

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING

Friday, January 26, 2024

9:00 a.m.

Morrison County Government Center

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Saehr, Hubner, Faber and Scholl. Absent: Brutscher and Winscher; SWCD Staff: Wettstein, Noska, McDonald, Beehler and Ringwelski; NRCS Staff: Hanson; BWSR: Mayers

2024 RE-ORGANIZATION – APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA (Items 2-10) MSC Saehr/Faber to approve the consent agenda items 2-10 as the 1st item does not apply this year. Motion passed.

1. Swearing in of New Board Members –No new board members
2. Official Date, Time, Location: Fourth Friday of Each Month, 8:00 a.m. at USDA County Office or Morrison County Government Center in special circumstances
3. Official Per Diem and Mileage:
 - Per Diem - Full Board Meetings, Day Meetings, Committee Meetings, and/or Payroll Signature - \$125
 - Mileage - at IRS Established Rate (\$.67 as of 1/1/2024)
4. Official Publication: Morrison County Record
5. Official Posting Location: Morrison SWCD Website and USDA Service Center Building
6. Official Bank of Deposit: Pine Country Bank Checking and Minnesota Municipal Money Market Fund (4M Fund)
7. Resolution Adopting the Morrison County Local Water Management Plan and Adopting it as the District’s Annual Plan.
8. Grant Agreements / Contracts Signature Approval: Morrison SWCD’s District Manager, Shannon Wettstein, in the absence of SWCD Board Members, may sign grant agreements and/or contracts.
9. Minimum Fund Balance Approval: The minimum Fund Balance will be **3 months** of Operating Expenditures.
(ie: PL Operating Exp. + Personnel for FY, divided by 12 x 3 months = MFB)
10. Capital Assets Policy of Threshold Approval: Capital Assets Policy Report, \$5,000 and above will remain the level of threshold documented, for depreciation, for all purchases by Morrison SWCD.
11. Officers for 2024 – Board discussed the slate of officers. MSC Saehr/Faber to nominate Scholl as chairman for a second year and rotate all other members up one role as identified on the chart. Motion passed. MSC Saehr/Hubner to keep committee roles the same with the addition of inviting Scholl to be part of the Finance Committee discussions this summer as he was involved in this budget committee meeting for this meeting since Brutscher was on vacation.* Motion passed.

Roles	2023	2024
Chairman	Dale Scholl	Dale Scholl
Vice Chairman	Dave Hubner	Scott Saehr
Secretary	Scott Saehr	Tom Brutscher
Treasurer	Tom Brutscher	Bill Faber
Public Relations	Bill Faber	Dave Hubner
Committee Assignments	2023	2024

Finance Committee	Brutscher / Saehr	Brutscher / Saehr*
Personnel Committee	Hubner / Faber	Hubner / Faber
Water Plan Representative	Brutscher	Brutscher
WCTSA	Faber / Hubner	Faber / Hubner
One Watershed One Plan	Scholl / Faber / Brutscher	Scholl / Faber / Brutscher

SECRETARY’S MINUTES: MSC Saehr/Faber. Motion passed with no changes.

TREASURER’S REPORT: MSC Faber/Hubner to approve. Motion passed.

COMMISSIONER’S REPORT: Absent

STAFF REPORTS: Hanson shared they are receiving funds to preapprove five compost facilities in ACT Now funding. They are also working on 40 RCPP applications, ranking the rest of the 81 EQIP applications they have and screening their 27 CSP applications. Wettstein pointed out that NRCS has over \$6M in applications the local office is processing and how impressive that is.

Ringwelski shared he is working on WCA and with Mike and our engineers on getting those engineered designed projects completed. Becker is also working on buttoning up reports for the Public Works delineations we completed during the summer. Noska was able to present he has been working with landowners on oak wilt and buckthorn removal and a lot of aspen regeneration sites. Beehler talked about attending the Central Minnesota Irrigation Association meeting, working with interested landowners on cover crops for next year and planning the two events coming up, Women in Ag and Winter Conservation Meeting. McDonald share the new funding the district had received for federal ACUB easements, and they will be moving forward with three landowners with that money. She also shared updates on the Facebook page and the additional outreach work she has been helping with and presented on at the Pheasants Forever state convention.

BWSR REPORT: Mayers shared he will be hosting a supervisor training that he has invited us to.

