



**Minutes of the November 7, 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. Hailey Olson – Conservation Technician (entered 10:55am, exited 11:50am)

ABSENT

1. None

AGENDA

- ◆ Motion was made by Wellner and seconded by Runck to approve the agenda as presented with approval to move item #17 to after item #7 on the agenda.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

CONSENT AGENDA

- ◆ Reviewed the consent agenda items presented which included the October 14, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes, the October 2025 Treasurer's Report, and the Bills Report dated October 9, 2025 to November 4, 2025. Motion was made by Runck and seconded by Eckstein to approve the consent agenda items presented.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

SWCD STAFF REPORTS

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

PF/FARM BILL WILDLIFE BIOLOGIST REPORT

- ◆ Reviewed staff report provided by Ecker.

NRCS REPORT

- ◆ Report not provided due to government shutdown.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

- ◆ Commissioner Braun was not able to attend today's meeting.

COST SHARE REPORT & CONTRACTS

*Hailey Olson entered 10:55am

- ◆ Reviewed the cost-share report and presented contract items for approval.
- ◆ Russell Anderson, \$200.00 MAWQCP certification incentive payment. Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Wellner to approve the \$200.00 MAWQCP certification payment to Russell Anderson.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ BCCWMA-08-03, Brown County, Stately 30/31, 74 acres treated for leafy spurge with a spring and fall spraying. Final project cost of \$8,392.40 with cost share payment of \$6,294.30 from the FY22/23 Cooperative Weed Management Grant. Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Eckstein to approve BCCWMA-08-03 cost share payment of \$6,294.30 to Brown County.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ CC2025-03, Kenneth Hanson, Cover Crop, Albin 26, 42 acres. Year one of two installed on 9/19/2025 and checked/certified on 10/24/2025. Total cost share payment of \$5,040.00 from the FY25 Conservation Contracts Grant. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Runck to approve CC2025-03 cost share payment of \$5,040.00 to Kenneth Hanson.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ 25-CWMM-BRO-003, Nicholas Braulick, SSTS Incentive, North Home 20. Voucher for \$5,000 SSTS Incentive payment for completion of the installation of a septic system. Motion was made by Wellner and seconded by Eckstein to recommend the voucher for submission to RCRCA, 25-CWMM-BRO-003 Septic System Incentive payment of \$5,000 to Nicholas Braulick.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ 25-CWMM-BRO-002, Samuel Haun, SSTS Incentive, Cottonwood 7. Voucher for \$5,000 SSTS Incentive payment for completion of the installation of a septic system. Motion was made by Runck and seconded by Eckstein to recommend the voucher for submission to RCRCA, 25-CWMM-BRO-002 Septic System Incentive payment of \$5,000 to Samuel Haun.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ WBIF-WW-24-08-04, Albin Township, Shoreline Protection Project (rip rap portion), Albin 14. Cost estimate of \$25,310.00 with 85% cost share of \$21,513.50. Watonwan Implementation grant funds through GBERBA will be used for the project. SCTSA will be technical provider for the project. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Runck to recommend project for approval to GBERBA, WBIF-WW-24-08-04 cost share contract with Albin Township.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried
- ◆ WBIF-WW-24-08-05, Albin Township, Shoreline Protection Project (coir log portion), Albin 14. Cost estimate of \$23,470.00 with 85% cost share of \$19,949.50. Watonwan Implementation grant funds through GBERBA will be used for the project. SCTSA will be technical provider for the project. Motion was made by Runck and seconded by Wellner to recommend project for approval to GBERBA, WBIF-WW-24-08-05 cost share contract with Albin Township.
Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
Opposed: None; Motion Carried

