



Brown Soil and Water Conservation District



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Minutes of the March 15, 2017 Brown SWCD Regular Board Meeting Brown County Office Building, Sleepy Eye, MN

Meeting was called to order at 2:00pm by Chair Vogel.

PRESENT

1. Jack Vogel – Chair
2. Gary Rathman – Vice Chair
3. Clem Windschitl – Secretary
4. Jeff Nielsen – Treasurer
5. Melanie Krueger – District Manager
6. Jeremy Groskreutz – District Technician
7. Alan Gleisner – District Technician
8. Heather Hansen – District Technician
9. Dustin Van Thuyne – PF/Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist
10. Nick Smetana – PF/Farm Bill Wildlife Biologist, Watonwan County
11. Tanner Bruse – Pheasants Forever
12. Ben Cottrell – Acting NRCS District Conservationist
13. Dean Simonsen – Brown County Commissioner Liaison

ABSENT

1. Greg Roiger – PRI

AGENDA

- ◆ Motion was made by Rathman and seconded by Windschitl to approve the agenda as presented.
Affirmative: Vogel, Rathman, Windschitl, Nielsen
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

GUEST – TANNER BRUSE, PHEASANTS FOREVER

- ◆ Tanner Bruse presented Gary Rathman with an award and banner in recognition of him being chosen as a 'Conservation Face of MN' by Pheasants Forever and the group watched the video that was shown at the state convention. Bruse expressed appreciation to Rathman for all he does for conservation. Bruse also discussed the Precision Ag initiative Pheasants Forever is working on with Ag Solver. Pheasants Forever is hiring two specialists to support this program in Minnesota. They are also looking for districts to partner with in offering the program to landowners as well as promoting the program. Bruse was asked to send the PowerPoint presentation to Krueger and she will distribute to the Board Members to review. The district will have him attend a future meeting for a more detailed presentation of the program if they want to move forward with a partnership.

CONSENT AGENDA

- ◆ Consent Agenda items were reviewed. Motion was made by Nielsen and seconded by Rathman to accept the Consent Agenda items as presented which included the February 15, 2017 Board Meeting minutes, the February 2017 Treasurer's Report, the Bills Report dated February 11, 2017 to March 9, 2017, and the Monthly Staff Narrative report dated February 11, 2017 to March 9, 2017.
Affirmative: Vogel, Rathman, Windschitl, Nielsen
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

WATER PERMITS/WCA REPORTS

- ◆ Krueger advised that no new well reports from MDH have been received and no new water permits from the DNR have been received. Hansen advised on a WCA TEP panel meeting she attended about the Cunningham irrigation application.

COST SHARE

- ◆ None

NRCS REPORT

- ◆ Cottrell gave a verbal report to the group. He is now working full time in Brown County only and not covering other county offices. They are actively working to replace Tom's position and trying for a third time to fill the soil conservationist position and are hoping to have both positions filled by May. He also reviewed the Client Gateway option available to landowners signed up in NRCS programs. Cottrell then reviewed the Amendments to the MOU Agreement with everyone. Each board member present signed the form affirming the review was completed.

PF/FARM BILL TECH REPORT

- ◆ Van Thuyne reviewed his PF/Farm Bill Tech board report with the group and the report is on file.

MEETING REPORTS

- ◆ Krueger attended the One Watershed One Plan meeting in St. James on February 21 and advised that the Watonwan County Commissioners and SWCD Supervisors voted to not include the Little Cottonwood watershed into the area for the grant proposal being submitted for the Watonwan Watershed One Watershed One Plan.
- ◆ Krueger attended the GBERBA Technical meeting in Mankato on February 22 and advised on items discussed which included One Watershed One Plan for Watonwan Watershed and the new Federal 319 PCA grant where funds are eligible for cover crops and alternative intakes. Details of the grant specifics will be known at a later date.
- ◆ Rathman attended the GBERBA Policy Meeting on March 10 and gave a report to the group and advised details of the Federal 319 PCA grant fund were discussed also.
- ◆ Buffer Informational meetings were held on February 28 and March 8 by the district with a total of 100 landowners attending. The group held discussion on the outcome of those meetings.
- ◆ Vogel, Nielsen, and staff worked at the district's booth for the Farm Show event on March 10-11 in New Ulm at the Civic Center and gave report to the group.
- ◆ Commissioner Comments: Commissioner Simonsen shared information with the group and stated that he also attended one of the Buffer Information meeting sessions on February 28 and thought it went very well.

Van Thuyne, Smetana, and Bruse exited at 3:35pm

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

- ◆ None

NEW BUSINESS

- ◆ **2016 Financial Statements Report:** The group reviewed the 2016 Financial Statements Report. Discussion was held on the status of the fund balance and that there was a slight increase this year versus a decrease last year. The report was submitted to BWSR as required by March 15 and is posted on the district website.
- ◆ **Lakeshed Maps and Little Cottonwood HUC:** Staff had researched the availability of lakeshed maps for all of the lakes within Brown County as per discussions held at the Annual Planning Meeting in January. Copies of the available lakeshed maps were passed around and discussion held on how the district can utilize these maps to focus cost share projects to these areas. Staff also advised that the Little Cottonwood watershed only has a HUC10 number, not a HUC8 number. It is considered part of the Middle Minnesota's HUC8 watershed, therefore, that is why it is not recognized as its own watershed and would make getting it recognized as its own HUC8 watershed very difficult as it would need to be changed at the local, state, and federal levels among many organizations.
- ◆ **Flood Relief Projects:** A handout listing the current status of all Flood Relief cost share projects was reviewed. Discussion was held on the technical services for these projects and the possibility of outsourcing the engineering services to private firms versus the SCTSA. The Board would like staff to stay informed on the status of all projects and report updates at meetings.
- ◆ **Resolution To Support One Watershed One Plan Watonwan Watershed:**
Discussion was held on the resolution the board is being asked to vote on which is a Resolution to Support the One Watershed One Plan Watonwan Watershed grant proposal. Krueger advised that all SWCDs and County Commissioners within the watershed are being asked to review and vote on this resolution as it is a necessary step to the grant proposal. Discussion was held on whether the district wants to support the grant proposal. A motion was made by Rathman and seconded by Nielsen to support the Resolution for the One Watershed One Plan Watonwan Watershed grant proposal.
Affirmative: Vogel, Rathman, Windschitl, Nielsen
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ **AIS Prevention Program Update:** Krueger and Hansen gave an update to the group on current AIS program activities and events recently attended as well as future plans.
- ◆ **Upcoming Meetings/Events:** A motion was made by Rathman and seconded by Windschitl to attend and approve the following upcoming meetings/events:
 - ◇ Wednesday, March 29 – GBERBA Technical Meeting, Mankato (Groskreutz)
 - ◇ Thursday, April 6 – RCRCA Board Meeting, Redwood (Roiger)
 - ◇ Friday, April 14 – Good Friday Holiday (office closes at noon)
 - ◇ Wednesday, April 19 – Brown SWCD Regular Board Meeting, 2:00pm
 - ◇ Tuesday, March 28 – Soil Health Evening Workshop event with the SFA, staff approved to co-sponsor this event and host it in the SWCD office building
Affirmative: Vogel, Rathman, Windschitl, Nielsen
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

Meeting Adjourned – 5:15pm

Secretary:  Date: 4-19-17