OLD BUSINESS:

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl presented that Dan C. from Sherburne SWCD will be tracking all the grants, Molly S. from Mille Lacs SWCD will be working on forestry in permanent protected lands, they are going to hire a new person for conservation easements and a short-term position for someone to apply for grants. The Rum group is also planning a tour this summer. Wettstein added they will receive additional supplemental funding.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber shared that they had a joint Policy and Technical Committee meeting and that all the money from the first batch of funding is encumbered and additional supplemental funding will be awarded. The partnership is working with Kanati Land Management to develop an outreach plan for the watershed.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update- Wettstein said the Policy Committee will meet in February and the Steering Committee is working on developing a work plan to submit to BWSR which will then allow them access to implementation funding.
4. Annual Tree Sale / Tree Open House on January 3 – Wettstein shared we had a very successful open house and online sale. That first day we had over \$20,000 in sales and over 160 individual sales. Even with the online sale option we still did have a very busy day in the office open house. With all of the activity, a lot of the specialty fruit trees are sold out and so is some of the conservation bundles of 25 trees. We will continue the sale until everything is sold out and now with the website, customers can see real time, what trees are still in inventory where in the past they would have to call in and talk to Knopik or they would send in their order form and Knopik would have to call them and let them know the trees were no longer available, it was really cumbersome.
5. BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant Award - \$292,500 for Cover Crops, Phase 2 was approved for funding.

6. LCCMR Amended Resolution for Weyerhaeuser Project – Wettstein read the resolution which LCCMR has requested which just identifies the district as the fiscal agent for this project. MSC Saehr/Faber to approve the resolution and submit it to LCCMR. Motion passed.

NEW BUSINESS:

1. 2024 Budget- Saehr and Scholl met with Wettstein before the meeting to discuss the years budget. A couple of changes have been made and what the board is reviewing is the recommendation from the Finance Committee. MSC Saehr/Hubner to accept the budget as presented with the employee COLA set at 3.4% and three employees moving forward with a step and the others staying at their current step. In addition, the recommendation to table the taxable fringe to be able to have more discussion at a later date but to leave it at \$14,400 per employee for the year. Motion passed. Wettstein will survey the employees to see if they are still liking the taxable fringe and if they feel it is sufficient to cover their health care needs since the district does not offer that benefit. From their she can look into a group plan and or review what surrounding districts/counties are offering for a health care benefit. Wettstein clarified that this is not part of the wage and compensation study we are currently undergoing as they are only looking at pay across the districts and counties, not benefits. The Finance Committee will be meeting mid-year to develop the next years budget so that this process will have more time and will line up with the budgeting process at the county better.
2. State Cost Share Contracts – MSC Faber/Hubner to approve 1-4 as presented. Motion passed.
 1. Renee Waldoch \$1,152.00 Reforestation
 2. Duane and Marian Steffes \$1,320.42 Critical Area Planting
 3. Lee Roberts \$994.12 Critical Area Planting
 4. Jerry Van Keuren \$600.00 Forest Stewardship Plan
3. State Cost Share Payments – MSC Saehr/Faber to approve. Motion passed.
 - a. Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls \$937.50 Forest Stewardship Plan
4. Clean Water Fund Cover Crop Policy Update

INFORMATIONAL:

- Campaign Finance Board Deadline January 31st
- Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Policy Meeting January 23 CANCELLED
- Rum River One Watershed One Plan Policy Meeting, January 25th at Mille Lacs County Courthouse from 4:30-6:30 PM
- Morrison SWCD Annual Tree Sale – Until Sold Out
- Ag, Apps and Art; An Event for Women in Agriculture, Friday, February 2nd 5-8 at the Rice Creek Club House
- Area 2 Meeting, Wednesday, March 6th, Benton SWCD to host
- Winter Agronomy Meeting, March 13th, Little Falls TBD
- Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Policy Committee, March 21st at 9 AM in Todd County

ANNUAL AWARDS LUNCHEON RECOGNIZING THE FOLLOWING:

Randy and Joni Hamson for receiving the Morrison County Wildlife Habitat Steward Award, Lance Chisholm for the MACDE Extraordinary Contribution Award, Josh Hanson for being a Morrison County Super Partner, Special Recognition: Tree Crew consisting of Donny Herman, Donny Johnson, Ralph Anderson, Willy Gruber and Ival Kronbeck, the Saehr Family (Darrel, Amy, Randy and Holly) for receiving the Morrison County Outstanding Conservationist Award, Roxanne Matson (retired) from Larson Abstract for her exceptional

support to the ACUB program, Morrison SWCD staff member Shannon Wettstein for receiving the DNR Forestry Partnership Award.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Tom Brutscher, Secretary

*****Next Board Meeting February 23 at 8 AM, USDA Service Center

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING
Friday, March 1, 2024
8:00 a.m.
Initiative Foundation, 405 1st St SE, Little Falls

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Saehr, Hubner, Faber, Brutscher and Scholl. Commissioner: Absent; SWCD Staff: Wettstein; NRCS Staff: Absent; BWSR: Mayers

SECRETARY’S MINUTES – MSC Saehr/Faber to approve as written. Motion passed.

