



**Minutes of the January 14, 2025  
Brown SWCD Regular Board Meeting  
Brown County Office Building, Sleepy Eye, MN**

**Meeting was called to order at 10:31am by Craig Fischer.**

**PRESENT**

1. Craig Fischer – Chair
2. Mark Wellner – Vice-Chair
3. Brad Augustin – Secretary
4. Bill Eckstein - Treasurer
5. Rae Runck – PRI
6. Melanie Krueger – District Manager
7. Brian Braun – Brown County Commissioner Liaison

**OATH OF OFFICE**

- ◆ Re-elected supervisors, Brad Augustin, Craig Fischer and Mark Wellner took the oath of office and Certificates of Election were completed for each member.

**AGENDA**

- ◆ Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Wellner to approve the agenda.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS**

- ◆ Discussion was held on board positions and all agreed to continue with current positions. Motion was made by Runck and seconded by Eckstein to continue with current board positions as is for all Supervisors with Fischer as Chair, Wellner as Vice-Chair, Augustin as Secretary, Eckstein as Treasurer, and Runck as PRI.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

**2025 BOARD MEETING SCHEDULE**

- ◆ Discussion was held on the board meeting schedule and preference is to keep the meeting schedule as is. Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Runck to set regular board meetings for 10:30am on the second Tuesday of each month.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

**2025 COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS**

- ◆ Discussion was held on committee assignments and preference is to keep them as is. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Augustin to continue with current Committee Assignments for 2025.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

### **CONFLICT OF INTEREST FORM**

- ◆ Reviewed the annual conflict of interest form that is reviewed and signed by all Supervisors and staff. Motion was made by Wellner and seconded by Runck to accept the annual conflict of interest form for all Brown SWCD Supervisors and staff.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

### **DESIGNATE DEPOSITORY**

- ◆ Discussed the district's bank account locations and information. Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Eckstein to continue with designated depositories for 2025 as First Security Bank and SouthPoint Financial Credit Union for the district.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

### **ELECTRONIC PAYMENTS AUTHORITY**

- ◆ Discussed annual authorization of electronic payments to the District Manager. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Wellner to authorize District Manager, Melanie Krueger, to execute electronic fund transfer payments as needed for payment of Brown SWCD bills.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

### **SIGNATURE AUTHORITY**

- ◆ Discussed authorization of signature authority to District Manager for grant reports and documents to and from BWSR through the eLINK grants reporting system. Motion was made by Wellner and seconded by Runck to authorize District Manager, Melanie Krueger, as signature authority for all grant reports and documents through the eLINK system with BWSR.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

### **2025 MILEAGE RATE**

- ◆ Discussed mileage rate information. Motion was made by Runck and seconded by Eckstein to adopt the 2025 IRS business use mileage rate of 70 cents per mile.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

- ◆ Reviewed the consent agenda items presented which included the December 12, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes, the December 2024 Treasurer's Report, the Bills Report dated December 5, 2024 to January 8, 2025, the MCIT 2025 PC & WC Renewal Invoice for \$9,215.00, and the 2025 Membership Dues Invoices to MASWCD, GBERBA, Area VI, and NACD for a total of \$9,361.367. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Runck to approve the consent agenda items as presented.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

### **SWCD STAFF REPORTS**

- ◆ Discussed staff reports provided by Botz, Giefer, Krueger, Olson and Spence.

### **PF/FARM BILL WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST REPORT**

- ◆ Reviewed report provided by Ecker.

## NRCS REPORT

- ◆ No report this month.

## COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

- ◆ Commissioner Braun provided an update on recent activities at Brown County.

## COST SHARE REPORT & CONTRACTS

- ◆ Reviewed the cost-share report. There were no contracts for approval this month.

