room. These panels were about \$100.00 each. District Manager found an online company where panels can be ordered and installed ourselves at about \$80 per panel. The question was asked if the landlord would pay for any or all of these panels. District Manager will follow up with landlord.

A motion by Gene Kuntz, seconded by Al Malecha to postpone action on this item until the next meeting, allowing the District Manager to have a discussion with the landlord about payment of the panels. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

F. MASWCD Call for Resolutions – 2025 Resolution Process – information:

The District Manager reviewed the resolution process.

G. Soil Health funding proposal – action:

In light of all the changes occurring with federal funding recently, the RCPP funds may not be available. The District Manager is proposing that the district takes \$25,000 of our SWCD Aid funding and use that to propose the adoption of cover crops on fields that have not had more than three years of cover crops in the last ten years. These contracts would be for one year. Maximum enrollment would be for 80 acres per entity. Funding would be \$40 per acre.

If RCPP funding comes thru, then that money would be used for larger fields/contracts.

A motion by John Larson, seconded by Richard Peterson to approve using \$25,000.00 of SWCD Aid money to fund cover crops as proposed. All aye. None opposed. Motion carried.

Discussion: the question was asked if areas around the lakes would be targeted. A ranking and batching system would be used. A percentage could be allocated for areas around the lakes and if not used by a certain time, the money would roll over for other areas.

H. 2024 Annual Report:

The District Manager shared the 2024 Annual Report with the board. The financial piece is still in process. It was suggested that maybe a one-page summary with graphics could be created as well.

I. Tree sale update:

The remaining number of trees was shared, as well as upcoming week of distribution.

J. Buffer Law update:

A re-cap of the Buffer law compliance protocol was shared as well as minor changes to the process resulting from the first batch of letters sent out.

NRCS REPORT:

Taylor O'Bryan presented the following report:



April 9th , 2025

NRCS Report for the Rice SWCD Board Meeting

General:

- ⇒ Taylor, Marlene, 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 – All probationary employees let go are returning as of this week

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 21st – 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.
- ⇒ 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 from new land from the compliance team
- ⇒ Rice County has 21 requests awaiting a certified wetland determination from the compliance team

Upcoming Events/Deadlines:

- Deciding the 2025 Local Working Group Meeting date: Today after the regular meeting is over
- Making a new contract between SWCD and NRCS – in the works

FSA report presented by Taylor Carlson:

Taylor presented the following report:



Rice County, Minnesota

2800 1st 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: April 2025 Board Meeting

Old Business

ARC/PLC Election & Enrollment

- ARC/PLC is now open for enrollment, producers are encouraged to call the FSA office to schedule an appointment.
- The ARC Program is an income support program that provides payments when actual crop revenue declines below a specified guaranteed level.
- The PLC Program provides income support payments when the effective price for a covered commodity falls below its effective reference price.
- The deadline to signup is April 15th.

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

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.

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

- April 29th at 8:30AM is the next Rice COC Meeting.
- May 14th at 8:30 AM is the next Le Sueur COC Meeting.

Farm Service Agency

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

Pheasants Forever – Eleanor Berg:

Eleanor Berg introduced herself and spoke about the Pheasants Forever program.

DISTRICT MANAGER’S REPORT: The new truck that was approved and ordered last fall should arrive next week. We traded in the 2012 Chevy Truck and potentially the 2017 Traverse, which will lower the price of the truck.

SUPERVISOR REPORTS:

Richard Peterson: attended virtual meeting with Representative Allen – good meeting.

Al Malecha: ground is still too cold.

John Larson: No report.

Roger Bongers: attended virtual meeting with Representative Allen – good meeting.

Gene Kuntz: attended Hwy 14 soil health meeting – good attendance and good presenters. Attended a meeting in Northfield by the Izak Walton league – 2 farmers in attendance. Attended a soil health meeting at the Ag Power Show in Owatonna – presenter was not very good. Attended virtual meeting with Representative Allen – good meeting.