TREASURER’S REPORT - MSC Saehr/Brutscher to approve. Motion passed.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl said the last meeting they were given a presentation of the work that had been done or was in the works.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber said their last meeting had a year end recap of projects and money as well.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Policy committee met to discuss and hear each district share what work they were building into a work plan.
4. Ag, Apps and Art; An Event for Women in Agriculture, Friday, February 2nd 5-8 at the Rice Creek Game Farm Club House. Wettstein shared this was the first event like this the district has hosted and we had a great turnout of 50 people (it was originally capped at 45 due to materials) and survey respondents said they would be interested in coming to another like it. Attendees heard about soil health benefits, it featured a panel of female farmers all with different operations and there was a fun craft attendees could take home. Wettstein shared Beehler took the lead but that Carrie Miller and Sunnie Kahlhamer from NRCS as well as Knopik and McDonald helped plan the event.
5. Taxable Fringe Update – Employee Survey. Wettstein shared the anonymous survey she did with the report asking if staff is happy with the current offering of a taxable fringe. Most all staff are happy, but the next step will be to get comparable to make sure our offering is keeping up with other districts and the county. This comparison is not part of our current wage and compensation study.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Correction to Landowner Name on State Cost Share Contract January Approval – MSC Faber/Hubner to make the correction. Wettstein explained she mistakenly put the wrong name in the board agenda to approve but the amount we approved was correct. Motion passed.
 - a. ~~Renee Waldoch~~ Mark Przybilla \$1,152.00 Reforestation
2. State Cost Share Contract – MSC Brutscher/Hubner to approve. Motion passed.
 - a. Brad and Sharon Schmidtbauer \$4,050.00 Forest Stewardship Plan
3. Pioneer Tree Service Invoice (Final Oak Wilt) – Wettstein passed around the final invoice for the Oak Wilt project. This included work in Morrison and Cass Counties that was completed for the project. There was discussion on the amount of the bill and Wettstein admitted to allowing the contractor and instructing Noska to overspend the grant dollars as the one site in Cass County had taken several years to get the landowners on board and during that time the wilt had spread. Overall, at the one site, Pioneer did \$98,000 worth of work. Wettstein shared that the original grant did say we would use the grant funds to treat the

northernmost sites and the site in Cass was our highest priority site. She also verified all of the expenses are true and correct as Noska was onsite and provided oversight during the plowing, felling and hauling process. The board asked for Noska to present a summary of the work at the next board meeting. After discussion on whether to approve the full amount or a partial amount a MSC Hubner/Faber to pay the entire amount of 217,584.00. Wettstein shared the amount not covered out of the grant will be paid for out of the new Soil and Water State Aid money appropriated by the legislature last year. Motion passed.

4. Update on Wage and Compensation Study – MSC Hubner/Saehr to table this until next meeting due to time constraints. Motion passed.

INFORMATIONAL

- Area 2 Meeting, Wednesday, March 6th, Benton SWCD to host
- Winter Agronomy Meeting, March 13th, Little Falls Ballroom

BOARD WORKSHOP Workload Analysis – Guests from Houston Engineering, Inc (Doug Thomas, Moriya Rufer and Rachel Olm)

The project purpose is to prepare a workload/technical analysis designed to ensure that the Morrison SWCD (District) resources—both internal and external—are enough for meeting planned goals and objectives over the next four to six years. Our overall approach will be to employ a workload analysis process that is geared toward government bodies. It differs from traditional workload analysis/assessment techniques in a few different ways. This approach starts with the statutory and historical obligations of a unit of government (core/critical) and then builds back in (current) district and county programs and projects that support current comprehensive/work plans. It then builds in actions identified in plans such as 1W1Ps and/or are envisioned by the governing body (new or on the horizon). After these are understood, they will be used to provide an estimate of required staffing needs and skills required to carry out the various levels of activities, programs, and projects for the next four to six years.

Houston Engineering staff will also meet with Morrison SWCD staff on a separate day to go through current work, alignment to essential/core purposes, plan implementation and perspectives on associated staff time necessary to adequately perform these functions.

Meeting Adjourned at 12:15 p.m.

Tom Brutscher, Secretary

*******Next Board Meeting March 22nd at 8 AM, USDA Service Center**

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING
Friday, March 22, 2024
USDA Service Center
16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345
8:00 a.m.

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Saehr, Hubner, Faber, Brutscher and Scholl. Commissioner: Absent; SWCD Staff: Wettstein; NRCS Staff: Hanson; Absent; BWSR: Mayers

AGENDA – Moved the New Business #3 to Old Business #1.

SECRETARY’S MINUTES MSC Faber/Brutscher to approve with changes (Kahlhammer spelling, location and adjournment at 12:15). Motion passed.

