

AITKIN COUNTY SWCD
307 2nd STREET NW, ROOM #216
AITKIN, MN 56431

Minutes of the Aitkin County Soil & Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors meeting held on Tuesday, January 27, 2026 at the Aitkin County Courthouse 3rd Floor Jury Deliberation Room. Meeting was called to order at 9:00 a.m. Pledge of Allegiance was recited.

Those present were:

Those absent were:

Dan Gravley, Chair
Francis Dierickx, Vice Chair
Bob Janzen, Treasurer
Franklin Turnock, Secretary
Tom Fasteland, Reporter
Janet Smude, District Manager
Lori Nelson, District Secretary
Veronica Lundquist, Soil Health Specialist/
Outreach Specialist

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve the agenda.

Additions to the agenda

- Bills over \$3000
 - Crow Wing SWCD \$103,321.26
 - Todd County SWCD \$4810.09
- Envirothon contribution/\$250
- Committee assignments
- 2026 mileage rate 72.5/mile

A motion was made by Francis Dierickx and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve the agenda with additions. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Francis Dierickx to approve the December 16, 2025 minutes. Approved unanimously.

TREASURER'S REPORT

A motion was made by Francis Dierickx and seconded by Tom Fasteland to accept the December financial statement. Approved unanimously.

CHECKS WRITTEN

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Francis Dierickx to approve the checks written. Approved unanimously.

AIS DISCUSSION

A meeting was held with David Minke, County Administrator, Mark Wedel, Aitkin County Commissioner, Bret Sample, Aitkin County Commissioner, Janet Smude, Aitkin County SWCD District Manager, and Brian Roulet, Project Coordinator. David Minke, County Administrator offered to redo the AIS contract. A change was to be made was Aitkin County SWCD is to be paid within 30 days of the county receiving the dollars. Also, restructure of the Committee was discussed. The AIS Committee will be (2) Aitkin County Commissioners, (1) Aitkin County SWCD Supervisor, Aitkin County Sheriff or designee, AIS inspector, ACLARA representative, (3) lake association members, Aitkin County SWCD District Manager and AIS Coordinator.

Per diem was discussed to encourage members to come. Meetings will be held April-October during the season when most active. A set date each month for the AIS meeting.

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Tom Fasteland to sign the AIS agreement. Approved unanimously.

DRILL DISCUSSION

COST-SHARE PROJECT/MORRISON SWCD

Drill discussion and Cost-Share Project/Morrison SWCD will be discussed when Sam arrives.

ELECTION OF OFFICERS

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Frank Turnock to nominate Francis Dierickx as the new Chair. Approved unanimously.

Francis Dierickx took over the meeting at this time.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to nominate Tom Fasteland as Vice Chair. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Tom Fasteland to nominate Bob Janzen as Treasurer. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Bob Janzen to nominate Frank Turnock as Secretary. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to nominate Dan Gravley as reporter. Approved unanimously.

2026 SWCD OFFICERS

Francis, Dierickx, Chair
Tom Fasteland, Vice Chair
Bob Janzen, Treasurer
Franklin Turnock, Secretary
Dan Gravley, Reporter

DESIGNATE BANKS AND NEWSPAPER

A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve Security State Bank as the official bank. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve the Old National Bank as the official bank. Approved unanimously.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve the Aitkin Independent Age as the official newspaper. Approved unanimously.

PETERSON COMPANY/2024 SWCD AUDIT

Peterson Company met with the Aitkin County SWCD Board (Zoom) to go through the 2024 Aitkin County SWCD audit.

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Frank Turnock to approve the 2024 SWCD Audit. Approved unanimously.

BILLS OVER \$3000

PETERSON COMPANY/\$5100

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fastland to approve payment of \$5100 to Peterson Company. Approved unanimously.

MN COUNTIES INSURANCE TRUST/\$13,534

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Frank Turnock to approve payment of \$13,534 to MN Counties Insurance Trust. Approved unanimously.

MASWCD/\$7642.98

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve payment of \$7642.98 to MASWCD. Approved unanimously.

CROW WING SWCD/\$103,321.26

A motion was made by Tom Fastland and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve payment of \$103,321.26 to Crow Wing SWCD. Approved unanimously.

TODD COUNTY SWCD/\$4810.09

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve payment of \$4810.09 to Todd County SWCD. Approved unanimously.

ENVIROTHON/\$250

A motion was made by Bob Janzen and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve payment of \$250 to the Envirothon. Approved unanimously.

DRILL DISCUSSION-SAM

Sam handed out information re: drill comparisons (Truax & Great Plains). A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Dan Gravley to table.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Frank Turnock to sell the Truax drill now. Approved unanimously.

