

Becker Soil and Water Conservation District
Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting
Wednesday, March 18, 2015

The regular meeting of the Becker Soil and Water Conservation District Board of Supervisors was held on Wednesday, March 18, 2015 in the Conference Room of the Ag Center Building located at 809 8th Street SE, Detroit Lakes, Minnesota.

Those present were Supervisors Tony Beck, Kathy Stenger, Jerome Flottesmesch, Travis Schauer and Eugene Pavelko. Others present include Becker County Commissioner Barry Nelson, District Administrator Peter Mead, Admin Assistant Jen Wentz, NRCS District Conservationist Ed Musielewicz, District Technician Ed Clem and Shoreland Specialist Marsha Watland.

Call to Order – Chairman Stenger called the meeting to order at 8:05 a.m.

Approve February Meeting minutes – no changes noted.

Motion (Beck, Schauer) to approve the February meeting minutes as written. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Financial Reports and Bills for Approval – Peter reviewed February financial reports and March bills for approval.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Pavelko) to approve the February financials and March bills. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Approval of First Quarter Special Supervisor Meetings

- 1/7 – BSWCD Annual Planning Retreat
- 2/3 – Becker County Commissioners Meeting
- 3/31 – Area 1 MASWCD Meeting

Motion (Flottesmesch, Beck) to approve special meetings for the first quarter of 2015. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Flottesmesch, Beck) to amend the above motion to include the March 26th Township Weed meeting. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Approval of First Quarter Supervisor's Payroll Vouchers and Expenses

Motion (Pavelko, Beck) to approve first quarter vouchers and expenses. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Reports –

District Conservationist – Ed Musielewicz reported on the following:

- EQIP sign-up has ended but rank and score is currently underway.
- We have 22 eligible 1st round applications for 1/2 million.
- Not all applications will be approved immediately. The Red River Basin Initiative will cause delays in this.
- Sign-up deadline for Red River Basin is April 17th but there is no scoring worksheet yet.
- We have 11 applications yet to score for sign-up #2 and #3. Ray has been helping with this.

- We have a total of \$800,000 in applications this year.
- CSP signup deadline was extended to March 13th. We have completed 1/3 of our interviews.
- There is no measurement tool on the computer for CSP data entry. Rank and score is currently being completed on paper.
- CSP re-enrolls have 27 expiring contracts.
- Landowners have until the end of March to make application. We have 11 thus far.
- Area Conservationist, Danny Weber has undergone open heart surgery and continues with dialysis but is doing better.
- New State Conservationist will be announced by the end of April.

District Administrator – Peter Mead reported on the following:

- He and Ed M. attended the Technical Training & Certification for Conservation Delivery in Minnesota strategic meeting in Bloomington to address training needs and the TAA framework in MN.
- Peter Represented TSA1 and Ed was one of several DCs chosen from around the state. BWSR, NRCS and MASWCD staff led the workgroup. Other states offered input on their programs and training frameworks too.
- This session addressed the need for training and tech approval authority with NRCS and Districts, and a framework for TAA on Non-Ag practices was discussed.
- A core group of NRCS, BWSR and MASWCD staff will meet and develop a plan for future sessions.
- The recent funding push for stable funding looks to carve out 11 million in Clean Water funds to provide \$40,000 to Districts annually. Afterwards, funding will be based on need and conservation delivery plans. This will offer support for operational expenses.
- Governor Dayton's Buffer Bill recap: requirement that DNR specify all bodies of water subject to 50' buffer rule. This will be established by the state, enforced by DNR but monitored by Soil & Water Districts.
- TAA has been granted to Claire Olson by Dave Jones for design of 638's / WASCObS.
- HS Intern Jalen Young will be on hand in our office Monday – Friday from 10:30-12:00.
- We have WAE money available. Ed M. has sent a request to offer assistance through partnership with a seasonal technician, and we can provide 50-50 match between WAE hours and District funds to hire a seasonal technician.
- Work plans and grant agreements have been submitted for new Clean Water competitive grants. Once executed, we can begin spending this grant money.