TREASURER’S REPORT MSC Brutscher/Faber to approve. Motion passed.

COMMISSIONER REPORT – Winscher shared Dave Stich is retiring from the BOA/PC. Also shared they are going through a wage study like the district is.

STAFF REPORT – Hanson gave the report that there will be a new DC on April 7th and he will introduce them at the April meeting. They have 22 preapproved EQIP applications and 14 approved applications. RCPP has 19 preapproved applications and 7 approved.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Update on Wage and Compensation Study – Wettstein briefed the board on where this is at. The recommendations from Kelly Jones from DDA is to move towards a yearly step and define grades for each position. The presented chart shows 10 grade, 12 step framework. Scholl asked about what would happen after 12 years for an employee and Wettstein said she will work with Jones to get an answer with that. Wettstein said this is all based on our pay philosophy for how much of an increase each step gets (with COLA) and how many steps we have. The county is looking at something very similar. The market data from 15 surrounding SWCD’s and 3 counties shows we have a lower starting salary but we end higher and Jones is recommending moving up our starting salary to be more competitive and this will also keep our spread narrower. Wettstein shared we can come back to this topic next meeting but wanted to get it in front of everyone first.
2. Workload Analysis Follow-up from March 1st Board Workshop – The board worked through this worksheet with Wettstein making her recommendations first and explaining the reasoning and then opening up for discussion. MSC Saehr/Faber to accept the recommendations based off the review the board had today and send to the consultants from HEI. Motion passed.
3. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl gave the update to say they are looking for projects for 2025-2026 and that currently 68% of the money is going to staff and 32% going to projects.
4. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber said they will not have a meeting until May.
5. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Brutscher shared the group is developing a project list and the policy committee heard what is planned. The workplan needs to be submitted before implementation funds are available.

6. National Association of SWCD Annual Convention, February 10-14th – Wettstein was really proud that we had a huge representation at this meeting with Beehler and Wettstein presenting, staff attending and Brutscher, Saehr and Faber attending from the board. The district received a lot of recognition at this meeting.
7. BWSR Board Responsibilities Meeting, February 13th – Scholl would like to talk about this when Mayers is here next month.
8. Winter Agronomy Meeting, March 13th, Little Falls Ballroom – This was really successful with 60 people in attendance and topics that were asked for including annual forages, cover crops in no till vs manure incorporation and engineering assistance.
9. 2023 Easement Summary – Wettstein shared a summary put together by Chisholm and McDonald.

NEW BUSINESS

1. State Cost Share Contract Approvals – MSC Brutscher/Faber to approve. Motion passed.
 - a. Jeremy Lucking \$4,627.74 Field Windbreak
2. Recommend Payment to the Rum River Watershed – MSC Faber/Hubner to pay then be reimbursed by Rum River. Motion passed.
 - a. Jim and Joy Schlichting \$3,000.00 Forest Stewardship Plan
- ~~3. Update on Wage and Compensation Study~~
4. Peterson Company LTD Audit Engagement Letter – Year End Audit Fee \$5,500 for 2023 – MSC Faber/Brutscher to sign. Motion passed.
5. General Cost Share Policy – MSC Brutscher/Faber to table to a later meeting. Motion passed.
6. Mississippi River Brainerd Memorandum of Understanding for Implementation – MSC Faber/Brutscher to sign. Motion passed.

INFORMATIONAL

- National Guard Bureau Correspondence Regarding Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid (PFOS)
- Rum River Watershed Policy JPE Meeting, March 21 Mille Lacs County Courthouse
- Request for Proposals (RFP) for Environmental Classroom Exhibit Design Services
- Rum River Watershed Policy Committee Meeting June 27th
- Long Prairie Watershed Policy Committee Meeting, May 16th

Meeting Adjourned at 10:35 p.m.

Tom Brutscher, Secretary

*******Next Board Meeting April 26 at 8 AM, USDA Service Center**

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING

Friday, April 26, 2024

USDA Service Center

16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

8:00 a.m.

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Saehr, Faber and Scholl. Commissioner: Winscher; SWCD Staff: Wettstein, Ringwelski, Noska and Beehler; NRCS Staff: Hanson and Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers. Guests: Randy and Joni Hamson, Landowners; Todd Holman, CRSL Coordinator; Sargent Major Ryan Hoffstead and Deputy Garrison Commander Lieutenant Colonel Steven Hall.

SECRETARY'S MINUTES MSC Saehr/Faber Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT MSC Faber/Saehr to approve. Motion passed.

COMMISSIONER REPORT – Winscher talked about that George Sandy will serve on the PC/BOA, that the new height limit in shoreland will be increasing from 25 to 30 feet and Camp Ripley was in just a couple of weeks ago to give their community briefing.

