

Stevens Soil & Water Conservation District
Regular Meeting Minutes
Tuesday, July 13, 2021
9:30 a.m. SWCD Office & via Zoom call

- I. Chair Lonergan called the regular meeting to order at 9:35 a.m. Board members present: Goodnough (by phone), Feuchtenberger, Fynboh, Lonergan. Staff present: Johnston, Solemsaas, Staebler. Others present: Pete Waller, BWSR; Roger Rose, UMM (via Zoom); Melissa McCann, NRCS.
- II. Supervisor Feuchtenberger moved to approve the agenda. Second by Supervisor Fynboh. Passed unanimously.
- III. UMM Survey Summary: Roger Rose was present to summarize the results of the 2020 survey of landowners regarding perception of and participation in SWCD Programs. He detailed the logistics of sending the survey. Response to the survey was lower than expected. Most respondents were 60+ years old and had been farming over 20 years. 70% of respondents were happy with the programs we offer/help administer. He noted that we can continue to find ways to reach more people. Education and school programs were appreciated by 76% of respondents familiar with them, although about 20% of total respondents were not familiar with these programs. He detailed some questions and responses that will help gauge interest in programs and looked at barriers they see to participating in these programs. Respondents were mostly supportive of the Legacy Amendment at the current level. Most like mail communication and good web presence. There was little interest in social media from this group of respondents. He noted some of the more pertinent/recurring comments received. Most comments were positive and supportive. Over-arching theme was that people want to learn more about the programs so they can participate more effectively. They will be producing a paper report for the board that will include all the comments printed in list format. The board gave comments about the survey in general, including the length of the survey and reasons for the lack of desire to complete the survey. Discussed whether or not other SWCDs across the state would be interested in similar surveys. Need to think about who didn't respond as well as who did. A direct sample of current farmers would be beneficial, such as a shorter survey at the fair.

The Zoom portion of the meeting ended at 10:15. Those in attendance continued discussions on how to better engage active farmers. Pete suggested an annual meeting of ag producers. Total cost of the project was also discussed. There was no cost to the SWCD.

IV. Reports

- A. Pete Waller, BWSR, gave a legislative update. In general, the session ended well, avoiding a temporary shut-down. Most historical funding stayed static. There were three new appropriations. The Clean Water Fund will include \$141,800,000. WBIF funding is almost doubled. Competitive funding is decreasing. State funding of CREP obligations will be coming to an end. \$24M for Local Capacity funding. Generally speaking, about 83% of BWSR's funding goes to projects and direct funding vs administration. He summarized outdoor heritage and Environment and Natural Resources Trust fund (lottery) projects funded. He also detailed some policy items including the approval to increase daily compensation cap for SWCD supervisors from \$75 to \$125 for boards that approve that change after August 1.
- B. Melissa McCann, NRCS, gave a report on recent activity in her agency. There are 13 EQIP applications and one RCCP project going to contract. Two CSP applications going forward. General CRP sign-up ends July 23 and continuous goes until August 4. A successful annual LWG meeting was held recently and she is working on a report of that to be sent to the state.
- C. Commissioner Ennen was not present as the Board of Commissioners was in a work session this morning.
- D. Additions to staff reports
 - a. Solemsaas: Construction of projects are getting finished up as far as construction. Matt will be doing a session on rain gardens at WCROC Hort Night. There has been a good, wide response to this after the Prairie Yard & Garden episode we were featured in. Seeding is done and he's been getting drone footage of projects throughout the county. Attended a Manager's Meeting in Brainerd last week and will have an ag inspector's conference next week. John, Adam, and Brady helped Swift County with a rain garden construction.
 - b. Erickson is still working with one easement violation and on other easement activity.
 - c. Lembcke has been in the field. They are ready to begin rain garden constructions.
 - d. Johnston attended a training on Facebook/social media usage for districts. She will be getting a display ready for Hort Night. The AIS Family Fun Night was very well attended. She will be working on a project with 4-H and

Extension to help the youth in the Shooting Sports project who need to complete conservation related projects. Kits will be made that can be used for Conservation Day and other educational sessions. We will have a double booth at the fair that will include a display from PDTRA. She is working with John on a MAWQCP promotional meeting to be held in the fall.

- e. It was noted that Elink workplans will now be required for state cost share grants.

Goodnough left the meeting at 11:00 a.m.

V. Fynboh moved to approve the minutes from the May Regular Meeting. Second by Supervisor Feuchtenberger. Passed unanimously.

VI. Financial Matters

- 1. Fynboh moved to approve this month's Treasurer's Report. Second by Feuchtenberger. Passed unanimously.
- 2. Feuchtenberger moved to approve payment of the following bills. Second by Fynboh. Passed unanimously.

VII. There was no Old Business

VIII. New Business

- A. Fynboh moved to approve the well monitoring contract with the MN DNR. Second by Feuchtenberger. Passed unanimously.
- B. Feuchtenberger moved to approve the annual contract for services with WCTSA2. Second by Fynboh. Passed unanimously.
- C. Feuchtenberger moved to approve the following well sealing cost share payments, using CLWP funding. Second by Fynboh. Passed unanimously.
 - 1. Schmidgall well sealing cost share \$450 (2 wells in Donnelly Township)
 - 2. Evink well sealing cost share \$300 (1 well in Hodges Township).
- D. Fynboh moved to approve the following cost share allocations. Second by Feuchtenberger. Passed unanimously.
 - 1. PDTRA 2016 Federal 319 Contract allocation for \$3111.16 (Schmidgall Rain Garden)
- E. Feuchtenberger moved to approve the following cost share allocations. Second by Fynboh. Passed unanimously.
 - 1. 2019 District Capacity Cost share contract allocations \$1852 Amundson Rain Garden, \$2172 Moore Rain Garden, \$1591 Finzel Rain Garden

IX. Supervisor Reports

- a. Feuchtenberger invited everyone and their families for a picnic pot luck at their home. He will provide the meat and lemonade. Thursday, July 22 at 5:30 p.m. SWCD employees and families are invited. Please bring a dish to pass.
- b. There will be a soil health field day in September at Greg Fynboh's farm. Greg will meet with the BdS policy committee next week.
- c. Dave congratulated the staff on a goo AIS Family Fun Night. He attended the Area 2 meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Troy Goodnough, Secretary

Date