NEW BUSINESS

- ◆ **AIS Program Work Plan Draft:** Staff discussed the draft work plan information presented for 2026 and answered several questions. A final work plan will be presented at next month's meeting for the Board's approval.
- *Hailey Olson exited 11:50am
- ◆ **MASWCD Convention:** Discussed attendance to the convention in December.
 - ◆ **Tree Program Prices:** Reviewed tree program price evaluation information provided by manager. Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Runck to accept District Manager's recommendation to hold tree program sale prices as is through the 2026 tree sales program.
 - Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
 - Opposed: None; Motion Carried
 - ◆ **2026/2027 Conservation Contracts Policy:** Discussed the draft grant program policy presented. Manager answered questions about some of the changes. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Runck to approve the 2026/2027 Conservation Contracts Grant Program Policy as presented.
 - Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
 - Opposed: None; Motion Carried
 - ◆ **2026 Health Insurance Benefits:** Discussion held on the health insurance benefits information provided. Manager obtained several quotes for consideration as the district's existing plan premium went up 19.3%. Personnel Committee met earlier this week to review and recommends enrolling in the PEIP HSA plan as of January 1, 2026 and continuing HSA contributions as is.
 - ◇ Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Runck to approve Brown SWCD to enroll in the PEIP Advantage HSA health insurance plan as of January 1, 2026 and authorize manager to complete necessary paperwork for the enrollment.
 - Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
 - Opposed: None; Motion Carried
 - ◇ Motion was made by Runck and seconded by Wellner to approve 2026 HSA contributions of \$100 per month per employee enrolled in the district's health insurance plan.
 - Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
 - Opposed: None; Motion Carried
 - ◆ **2026 Section 125 Cafeteria Plan:** Reviewed renewal information for the district's Section 125 Cafeteria Plan. Motion was made by Augustin and seconded by Eckstein to approve renewal of the Section 125 Cafeteria Plan with TASC for 2026.
 - Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
 - Opposed: None; Motion Carried
 - ◆ **MN Paid Leave Information:** Discussed the new state program starting in 2026, MN Paid Leave. Program information was provided and discussed some aspects of the program. Employees will be notified by December 1 as required. Decisions for workplace policies will be presented at next month's meeting.
 - ◆ **Personnel Policy Updates:** Manager requested authorization to hire lawyer to complete updates as needed to the Personnel Policy for 2026 with an estimated cost of around \$1,000 dependent on how many updates are needed. Motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Wellner to authorize hiring Ratwik, Roszak, & Maloney to complete necessary updates to the Brown SWCD Personnel Policy for 2026.
 - Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
 - Opposed: None; Motion Carried
 - ◆ **E-Filing Tax Forms:** Manager requested authorization to hire a firm to e-file the district's 1099 tax forms for a cost up to \$500. In order for manager to do it, a second Responsible Official is needed and at this time there are no other feasible options for

that. Manager will be able to e-file W-2 forms. Motion was made by Wellner and seconded by Runck to authorize hiring a firm, up to \$500 cost, to e-file 1099 tax forms with the IRS on behalf of Brown SWCD for calendar year 2025.

Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner

Opposed: None; Motion Carried

- ◆ **Wood Lake Task Force Updates:** Provided information regarding the subcommittee task force meeting held in October.
- ◆ **Meeting Reports:**
 - ◇ Augustin gave an update about the GBERBA Executive meeting attended via Webex on October 17.
 - ◇ Eckstein gave a report about the October 17 and November 6 RCRCA Board meetings he attended.
- ◆ **Upcoming Meetings/Events:** A motion was made by Eckstein and seconded by Runck to approve the upcoming meetings/events:
 - ◇ Personnel Committee Meeting, December (Eckstein, Wellner, Krueger) (date to be determined)
 - ◇ Friday, November 14 – GBERBA Joint Policy/Technical Meeting, 9:00am, Mankato (Augustin)
 - ◇ December, MASWCD Convention as discussed (Augustin, Eckstein)
 - ◇ Thursday, December 4 – RCRCA Board Meeting, 9:00am, Redwood Falls (Eckstein)
 - ◇ Tuesday, December 9 – Brown SWCD Board Meeting, 10:30am (All)
 - Affirmative: Augustin, Eckstein, Fischer, Runck, Wellner
 - Opposed: None; Motion Carried

Meeting Adjourned – 12:47pm

Secretary: _____

Date: _____

12-9-25