VISITORS –

- Randy and Joni Hamson, 2023 Wildlife Steward Award Winner – Wettstein introduced the couple and shared the reasons they were chosen as the winners of this award and for their tireless work to create, manage, and maintain wildlife habitat on their 400+ acre property in Cushing township. Chairman Scholl presented a sign, the group congratulated them and Randy thanked the offices for all their support over the years and for the recognition.
- Sargent Major Ryan Hoffsted and Deputy Garrison Commander Lieutenant Colonel Steve Hall Presenting the 2023 ARNG Environmental Security Award to the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Team – SM Hoffsted presented the board with a Certificate of Appreciation for their partnership and for bringing national recognition to the Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape Team through receiving this award. Chairman Scholl accepted the award and thanked them for the recognition.

STAFF REPORT – Terry Zapzalka was introduced as the new District Conservationist for Morrison County. Ringwelski shared the precipitation summary report for the year and shared they are looking for additional volunteers to be precipitation readers.

BWSR REPORT – Mayers shared the Mississippi River Brainerd is finalizing an application for implementation funds. Holman had shared with the rest of the BWSR Board the amount of cover crops he had seen in this area of the state and wanted to recognize Beehler for the work that she, farmers, MDA and NRCS are doing in this area.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Oak Wilt Program Summary – Noska presented a summary of the oak wilt program from 2019-2024, the two rounds of LCCMR grants. The estimate from the Forest Health Coordinator for the DNR was that 1 million oaks were protected, and the risk of spread was reduced or eliminated on over 9,000 acres of forest. Pioneer Tree Service, Lisa and John Wimmer and their team were contracted to do the work and Noska was very happy with their work.

2. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update- Scholl shared they are working on the new workplan. They have received supplemental funding from BWSR.
3. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Faber shared they also received supplemental funding and their next meeting is on May 16th.
4. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Wettstein repeated what Mayers said earlier that the group is finalizing an application for their implementation funds.
5. Website and Social Media Update – Wettstein shared that the website has had over 2,500 visits since January 1 due primarily to the tree sale which kicked off on January 3rd. The Facebook account is now two years old and has reached almost 14,000 people.
6. 2023 Precipitation Observer Weather Summary – This was covered above in Ringwelski’s staff report.
7. Pheasants Forever Quarterly Summary – Wettstein shared a copy of McDonald’s report with everyone.

NEW BUSINESS

1. State Cost Share Contract – MSC Saehr/Faber to approve as presented. Motion passed.

a. Steffes Partnership	\$1,859.06	Critical Area Planting
b. American Legion Post 350	\$4,408.84	Critical Area Planting
c. Noah Czech	\$2,136.77	Prescribed Burn
d. Brad and Sharon Schmidtbauer	\$2,511.33	Reforestation
2. State Cost Share Payment- MSC Faber/Saehr to approve payment. Motion passed.

a. Brad and Sharon Schmidtbauer	\$4,050.00	Forest Stewardship Plan
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3. Long Prairie Watershed Partnership Contract – MSC Faber/Saehr to approve. Motion passed.

a. Earl Edeburn	\$427.50	Well Sealing
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4. Clean Water Fund Cover Crop Contracts- MSC Saehr/Faber to approve a. – I. None opposed. Motion passed. Beehler presented the ranking criteria and shared the total amount approved was \$127,663.60 for this round which will come out of the FY23 and FY24 grants.

a. Isaac Kroll	\$17,188.60
b. Duane Kroll	\$19,250.00
c. Adam Kroll	\$16,240.40
d. Neal Loidolt	\$7,351.30
e. Jayme Schilling	\$9,848.30
f. Gary Rademacher	\$7,283.55
g. Jeff Mueller	\$14,839.55
h. Shawn Winscher	\$5,519.25
i. Alvin Pick	\$5,794.80
j. Keith Lorenz	\$3,270.30
k. Simon Kroll	\$16,754.55
l. Gerald Herzog	\$4,323.00
5. Wage and Compensation Study – Wettstein presented the information as a continuation of last month’s discussion. The consultant has compared the district to 15 other surrounding SWCD’s and three other counties data. The recommendation would be to move to a new structure, shrink up the percentage range spread between the starting and ending salaries and decide how to recognize longevity as the recommended structure would move

employees up a step every year and they would top out at 12 steps. The board recommended continuing to move forward but had additional questions surrounding the policies which would need to be developed in conjunction with adopting a new structure. They recommended reviewing the probationary period, longevity, and performance reviews. The board also wanted to know the budget implications of not only adopting it but what the next three years would look like. Wettstein will work to develop or revise policies and to get a more long-term budget projection.

6. Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council Proposal, Phase 13 for ACUB Easements – \$5.2M – Board recommends moving forward with the application.

