

MINUTES FROM THE AUGUST 19, 2015 BOARD MEETING

The regular monthly board meeting of the East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District was held on Wednesday August 19, 2015 at 7:30 a.m. at the USDA Service Center Conference Room at 801 Jenny Ave S.W., Perham, MN.

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Lyle Dittmann at 7:27 a.m.

Members Present:

Chairperson: Lyle Dittmann
Vice Chairperson: Steve Inwards
Secretary: Dennis Reynolds
Treasurer: Marion Gill
Public Relations: Terry Greenwaldt

Others Present:

County Commissioner: Doug Huebsch
Acting District Conservationist: Jon Frie
District Manager: Darren Newville
Administrative Secretary: Chantal Tougas

Agenda

Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Steve Inwards to accept the Agenda as presented with one change. Add discussion of maturing CD's: Opposed: None, motion carried.

Approve Board meeting Minutes: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Dennis Reynolds to approve the previous month Board Meeting Minutes as presented. Opposed: None, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt to approve the make the following changes to the current CD's at the bank. Opposed: None, motion carried.

Maturity Date	CD #	Action
8/10/2015	38790	Move to the General Checking Account
8/21/2015	38827	Cash in, use to pay off building loan
9/9/2015	41687	Renew for 12 months
9/9/2015	36373	Renew for 18 months

The remainder of the building loan will be paid off using funds from the building account.

Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Dennis Reynolds to approve the Treasurer's Report as presented. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Bills Paid & Bills Payable: Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Dennis Reynolds to approve the Bills Paid and Bills Payable as presented. Opposed: None, motion carried.

Cost Share

WATER PLAN COST SHARE

4-WPCS, Joe Rice; Ottertail Township, Section 14, is requesting payment for cost share on a Well Sealing. The cost was \$ 565.00 with the final cost share payment of \$ 300.00. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Dennis Reynolds to approve payment. Opposed: None, motion carried.

5-WPCS-2015, Susan Keskitalo; Otto Township, Section 27 is requesting cost share assistance for a Well Sealing. The cost estimate is \$ 565.00 and cost share not to exceed \$300.00 or 75%, whichever is less. Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt to approve the above cost share item. Opposed: None, motion carried.

STATE COST SHARE

3-CSW-2014, Richard Dykhoff; Bluffton Township, Section 19, is requesting payment for cost share on a windbreak project. The cost was \$1,164.60 with the final cost share payment of \$873.45, which is 75%. Motion made by Marion Gill, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt to approve the above cost share item. Opposed: None, motion carried.

4-CSW-2014, Joe Esser; Corliss Township, Section 17, is requesting payment for cost share on a windbreak project. The cost was \$1,271.00 with the final cost share payment of \$953.25 which is 75%. Motion made to approve payment by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Dennis Reynolds. Opposed: None, motion carried.

5-CSW-2014, Virgil & Susan Okeson; Ottertail Township, Section 11, Lake Buchanan, is requesting payment for cost share on a native buffer project. The cost was \$1,960.74 with a payment of \$1,470.55, which is 75%. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Marion Gill. Opposed: none, motion carried.

1-CSW-2015, Mick Guiliani; Hobart Township, Section 21, Rose Lake, is requesting cost share assistance for a Native Buffer installation. The cost estimate is \$2,872.32 with cost share not to exceed \$2,154.24 or 75%, whichever is less. Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Marion Gill to approve this cost share assistance. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Agenda cont.

District Manager's Report: See attached report as written by Darren Newville.

District Conservationist's Report:

Acting District Conservationist Jon Frie.

- Cathee Pullman is the new Area Conservationist. So far she is impressed with the relationship the NRCS has with the SWCD.
- CRP is busy. We have made 219 site visits so far.
- EQIP: One more contract was funded. There will be one sign up period.
- Bruce Becker's position has not yet been posted. Jon will be done on August 28, 2015. The new acting District Conservationist will be Rick Berscheid. There are 39 employment vacancies for NRCS in the State of Minnesota.

County Commissioner Report:

- It would be nice if we could declare next year the "Year of the Thistle" and educate/inform our community about Thistle and what damage it can do and the necessary steps to get rid of this noxious weed.
- The Minneapolis Star Tribune published an article a few weeks ago regarding declining area lakes. It would be interesting to find out where they got their information.
- There is discussion of Perham applying a .05% Transit Tax to the current state MN Sales Tax. This would help pay for road improvements.

Old Business

Department of Ag Update: There are 50 fields signed up for the guided stalk sampling program. Aerial flights should happen next week. There will be some maintenance done on the weather stations.

