

**MINUTES OF THE WADENA SWCD
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
February 22, 2011**

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Marvin Runyan at 1:05 p.m.

Supervisors present: Marvin Runyan, Chairman
 Tom Schulz, Vice Chairman
 Ken Berg, Secretary
 Nancy Benson, Treasurer
 Melvin Kinnunen, Public Relations and Information

Staff present: Malinda Dexter, District Manager

Others present: Steve Lutes, NRCS District Conservationist
 Ralph Miller, County Commissioner

Motion by Tom Schulz to approve the minutes of the January 18, 2011 board meeting. Motion seconded by Melvin Kinnunen, motion passed.

Nancy Benson read the January Treasurer's Report and made a motion to approve as read, subject to audit. The balance on hand as of January 31, 2011 was \$ 36,235.61. The accounts receivable balance as of January 31, 2011 was \$4,083.29. Motion seconded by Melvin Kinnunen. Motion passed.

Ralph Miller, Commissioner reported that the County voted to give a Sheriff's car to the District. We will receive it in 30 to 60 days, after they will remove the decals, sirens, and the District will transfer, license and insure it. When we no longer need the car we must give it back to the Sheriff's Department. Malinda is to send a thank you note to the Sheriff after we receive the car.

Tom Schulz reported on the SWCD Forestry meeting held January 20th in McGregor. Discussed Midwest Floating Islands, they use a fibrous mat that floats, plant shrubs and trees on it and pull it out to where they want it on a lake or wide stream and anchor it down. MN Conservation Core (MCC) is a good program for students. Don Baloun, NRCS State Conservationist is working with a task force to use \$1 mil in EQIP funds for Forestry.

Melvin Kinnunen reported on the MARC&D Annual Meeting held January 26th in St.Cloud. Malinda and Melvin worked at the registration table before the meeting. By-Law changes included allowing officer's to be re-elected for a 3rd term. The NRCS Grazing book is to be reprinted with \$700 in funds from each Council.

Tom Schulz reported on the NACD Convention in Nashville. NACD is lobbying for a Block Grant to come from the next Farm Bill to get funds to Districts. In the North Central Region of the United States, most Districts have staff, the South does not have staff. A resolution came from Michigan stating the funds past to Districts must be a minimum of 85%. Tom is concerned about NACD, the leadership is for farm advocacy and not conservationists. The MASWCD spends \$17,000 a year with dues and meetings for NACD.

Tom Schulz reported on the Great Lakes Committee meeting. He was elected Secretary of the organization. The test results from monitoring rivers in the Great Lakes show phosphorous rates are rising, why?

Tom Schulz reported on the MASWCD Retreat held Feb. 14 & 15. They discussed spending a lot of time on the Capacity Awards program. Some Districts do this and some do not, they will trim down the document to fit Area's. It may stay the same for one more year. New Supervisors training was discussed, it may be done during or before the convention for those elected in November.

Tom reported on the MASWCD meeting held on Feb. 16th in St. Cloud. Roundtable discussion on water management with Districts and Watershed Districts, the plan recommends 81 watershed districts, eliminate competitive grants and add incentives. Work on more efficient areas, like the Red Eye River and the Crow Wing River, counties in those watershed districts must work together. MN Assoc of Counties (MAC) and Watershed

Districts are discussing this.

Tom Schulz reported that the Legislature is recommending budget cuts. So far the Conservation Delivery System or Base grant has not been cut, but Cost Share has been cut. Open lot agreement deadline is closed, 80% of projects not completed should be completed with funds remaining in cost share.

Melvin Kinnunen reported on the WesMin RC&D Annual Meeting held on Feb. 16 in Alexandria. There were two by-law changes, 1) the removal of council members, 2) WesMin RC&D meetings to be held every other month. Speaker at the meeting was Lindberg Ekola from the MN Forest Resource Council (MFRC).

Nancy Benson reported on the Trees for Wadena meeting held Feb. 22nd at the office. The Initiative Foundation has received \$55,804.27 from donations. The Medina fundraiser brought in \$18,803. Staff is documenting tree loss. Distribution of trees will be April 30th. Staff will be going door to door in the City of Wadena to meet with landowners, they will be asked to fill out a 10 question survey and draw a sketch of their lot, where trees were lost. Region 5 DC has applied for a grant from the Bremer Foundation for staff reimbursement for 360 hours at \$30/hour. News articles are going out in the City utility bill, we are still finding people that do not know about the program.

Melvin Kinnunen made a motion to adopt the Employee Policy Manual as written. Nancy Benson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

The Conservation and Wildlife Expo was discussed: Melvin Kinnunen stated we are money ahead right now and we cannot afford to lose any funds, workshops were poorly attended. Marvin Runyan stated we had good programs for the kids. Tom Schulz stated our work plan for this year is full, but we can look at it another year. Ken Berg stated we cannot afford to lose any money right now. Nancy Benson said do not host one this year but look at it next year. Tom Schulz made a motion to put the Conservation and Wildlife Expo on hiatus for this year and look at it again next year. Ken Berg seconded the motion, passed.