District Technician – Ed Clem reported on the following:

- Tree sales are still a bit behind, but with the recent change in weather, they've picked up nicely.
- 14,000 trees have been ordered; over 11,000 have been sold.
- TEP meeting held Monday.
- Wally Danielson, near Richwood on the Buffalo River, has a nice site for a wetland bank. He's interested in the Ag bank program.
- Ed and Ryan H. viewed the site after the meeting. It's not currently being tilled.
- He can only earn 50% credit because it's not an entirely drained wetland.
- This is almost 60 acres of basin and about 30 acres of credit.
- Danielson will mitigate much of this land on his own. He has CWs on the land.
- BWSRs banking program is not very user friendly. An Environmental Consultant should be hired. The entire process will be 3-4 years.
- We have five tree planting jobs.

Nistler is starting construction in April. Road restrictions are already set. Once started, we will begin construction staking and inspections. This will all compete with time management for trees.

Ag in the Classroom was held yesterday in Detroit Lakes at M State. It was very successful. Next Tuesday will be held in Frazee with Menahga attending. Lake Park-Audubon, White Earth, Holy Rosary and home-schooled students attend the session in Detroit Lakes. Waubun-Ogema schools were invited but unable to attend.

Shoreland Contractor Training saw nearly 75 contractors and various agencies in attendance. Claire, Marsha, Ed Clem and Peter led the sessions. Overall, the event was a huge success. Permitting requirements was probably the biggest surprise for most contractors. Hopefully, with the help of our new AIS Coordinator and Water Quality Technician, we can help make this process much more streamlined and less confusing for everyone. We now have an in-office exam for those that weren't able to attend this meeting. \$45 is charged for the certification exam when in-between training sessions.

Adam and Phil drove to Marshall to attend a course on offering future farmland demonstrations re: cover crops and no-tilling to our area producers.

Ag Inspector - Marsha Watland reported on the following:

- Feb 25th—District meeting in Mahnomen. Short course agenda has been set.
- Mar 11th—MACAI Exec board meeting. They continue to work on financial support. Since 1939, there has been no funding offered to counties.
- We may finally see financial support for CAI duties. The committee will present all information at the Capitol. Both the House and the Senate will be targeted.
- This could offer 1 million for both 2016 and 2017 and will be available to all 87 counties.
- It was discussed at the recent County AMC meeting. She will know the outcome by the end of May.
- These funds will help with continuous weed control in specific areas throughout counties which will be designated by the County Ag Inspector. Most funding will be used for implementation and salaries.
- CWMA training will be held tomorrow in Detroit Lakes.
- Gravel pit inspections will begin the 3rd or 4th week of April.

Shoreland Specialist - Marsha Watland reported on the following:

- Feb 19th—Shoreland Contractors Training & Certification. There have been inquiries regarding the program and she recently administered an exam. The Chamber of Commerce, Planning & Zoning and all area Watersheds now have a complete list of certified contractors.
- Mar 6th—MPCA meeting. They are writing a grant which will provide for civic engagement similar to the Bush grant. It will cover requirements for the water plan. Just to be clear, this is the watershed revised water plan led by MPCA for all watersheds under our County Water Plan.
- Mar 27th—Upper Cormorant meeting. Several landowners have informed her of ice ridge issues. Planning & Zoning, DNR and both area watersheds will meet on site. They will devise a solution and offer consistency towards a permanent fix.
- April 23rd & 28th she will instruct a rain garden session for the Frazee Community Education program.
- April 28th—Detroit Lakes Area Water Festival held at the ice arena.

- She's been working on shoreland designs with a large site on LaBelle Lake. This is a 500' site. Claire has been assisting with this work.

2014 Annual and Financial Reports – distributed to all; Peter reviewed the main points of the Annual Report and Jen reviewed the Year End Financial Reports.

Motion (Flottemesch, Beck) to approve the 2014 Annual Report. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Beck, Pavelko) to approve the 2014 Year End Financials. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Becker County AIS Program – Peter reviewed some current issues.

We now have a lease for office space at the Wells Fargo building. This will be \$1,135 per month including most utilities. We will need to pay internet fees separate. Phones and router are both available from County IT surplus.

Motion (Flottemesch, Schauer) to approve the lease agreement for AIS Coordinator / Water Quality Technician. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Budget needs for additional office equipment and field supplies are as follows:

- \$10,600 for Inspector Tablets and Field Supplies
- \$4,200 in office equipment, computer and peripherals.
- \$4,500 in furnishings.
- \$25,000 for a ¾ ton pick-up truck.
- \$18,000 (plus or minus) for a Landa decontamination unit.