INFORMATIONAL

- City of Swanville Perfluorooctane Sulfonic Acid (PFOS) Discovered in Public Water Supply
- Nitrate Clinic, Morrison County Courthouse May 20-24
- Request for Proposals (RFP) for Environmental Classroom Exhibit Design Services Open
- We Are Water Exhibit, Art in Motion, Holdingford, April 25-June16
- Long Prairie Watershed Policy Committee Meeting, May 16th
- Buckthorn Clearing at Belle Prairie County Park, June 8 9:00-12:00 pm
- Area 2 WCTSA Meeting, Glenwood, June 12th
- Summer Soil Health Field Day, June 18th
- Rum River Watershed Policy Committee Meeting June 27th
- Lance Chisholm Last Day, July 31

*****Next Board Meeting May 24th at 8 AM, USDA Service Center

Meeting Adjourned at 10:40 p.m.

Tom Brutscher, Secretary

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING

Friday, May 24, 2024

USDA Service Center

16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

8:00 a.m.

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Saehr, Faber, Brutscher and Scholl. Commissioner: Winscher; SWCD Staff: Wettstein and Lawin; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers.

AGENDA

SECRETARY'S MINUTES MSC Faber/Brutscher Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT MSC Saehr/Faber to approve. Motion passed.

COMMISSIONER REPORT – Winscher talked about the tax forfeited properties going up for sale, working on getting ready for the county fair and that it is budget time and an election year.

STAFF REPORT – Zapzalka shared federal funding is coming in through the RCPP, CSP, EQIP programs. The Farm Bill is supposed to be done this year as well.

BWSR REPORT – Mayers gave the legislative report on BWSR it included legislation that says districts can now obtain loans and a provision that BWSR can penalize up to \$10K for violations and then forgive them once resolved. He also spoke about a request for interest that is opening and will be for soil health. The district would be able to express interest up to \$80K.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Wettstein shared comments are due on the draft work plan beginning of June, this then will go to the next Policy Committee meeting.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update -Wettstein shared that the Policy Committee heard the draft outreach plan that is being prepared by Kanati for the watershed. This group is also working on a second work plan.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – This group is also working on a work plan, it is their first and is set to receive initial funding beginning of June.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update – The staff for this watershed met for the first time so Wettstein shared you will be seeing a resolution later in the meeting and will have to decide who will attend these meetings from the board.
5. BWSR Board Responsibilities Meeting, February 13th – Scholl attended this meeting and wanted to share when Mayers was in attendance, so this was something he felt was worthwhile to attend. It went over BWSR's role with the district in that they are the ones setting the boundaries for a lot of the funding we get and then we as a board get to decide how to spend it. He also shared 85% of BWSR's appropriated funds go out to the counties and SWCD's with much of it being advanced for programs. BWSR also has disaster funds if the governor determines it was a disaster. Scholl asked Wettstein to look into surety bonds for the district, this is what townships have to protect themselves from litigation and financial risk. Wettstein will reach out to MCIT our insurance provider and ask them about this.
6. Request for Proposals (RFP) for Environmental Classroom Exhibit Design Services- Wettstein shared that the RFP was open for two months and that she spoke with five different design firms. We did receive one proposal from Split Rock Studios, a Minnesota based firm. They are a

very reputable design and build company, Wettstein shared their website with the board. Wettstein will reach out to them to discuss the potential of working on the project so at a later date the board will see a contract to consider if this moves forward. The estimate was much higher than expected as they charge what is industry standard of \$400/square foot to design a space. The design charge is 20% of that. The environmental classroom section of the new military museum was advertised as 2,500 square feet when we released the RFP but has since been lowered to 1,670.

7. Call for Resolutions – Wettstein shared she does not have any resolutions for the board to consider but that at the area meeting in June they will discuss resolutions to send to the state convention.
8. DNR Commissioner’s Order on Little Rock Creek – Wettstein shared on April 23rd the DNR issued a Commissioner’s Order. In the order it does give a link to the comments received and we are listed and paraphrased in the comments section.
9. Tree Sale Summary -Brutscher shared he was really impressed by the tree week activities, he helped at the garage on Thursday and Friday. Wettstein shared the report put together by Knopik that we pushed 105,775 trees out the door, 35,175 of which the district sold, the rest were DNR trees that we were a drop location for. All in all, it went well but it was way too many DNR trees to process and it was wearing on the staff. Knopik has told DNR that it was too much and that next year we may not be able to help with this.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Resolution to Support Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan – MSC Brutscher/Faber to support. Motion passed.
2. Employee Policy – Ratwik, Roszak and Maloney, P.A. Review – Wettstein shared she has reached out to this law firm to help update our employee policy as they recently have done work with other SWCD’s and did Crow Wing SWCD’s policy (which Crow Wing was using our current policy). The district policy is almost 10 years old and needs to be brought up to date. Wettstein asked if the board would be interested in having someone from the firm meet with them to discuss this work. MSC Saehr/Faber to have them come and present. Motion passed.
3. Wage and Compensation Study – New Structure and Policies – Wettstein followed up from last meeting to present the budgetary impacts of adopting a new pay structure and used the highest end estimation assuming frozen wages for two staff nearing retirement for the projections through 2027. The budget impacts were as follows: 2024- 1.19% or \$6,254; 2025 – 5.77% or \$31,027; 2026 – 5.81% or \$33, 018 and 2027 - \$35,146. The reason it is only 5-6% is because of the two employees were frozen on the pay scale and therefore only received a COLA increase, not a step increase over the next three years. If they are back filled with less experienced staff when they retire then the projected costs will be even less. MSC Saehr/Brutscher to pass approve the market analysis and adopt the new wage structure which will include 12 steps and 10 grades to go into effect July 1, 2024. Motion passed. Wettstein shared the current policies the district has for the probationary period and the possibility of adopting the longevity policy similar to Morrison County. These could be changed or updated when we update our employee policy.