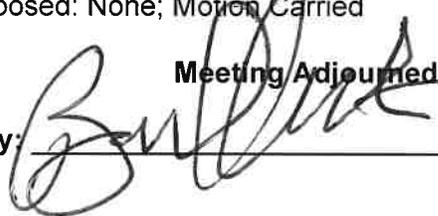
## NEW BUSINESS

- ◆ **2024 Quarter 4 Budget Report:** Reviewed the quarter four budget report.
- ◆ **Grant Updates:** Reviewed the grant update information provided for final grant reports submitted to BWSR on FY24 Conservation Delivery Grant, FY22 Buffer Grant, FY23 Soil Health Cost Share Grant, the FY23 State Cost Share Grant and a recap of annual grant reports due to BWSR by February 1 for the district's 14 open grants with BWSR.
- ◆ **Tax Form E-Filing:** Discussed the need to hire Peterson Company to electronically file (e-file) the SWCD's annual W-2 and 1099 tax information returns. The IRS now requires anyone who files 10 or more of those forms to e-file the annual reports versus mailing them. Manager is working on setting up an account but it won't be ready in time for the reporting deadline. Peterson quoted an estimated price of \$352 to do the work. Motion was made by Wellner and seconded by Eckstein to authorize hiring Peterson Company to e-file 2024 tax forms reports with the IRS on behalf of Brown SWCD.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ **2025 Budget:** Discussed the 2025 Budget prepared by manager. More information was provided as requested for some of the line items. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Wellner to approve the Brown SWCD 2025 Budget as presented.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ **Personnel Committee – Hiring Recommendation:** Personnel Committee members gave an update on the hiring process conducted and advised that interviews with four applicants were held on January 7 and then advised their recommendation to hire Isabella Portner and if she declines, then hire Lillian Maul. Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Runck to authorize Personnel Committee recommendation to hire Isabella Portner for a full-time Conservation Technician 1 position at Grade 5, Step 1 wage (non-negotiable) with standard benefits and training probation phase per policy, with an anticipated February 2025 start date to be determined upon acceptance of job offer, and if applicant declines, then offer position to Lillian Maul.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ **Soil Health Practices Grant:** Reviewed the soil health practices grant update timeline and information provided by manager and discussed authorizing her to submit a Request For Information to BWSR for the grant program and funds once they open up the application to request it in late January or February. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Wellner to authorize District Manager to submit a Request For Information to BWSR indicating Brown SWCD's interest in participating in the Soil Health Practices Grant Program.  
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

- ◆ **Peer To Peer Mentor Agreement:** Reviewed the Peer To Peer Mentor Agreement with Mark Portner as presented and discussed the mentor program policy information through the SCTSA Soil Health Collaboration Grant. Motion was made by Runck and seconded by Augustin to approve the Peer To Peer Mentor Agreement with Mark Portner for February 1, 2025 to January 31, 2026 in the amount of \$3,000.00.  
 Affirmative: Augustin, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
 Abstained due to potential conflict of interest: Eckstein  
 Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ **Meeting Reports:**
  - ◇ Eckstein gave a report about the RCRC meeting attended January 2 in Marshall.
- ◆ **Upcoming Meetings/Events:** A motion was made by Wellner and seconded by Augustin to approve the upcoming meetings/events:
  - ◇ Tuesday, January 21 – Area VI Chairs Meeting, 9:30am, Mankato (Fischer)
  - ◇ Friday, January 24 – GBERBA Policy Board Meeting, 1pm, Mankato (Augustin)
  - ◇ Tuesday, February 4 – MASWCD Legislative Priorities Webinar, 1pm (Wellner, Augustin, Runck, Eckstein)
  - ◇ Friday, February 7 – RCRC Board Meeting, 10am, Marshall (Eckstein)
  - ◇ Tuesday, February 11 – Brown SWCD Board Meeting, 10:30am (All)  
 Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner  
 Opposed: None; Motion Carried

**Meeting Adjourned – 12:12pm**

Secretary: \_\_\_\_\_



Date: \_\_\_\_\_

2-11-25