This will come from state money that has been funneled through Becker County and then to our District. Last year's carryover of funds will be used initially, with the next allocation of State dollars coming in July and again in December. The AIS funding can be carried forward indefinitely and should be available for the next five years. Lake inspectors will be located on a priority based system including risk, lake association interest and watershed proximity. Aquatic invasive species are and will continue to be specified by the state. Red River Basin is also a part of this. End of June, July and August sees the most activity on zebra mussels.

Motion (Pavelko, Flottemesch) to approve the additional expenses for AIS from the remaining 2014 funds. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Schauer, Flottemesch) that the BSWCD form a 3 member AIS Advisory Committee with member make-up to be one Becker County Commissioner, one Becker Soil and Water District supervisor and one County resident selected at large. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Motion (Flottemesch, Pavelko) to approve appointments to the AIS Advisory Committee as recommended by Chairman Stenger – Barry Nelson, Becker County Commissioner, Kathy Stenger, BSWCD Chairperson and at large Dennis Kral, Chairperson Pelican River Watershed. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Watercraft inspectors will be interviewed and hired by Becker County Human Resource Director Nancy Grabanski. There are 21 applicants in all. DNR representatives recommend an initial phone interview.

Floyd Lake Shores grant application denial letter was reviewed by Peter.

2015 Clean Water Legacy Grant Programs – Peter reviewed the draft document for buffers with a 50' average width and two levels of costs for structural practices.

CWL / CRP Buffer Program

With a minimum 10 year commitment, the NRCS and FSA will provide an average rental rate of \$129/acre (County Average Rate) on newly enrolled perennial buffers, filter strips and grassed waterways via the CRP and/or EQIP programs. Becker and Clay SWCD will provide the additional necessary incentive from grant funds to provide a total of \$200/acre/year (from all fund sources) for the implementation and maintenance of these vegetative practices. This incentive will be provided as a lump sum once establishment has been verified in the field. Incentives provided with CWL funds will not exceed \$150/acre.

CWL Working Lands Buffer Program

With a 10 year commitment producers/landowners not interested in or eligible for federal programs will be eligible for a \$60/acre/year incentive for the establishment and maintenance of perennial buffers, filter strips or grassed waterways. This option will allow restricted, delayed haying for management, allowing one cutting after the primary nesting season at a minimum 4" cutting height and require a minimum stubble height of 8" going into winter.

In both cases, full establishment and first year maintenance costs will be covered by the program using all available fund sources. Preparation/seeding and first year maintenance can be contracted with the SWCD and a preferred vendor.

Structural Practices – Payment Tiers

Structural Practices will hold two payment tiers.

Tier one: 90% of programs and practices. Tier two: eligible for up to 75% of all practices.

Included in the policy is a \$200 per contract fee with buffers in the work plan for administrative/technical fees and to perform inspections during years 1, 3, 5 and 9.

Labelle Lake Projects

Peter reviewed maps and plans for the failing lakeshore at the Poling site on LaBelle Lake, gave an overview of the nearly 17 acres of buffers that will be established on the Jetvig property abutting west Labelle, one recent and one pending land acquisition and the existing perennial vegetation surrounding the rest of the Lake. With a cost estimate of \$39,000, the Poling restoration does have a large price tag but, when coupled with the pending buffers and other efforts, will afford nearly 100% protection of LaBelle's shores. Peter has contacted Bruce Albright from Buffalo-Red River Watershed District seeking \$30,000 in assistance with the project so we can "call the shores of LaBelle done."

Upcoming Events

Annual Township Weed meeting, Callaway – March 26th
NW MASWCD Area 1 Meeting, Crookston – March 31st
Lakes Country Water Festival, Detroit Lakes – April 28th
5th Grade Conservation Tour, Ike Fischer Farm – May 13th & 14th

Other

Peter noted the need for a seasonal technician for SWCD and NRCS staff needs.

Motion (Flottemesch, Schauer) to authorize administration to appoint a seasonal technician to work with District and NRCS staff during this construction season. Affirmative: Unanimous. Carried.

Duane Erickson approached Barry Nelson regarding support from the Wild Rice Watershed District and gave his recommendation and approval of Peter Mead's expertise on future projects.

The Becker County Forester has retired and the county's reorganization is looking at a promotion from within. Mandy Musielewicz has been offered the position as Forester and supervisor for the staff.

Being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 11:00 a.m.

Approved: Gene Pavelko, Becker SWCD Secretary Date: April 15, 2015