Staff Reports:

Emmie Scheffler:

This past month, I attended and presented at the ISG southern lakes conference. I have been working on designs with NRCS to find funding for projects. I have been working on CREP/RIM enrollments that were already selected and scenarios for new ones. For the CRWJPO, I have been working on MPCA contracting, the Lake Frances petition, and FY25 work planning and tracking sheets.

Teresa DeMars:

Past Month

- Pocket of Prairie Planning
- Finishing off CRWJPO webinar series
- April newsletter
- Spring Break Vacation

Next Month

- Earth Day Events
- Tree Day
- Tree Day
- Envirothon
- May newsletter

Al Kraus:

- Soil Health Incentive Programs – RCPP Funding
 - RCPP Funding is waiting for confirmation
 - Met with Rice & Steele SWCD staff to discuss outreach & program details related to RCPP funds
- Rice SWCD Cover Crop Interseeder
 - Working with Hiniker to get new design and manufacture of press wheel scrapers
 - Mike & Shane Peterson agreed to do the custom planting service in 2025 – this will include nitrogen fertilizer application & providing seed and fertilizer deliveries

- We agreed to host an Interseeding “Pop-up” event with UMN Extension – Set for June 2nd with note that the date could change
- Promotion of our custom service now underway
 - Contacting farmers directly
 - Goal is 1000 acres
- Farmer-to-Farmer Shop Talk
 - Held March 13th at Rice SWCD Office – 8 farmers attended
 - Planning to hold another shop talk Mid-June
- Bridgewater Streams project
 - Setting up contracts with participating farmers
 - Looking to add 170 acres of cover crops in 2025
- Rice-Steele Soil Health Nitrogen Rate Project
 - Held initial meeting farmers & other partners
 - Field designations to be set early April
- Midwest Cover Crop Council
 - Weekly meetings to update the cover crop decision tool
- Office move – assisted

Al Henderson:

Last month:

- WCA violation and application site visits
- WCA Technical assistance for landowners
- Buffers meeting with county
- Buffers monitoring and letters

This Month:

- April vacation
- WCA Trainings
- Tree sales
- More technical assistance for landowners for WCA and Buffers

Commissioner Jim Purfeerst: National Crime Victim’s week. Bulldozer at the landfill started on fire so that will be replaced this year.

Commissioner Charlie Peters: Jarett has been working on the ditches. Working on re-submitting FEMA info.

Watersheds- Quarterly reporting in progress on all the watersheds.

Doug Lennartson and Peggy Keilen from the Lake Associations discussed the Lake Management plans they received. Seeking assistance with grant writing, finding available funds.

OTHER/CORRESPONDENCE:

UPCOMING EVENTS:

April 9 @ 8:00 am - 10:00 pm Rice SWCD April Board of Supervisors Meeting

April 9 @ 10:00 am - 12:00 pm Local Work Group Meeting

April 25 @ 7:30 am - 4:00 pm Well Water Testing Clinic

April 12 Pollinator Gardening with Master Gardener Lisa Reuvers, 10:30 am, at Buckham Memorial

April 12 Stewardship Saturday at River Bend Nature Center, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm in Faribault.library

April 19 Roadside Cleanup at the Cannon River Wilderness Park by the Friends of the Cannon River
Wilderness Area County Park (CRWA) by Cannon City.
Faribault.

April 25 2025 Arbor Day Tree Giveaway by the Rice County Master Gardeners, 3:00 - 5:00 pm in

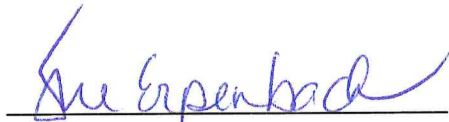
April 26 Northfield Earth Day Celebration, 11:00 am - 4:00 pm in Northfield.
Faribault.

May 3 Maple Syrup Fun Run by River Bend Nature Center in Faribault.

ADJOURN:

Motion to adjourn by Richard Peterson, seconded by Al Malecha. All aye, motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 9:53 am.

Submitted by:



Sue Erpenbach – Administrative Assistant



Board Member –