MORRISON TWP. CULVERT, MISS BRD 1W1P/\$23,589.80

A motion was made by Tom Fasteland and seconded by Frank Turnock to sign the cost-share assistance contract. Approved unanimously.

BREAK

MEETING WAS CALLED BACK TO ORDER

PERSONNEL POLICY/PAID FAMILY MEDICAL LEAVE (PFMLA)

Janet reached out to the Aitkin County HR Dept. to get language for PFMLA effective 1/1/26.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Bob Janzen to approve the added PFMLA language to the Personnel Policy. Approved unanimously.

2026 IRS MILEAGE RATE

The new 2026 IRS mileage rate is 72.5 cents/mile.

STAFFING/SWCD INTERN & ASSISTANT MANAGER

SWCD INTERN

We didn't get approved for a Conservation Corp summer intern. It was decided that we would not hire a SWCD intern this summer.

ASSISTANT MANAGER

Discussion. No decision at this time

COST-SHARE PROJECT/DAM LAKE PROPERTY OWNERS

MISS BRD 1W1P, \$90,000

Discussion. A motion was made by Frank Turnock and seconded by Tom Fasteland to approve a Streambank & Shoreline Restoration Project (Dam Lake), not to exceed 90% of the total project costs. Approved unanimously.

COST-SHARE PROJECT/DEFENBAUGH, MILLE LACS LAKE

RUM RIVER 1W1P, \$2585.25

A motion was made by Bob Janzen and seconded by Dan Gravley to approve a cost-share assistance contract Defenbaugh, Mille Lacs Lake, not to exceed \$2585.25 or 75% of the total eligible cost, whichever is less. Approved unanimously.

COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS

Committee assignments were reviewed.

SNAKE RIVER REPORT-DAN

- Project updates
- 2026 Fiscal Plan

DISTRICT MANAGER'S REPORT-JANET

- 1w1P updates
- Big Sandy Watershed
- CCFFC Grant update
- E-Link reporting (21 reports)
- Worked with Ellie to get the observation well readings to DNR
- ShelterPoint (PFMLA)
- Pay Equity Report was submitted to the State
- Meet the Staff article written for the newsletter

SENIOR TECHNICIAN REPORT-SAM

- Riparian buffers
- Culvert Inventory
- Forestry
- Well Inventory

SOIL HEALTH SPECIALIST/OUTREACH SPECIALIST REPORT- VERONICA

SOIL HEALTH/OUTREACH

- Forage & Grassland meeting
- Webinars/Soil Health & Native Planting
- Writing articles Native Plants and benefits to the soil
- Soil Health Grant tracking work done for the grant

SOIL HEALTH PROJECTS

-Talked to landowner drone seeding red clover & potentially seeding a pollinator planting with the no till drill, depending on the status of the drill.

COUNTY AG INSPECTOR

-Trainings
-Beginning to think of a training for townships re: noxious weeds

OUTREACH

-2026 Rivers & Lakes Fair

OTHER

-Website update training
-January newsletter
-Tree/Plant orders

PROJECT COORDINATOR REPORT

No report. Brian was absent.

WATERSHED MGMT/WETLAND SPECIALIST REPORT-ELLIE

-Shorelines
-Wetlands (wetland related e-mails, etc., BWSR lecture RIM for Peatlands
-Watersheds/Outreach
 -Rivers & Lakes Fair
 -Mille Lacs Watershed meeting
 -Kettle Upper St. Croix for 2027

OTHER

-Trainings
 -BWSR Grant training
 -MN Water Stewards network on going water quality training
 -Studying for drone license

Finished wells for DNR monitoring for the month of December and reported data in January.

Round Lake Drone Prioritization Study

MN BWSR BOARD CONSERVATIONIST REPORT

Darren was not in attendance today. Janet informed the SWCD Board that Darren accepted another position with MN BWSR.

DISTRICT CONSERVATIONIST REPORT-TOM

-Program updates

-EQIP applications (60) pending for FY2026. January 15th is the application deadline for the 1st ranking period.

-Regenerative Ag Pilot Program recently announced by the Secretary of Agriculture—still learning the details of this program and upcoming training is in the next week or so.

-Staff participated in Subsurface investigations training at the Baxter Area office.

-Lance Smith is the new Acting Area Conservationist for the NE area for at least 120 days following Steve Cole's retirement.

TSA 3 REPORT-TOM

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 28, 2026.

The next Aitkin County SWCD Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 17, 2026 at the Aitkin County Government Center, 3rd Floor Training Room at 9:00 a.m.

A motion was made by Dan Gravley and seconded by Tom Fasteland to adjourn at 11:30 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Franklin Turnock
Secretary