Steve Lutes, NRCS District Conservationist gave the NRCS report:

- Discussed the NRCS Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) and a drug free workplace and EEO.
- CSP signup had 42 applicants, the scoring system has gone up, should have 50% success.
- EQIP signup ends March 4th
- WHIP signup had 7 applicants, funding has been cut, but should get four approved.
- Budget under continuing resolution, may go back to 2008 budget.
- Colleen Oestreich will be attending the next meeting, so request it be held in the afternoon.

Melvin Kinnunen made a motion that the next meeting be held March 21st at 1:00 p.m. Tom Schulz seconded the motion. Motion passed.

New Business:

Cost Share to be Paid:

09-379 Nolte, Twp 136, Sec.9, Subsurface Drainage \$2,325.5 Partial payment for work completed last fall. Tom Schulz made a motion to approve C/S Contract #09-379. Nancy Benson seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Darren Newville from East Ottertail SWCD (EOT) was put on speaker phone and discussed the Adaptive Management Program being started in EOT County. MDA received funds from the sales tax 3/8th of 1%. They developed a work plan with Luke Steuve of MDA, and an irrigation curriculum for a clinic to be held Feb. 23rd in New York Mills. Darren is putting together an irrigation forum in two weeks to include DNR, MPCA, MDA, CMIC, and SWCD's to discuss information for irrigation, tools and an outreach program. Nitrogen Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) is a concern for producers, there is a need to upgrade the irrigation scheduling program with 3 new weather stations at the Wadena Airport, Parkers Prairie and the EOT office.

Darren explained that the Adaptive Management Program gets producers to sign up and provides

management practices to EOT, they take aerial photos of the farm and photos are reviewed for soils information. Then collect basil stalk samples from the field to test for nitrogen use. A winter meeting for data to be explained and hopefully to get landowners to reduce use of Nitrogen. The pilot project should include 30 to 40 fields, if they get more signups there may be more. There is no cost to the landowner. Received a grant to pay Ag Technology, of Iowa, for providing the aerial photos. Fields get ID # no names are given out, trends will come out of the study after a few years. If Wadena County Producers want in the program they should contact Darren in the EOT SWCD office. Malinda asked if there was anything that the District needs to do, we may have to collect stalk samples and will be reimbursed for our time. A five year work plan has been developed. Dry land will also be in the project.

Minnesota Conservation Core (MCC) grant for a Conservation Apprentice was approved. We will have a student from mid May to mid August at no cost to us, they are paid a food and lodging stipend from the MCC and at the end of the summer they receive a scholarship. We need to spread the word on the application process.

The Poster and Essay Contest was discussed. It was the consensus of the board to continue the program. We need to get into the schools as much as possible.

Meetings or Training Sessions:

Feb. 24 Private Forest Management in the Future, Brainerd - Tom - mileage & meal

March 3 EQIP Meeting on Forestry, Sartell - Tom - mileage & meal

March 11 Area VIII Meeting, Bemidji - full board and Malinda - cost is \$11 per person

March 23-24 Spring Administration Training, Mille Lacs - cost \$65.00 per person, room \$39.00

Area VIII attendance, Tom, Melvin, Nancy, Ken, Marvin and Malinda. Ken Berg made a motion to approve the above listed meetings for attendance. Melvin Kinnunen seconded the motion. Motion passed.

Melvin Kinnunen and Nancy Benson discussed the District Technicians evaluation. They had a concern for the tardiness in the mornings and the long coffee breaks in mid morning and mid afternoon. They also discussed the refusal of the employee to take the mail and straighten up the break room when it is their turn. The employee's attitude in the office was also discussed. Melvin Kinnunen made a motion to give the employee the next step increase. Motion failed due to no second. Tom Schulz made a motion that the employee be recommended for the next step given conditions of promptness to work and no insubordination for 60 days and if no incidences in that time will receive raise to the next step on the pay scale. Nancy Benson seconded the motion. More discussion followed regarding the behavior bordering insubordination. A verbal warning will be issued to the employee for tardiness, inefficient use of District time, failure to meet management directives and the board takes seriously the attitude issues. Tom Schulz withdrew the above motion. Tom Schulz made the motion that the District Board grant the employee the next Step on the pay scale in 60 days, retroactive to the anniversary date, given there are no repercussions. Nancy Benson seconded the motion. Vote: Schulz, Benson, Berg and Runyan for and Kinnunen against. Motion passed.

Marvin Runyan adjourned the meeting at 4:00 p.m.

Minutes by Secretary
Ken Berg