

AITKIN COUNTY SWCD  
307 2<sup>nd</sup> STREET NW, ROOM #216  
AITKIN, MN 56431

Minutes of the Aitkin County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting held on Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at the Aitkin County Government Center, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor Commissioners Room. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. by Frank Turnock, Chair. Pledge of Allegiance was said.

Those present were:

Those absent were:

Frank Turnock, Chair  
Dan Gravley, Vice Chair  
Bob Janzen, Treasurer  
Wayne Anderson, Secretary  
Tom Fasteland, Reporter  
Janet Smude, District Manager  
Lori Nelson, District Secretary  
Darren Mayers, BWSR Board Conservationist  
Steve Cole, NE NRCS Area Assistant State Conservationist  
Garett Christiansen, NE NRCS Area Forester

Welcome Steve Cole, NE NRCS Area Assistant State Conservationist

Introductions were made.

Additions to the agenda and correction to the agenda.

Bills over \$3000

-Houston Engineering, \$9956.50  
-Tidholm Productions, \$7344.50  
-Mississippi Headwaters Board \$8822

Under Mississippi Brd./1W1P, MOA not MOU

A motion was made by Wayne Anderson and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve the agenda with additions and correction. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve the February 15, 2024 minutes. Approved unanimously.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

A motion was made by Wayne Anderson and seconded by Tom Fasteland to accept the February financial statement. Approved unanimously.

## CHECKS WRITTEN

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve checks written. Approved unanimously.

## STAFFING

### SOIL HEALTH SPECIALIST POSITION

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Wayne Anderson to offer Veronica Lundquist the position of Soil Health Specialist contingent on receiving the Soil Health Grant. Effective start date for the new Soil Health Specialist is May 1, 2024. Discussion re: offer a raise to Veronica. No decision was made.

### NEW EMPLOYEE POSITION, WCA

We can't reduce any more time from the Wetland Conservation Act. Looking to move ahead in advertising to hire the new employee position (Shoreland, WCA, etc.). Timeline will be as follows--advertise until April 30, 2024. Interviews the middle of May with a start date of June 1, 2024. Also, looking to reserve a spot for the upcoming Wetland training in Brainerd for the new employee. A motion was made by Wayne Anderson and seconded by Dan Gravley to move ahead in advertising for the new employee position. Approved unanimously.

### HEALTH INSURANCE DISCUSSION

After the last subcommittee meeting the staff had a meeting discussing the health insurance options. Some staff was not comfortable with the Zion, looking more for a standard Blue Cross Blue Shield Plan. Janet would like to meet with the subcommittee after the meeting today. It was decided that it would be a good idea to get it figured out so we know what we can offer a new employee.

## STEVE COLE/GARETT CHRISTIANSEN, NRCS, FORESTRY NEEDS IN NORTHERN MN

Discussion-Looking for More Forestry, What Does That Mean. A list of forest priorities was started. In the future as you think of priorities in forestry reach out to Kyle with your priorities in forestry. Also, Steve mentioned working agreements available with NRCS for Outreach and Education.

## MARY KRUGER, TSA 3

Mary Kruger will be coming to Aitkin the end of March, waiting for the background check. Also, Janet has been working with the county to update our lease (sub lease TSA 3).

## MISSISSIPPI BRAINERD 1W1P IMPLEMENTATION MOA NOT MOU

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Dan Gravley to sign the Mississippi Brainerd 1W1P Implementation MOA. Approved unanimously.

## DAN GRAVLEY/POWER POINT PRESENTATION

Dan Gravley gave a presentation re: sheep farm in McGrath.

## TREE REPORT

Lori gave an update on the 2024 tree sales.

## COST-SHARE PROJECT TO APPROVE/SHORELAND STABILIZATION, ROUND LAKE 2024-1

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve a cost-share assistance contract \$5708.25 or 75% of the total cost-share, whichever is less. Approved unanimously.

## CHARGES FOR SERVICES, PROPOSAL

Sam went through proposed charges for services. A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Dan Gravley to charge a \$70 deposit for the planting bars and when returned will receive their full deposit back. Approved unanimously.

## MISSISSIPPI HEADWATERS BOARD/\$8822

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve payment to Mississippi Headwaters Board for \$8822. Approved unanimously.

## TIDHOLM PRODUCTIONS/\$7344.50

A motion was made by Bob Janzen and seconded by Wayne Anderson to approve payment for \$7344.50 to Tidholm Productions. Approved unanimously.

## HOUSTON ENGINEERING/\$9956.50

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Wayne Anderson to approve payment for \$9956.50 to Houston Engineering, Inc. Approved unanimously.

Frank Turnock read a thank you note from MASWCD.

## SNAKE RIVER REPORT-Dan

Both Boards met on February 28, 2024. Criteria was set for dissolving the old Board—will meet in June to see if the criteria have been met.

Watershed Coordinator position-15 applied not qualified will be re-posting.

## DISTRICT MANAGER REPORT

- 1W1P Brainerd Grant Application
- Met with staff and went through their Ind. Development Plan (IDP)
- 6-month CD \$100,000 was obtained.

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve the \$100,000 CD instead of \$150,000. Approved unanimously.

We are in the process of offering direct deposit to the staff and is also available to the supervisors.

## DISTRICT TECHNICIAN/FORESTER REPORT/AIS UPDATE-Kyle

- AIS REPORT
- Education Grants

- AIS Network meetings
- AIS Workshop
- AIS Committee Structure

## FORESTRY

- Stewardship Plans
- Outreach/Education
- Grants
- Meetings

## FORESTER REPORT-Kaysie (not able to attend, report in folder)

- Stewardship Plans
- CCFFC
- McGregor High School Presentation 3/1/24
- MN Naturalist Presentation/Long Lake 3/29/24
- SFEC Webinar
- Pollinator in Forest Webinar series

## BUFFER SPECIALIST REPORT-Sam

- Riparian Buffers
- Rum River 1W1P
- WCA/TEP meeting
- Culvert Inventory
- Soil Health Grant
- Other/Large Culvert Project, Nordland Twp./Miss Brd. 1W1P  
& Spalding Twp./Ryan Clark & John Stolz, MN Ag Water

## MN BWSR BOARD CONSERVATIONIST REPORT-Darren

- SWCD Employee Training through Central Lakes College-3-day training  
only 30 spots available

## NRCS REPORT-Tom

- EQIP Update
- New Staff/Training
- CSP Update
- Arc Map-Arc Pro Training

- NRCS Team 6 meeting next week
- New Forestry position

#### TSA 3 REPORT-Tom

The TSA 3 meeting will be next Wednesday, March 27, 2024.

#### FARM BILL BIOLOGIST REPORT-Joe

- NRCS Program Update
- Easement Update
- Annual meeting, MN Chapter Wildlife Society
- Arc GIS Pro Training

The next SWCD Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Tuesday, April 16, 2024 at 9:00 a.m. at the Aitkin County Government Center Training Room.

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Dan Gravley to adjourn at 11:50 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne Anderson  
Secretary