4. Long Prairie River Watershed Partnership – Cost Share Contract – MSC Faber/Brutscher to approve. Motion passed.

a. Patrick Edeburn	\$427.50	Well Sealing
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5. State Cost Share Payment(s) – MSC Faber/Brutscher to approve. Motion passed.

a. Jeremy Lucking	\$4,325.34	Field Windbreak
b. Sharon and Brad Schmidtbauer	\$5,022.66	Reforestation
6. Miller Equipment and MFG Inc. Purchase Order – Tree Planter funded by LCCMR to be housed at DNR – Boards wishes were to donate or gift the tree planted to the DNR. Wettstein will work with the new Forestry Manager to work out an agreement.
7. Water Planner/Easement Coordinator Vacancy – Job Description and Job Posting – Wettstein asked the board if she could post this as an easement coordinator job vacancy and not include the Water Planner part of the position because since Lance started 17 years ago these programs have both grown a ton due to the success of the easement program and ongoing funding and the new role the One Watershed One Plan process takes in the district operations. MSC Saehr/Faber to post the position with the Easement Coordinator job description duties only. Motion passed.

INFORMATIONAL

- We Are Water Exhibit, Art in Motion, Holdingford, April 25-June 16
- Buckthorn Clearing at Belle Prairie County Park, June 8 9:00-12:00 pm
- Area 2 WCTSA Meeting, Glenwood, June 12th
- Summer Soil Health Field Day, June 18th
- Rum River Watershed Policy Committee Meeting June 27th
- Long Prairie Watershed Policy Committee Meeting July 18th
- Audit with Michael Peterson, July 23rd All Day
- Lance Chisholm Last Day, July 31
- 2024 Green Fair Folk Festival August 7th 4-8 PM, Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls

Next Board Meeting June 28th at 8 AM, USDA Service Center

Meeting Adjourned at 11:08 p.m.

Tom Brutscher, Secretary

MORRISON SWCD BOARD MEETING

Friday, June 28, 2024

USDA Service Center

16776 Heron Road Little Falls, MN 56345

8:00 a.m.

Attending In-Person: Supervisors: Saehr, Hubner, Brutscher and Scholl. SWCD Staff: Wettstein; NRCS Staff: Zapzalka; BWSR: Mayers.

AGENDA - MSC Saehr/Brutscher. Motion passed.

SECRETARY'S MINUTES MSC Saehr/Brutscher Motion passed.

TREASURER'S REPORT MSC Saehr/Brutscher to approve. Motion passed.

COMMISSIONER REPORT – Absent

STAFF REPORT – Zapzalka shared there are projects that are pouring concrete, working in between the rains. They are also doing contract modifications. Some EQIP funds are coming in but it is slowing down. Ringwelski shared he is doing cost share spot checks and buffer law spot checks. Ditch cleanings have slowed down.

BWSR REPORT – Mayers shared a legislative session overview and that BWSR grants would be opening with the return of Accelerated Implementation Grants.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Rum River One Watershed One Plan Update – Scholl shared it was a very quick meeting with very little allowance for explanation or discussion. They have hired a new coordinator, set rates and policies for cost share practices such as stewardship plans and went through decision items such as the attorney selection and the new work plan.
2. Long Prairie One Watershed One Plan Update – Next meeting is in July.
3. Mississippi River Brainerd One Watershed One Plan Update – Next meeting is in October.
4. Mississippi River Sartell One Watershed One Plan Update – Wettstein shared staff from the surrounding Counties and SWCD's have submitted a grant application for the planning phase to start this watershed.
5. Area 2 WCTSA Meeting, Glenwood, June 12th – Faber and Wettstein attended. They gave a legislative update on all the money going to SE MN because of the nitrate issue in the karst region of the state, they discussed resolutions moving forward for consideration to the state convention and the Envirothon, which Mike Becker from the office was a judge at both the area and state competitions.
6. Summer Soil Health Field Day, June 18th - RESCHEDULED – Due to the weather conditions that day the event needed to be rescheduled.
7. Shamineau Project Update – Wettstein gave the board an update on this project. The pipe for the outlet project has been run but unfortunately it is popping out of the ground in multiple locations and needs to be repaired. The pumps have not been turned on yet and the engineers are coming up with a plan to how to keep the pipes in the ground.
8. Camp Ripley Veterans State Trail/Bellevue Township Assistance – the District was approached by Bellevue Township to review the wetlands along the trail and measure the impact to

wetland moving the trail over would have. Ringwelski, Lawin and Wettstein reviewed and presented the information to them as the impacts would be minimal.

9. MCIT Insurance/Bonding – The question of Surety bonds was brought up to our insurance provider MCIT for clarification and if there was any need for the additional insurance.
10. Employee Policy – Ratwik, Roszak and Maloney, P.A. Review – Discussed having the attorney come to present to the board once they have draft policies which legally need to be updated so that the board had something to review and ask questions on. Wettstein will communicate with them and set up a time for them to visit once they have a draft.
11. Nitrate Testing Summary from May 20-24th – 145 wells were tested during the weeklong clinic. A map and summary were shared.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Easement Coordinator Position – MSC Saehr/Scholl to appoint a hiring committee of Brutscher and Hubner to review applications, rank and authorize Wettstein to move forward with a job offer to the top candidate. Motion passed. The hiring committee will meet after the regular meeting.
2. What a Match! LCCMR Grant Cost Share Policy – Woodland Stewardship Plans Resolution – MSC Hubner/Saehr to adopt the resolution establishing 75% cost share with this pool of funds. Motion passed.
3. Camp Ripley Sentinel Landscape RCPP Application – MSC Brutscher/Hubner to move forward with submitting this application. Motion passed.

MSC Brutscher/Hubner to approve action on the following items: 4a, 5b, 6b, 7a-c, 8a, 9a-d, 10a and 11a. Motion passed.

4. Long Prairie River Watershed Partnership – Cost Share Contract
 - a. Lee Arendt \$437.50 Well Sealing
5. Long Prairie River Watershed Partnership – Cost Share Payments
 - ~~a. Patrick Edeburn C23-3483 \$162.50 Well Sealing~~
 - b. Earl Edeburn C23-3483 \$212.50 Well Sealing
6. State Cost Share Payment(s) Correction
 - a. Sharon and Brad Schmidtbauer ~~\$5,022.66~~ \$2,511.33 Reforestation
7. State Cost Share Payment(s)
 - a. Friends of Crane Meadows 16-23/01-24 \$1,500.00 Conservation Cover
 - b. Mark Przybilla 03-24 \$1,152.00 Reforestation
 - c. Jerry VanKeuren 06-24 \$600.00 Forest Stewardship Plan
8. Clean Water Fund Cover Crop Contract Cancellation
 - a. Keith Lorenz 49-07-24 \$3,270.30 Cover Crop
9. Clean Water Fund Cover Crop Contracts
 - a. Chuck Gruber \$980.35
 - b. Alan Feirer \$3,969.35
 - c. Richard Blonigen \$3,575.00
 - d. Duane L. Kroll \$1,377.20
10. Soil Health Cost Share Contracts
 - a. Chuck Gruber \$951.60

11. Cost Share Contract

a. Jerome Yorek

\$380.00

Forest Stewardship Plan

INFORMATIONAL

- BWSR Easement Section Field Visit, Morrison SWCD Host on June 27th and 28th
- Rum River Watershed Policy Committee Meeting June 27th
- Long Prairie Watershed Policy Committee Meeting July 18th
- SWCD Budget Committee Meeting, July 19th, 8 am
- Audit with Michael Peterson, July 23rd All Day
- Lance Chisholm Last Day, July 31
- 2024 Green Fair Folk Festival, August 7th 4-8 PM, Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls
- Summer Soil Health Field Day, TBD
- Land Trust Alliance Conference, Providence Rhode Island September 24-28, 2024

*****Next Board Meeting July 26 at 8 AM, USDA Service Center

Meeting Adjourned at 10:25 p.m.

Tom Brutscher, Secretary

Hiring Committee comprising of Hubner, Brutscher and Wettstein met to review applications for the Easement Coordinator position after the regular meeting. Applications were ranked, and Wettstein will reach out to the top candidate to make an offer. Once an applicant has accepted, Wettstein will notify the other applicants and thank them for applying.