TSA Update: There will be a managers meeting on September 9, 2015. TSA will be getting additional funds and the discussion will be how it will be used.

EOT/Wadena SWCD Joint Meeting: We are planning on getting both boards together in the next month or so and inviting the County Commissioners as well. There will not be a meeting this month.

District Vehicles: The district has a new vehicle. A 2008 Mercury Mariner with 91,000 miles, \$11,220.00.

New Business

Meetings and Training for Approval: Minnesota Erosion Control Workshop, \$75.00 Registration fee for Aimee Zimmermann to attend. Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Dennis Reynolds to approve the fee for Aimee to attend this workshop. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Grants: Extension: Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Steve Inwards to apply for an extension for the 2013 CPG. Opposed: none, motion carried.

We will be receiving an additional \$31,000 from BWSR around the 27th.

We will be submitted Irrigation and Groundwater Grants. We received the Farmbill Assistant Grant to be signed. Motion made by Terry Greenwaldt, seconded by Dennis Reynolds to sign and return the Farmbill Grant. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Personnel: Mitchell Ness has completed his probationary period. Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Marion Gill to remove Mitchell from the mandatory probationary period to permanent status. Opposed: none, motion carried.

Interviews: Interviews for the following positions will begin on Monday, August 24, 2015 starting at 8:30 a.m. Luke Stuewe will be assisting with the interviews.

- District Technician: We have received 15-20 applicants for this position
- Irrigation/Nutrient Management Specialist: We have received 5 applicants for this position.

Credit Card Policy: Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt to adopt the attached credit card policy for district employees. Opposed: none, motion carried.

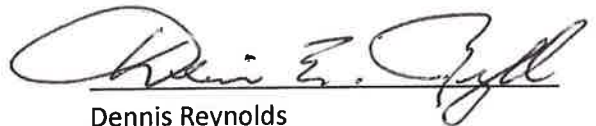
Public Comments: None

Adjourn: Meeting adjourned at 9:14 a.m.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND TRAINING SESSIONS			
Training/Meetings	Location	Date	Attending
DNR Groundwater Workshop	Otter Tail	July 29, 2015	
SWCS Conference	Greensboro, NC	July 26-29, 2015	Darren Newville
Local SWCD CWF meeting	Perham	August 5, 2015	
Leadership Training	Grand Rapids	Aug 12-13, 2015	
MASWCD Governance 101	St. Cloud, MN	Sept. 16-17, 2015	



Chantal Tougas
Administrative Secretary



Dennis Reynolds
Secretary

District Managers Report
August 19th, 2015
Submitted by Darren Newville

1. **Shoreland Program** – Gabe and Aimee have been focusing on getting cost-share vouchers and certifications done for projects that were completed this spring along with visiting new sites for potential projects for upcoming years. I assisted the COLA with selection of their Lake Association of the Year and Volunteer of the Year Awards. They will be presented at their August 27th meeting.
2. **Irrigation Scheduler** – With Arnie retiring on July 31st, Liz Reed our Conservation Corps Apprentice has taken over running the route. I am sure that the route will be winding down in the next month or so.
3. **District/ Farm Bill Technician Position** – Mitch has been focusing his time on CRP site visits and plans this past month.
4. **County Buffer Initiative** – Cassie is working on the digitizing and buffering county public waters using ArcMap GIS. She has edited the boundaries of approximately 90 lakes in nine townships, specifically Otter Tail, Leaf Lake, Girard, Henning, Folden, Elmo, Woodside, Parkers Prairie, and Eastern townships to reflect the normal water levels, and a 50 foot buffer has been applied to these waterbodies. She is now working on digitizing the banks of rivers and streams in this same nine township area. After the mapping is done letters will be sent to all of those property owners found to not be in compliance.
5. **County Ag Inspector Program** – Weed complaints continue to come in, most of them have been about plumeless thistle. If the thistle has already gone to seed, it does more harm than good to mow it this time of year as the seed will distribute further with a mower. Local Weed Inspectors are continue to be reminded about the process we have set for handling weed complaints and enforcement. Aimee has contact the County Highway Department and their contracted services provider about an issue in the some county road right of ways in the SE region of the county.
6. **Nitrate Sampling Clinics** – The Ottetail Clinic Nitrate Sampling Clinic was held on July 21st. They had nearly 70 sample come thru with only 8 samples being over the 10 ppm standard.
7. **Wetland Conservation Act** – The past week or so has been very busy as we have has a few complaints about ditching in the Leaf Lakes area. It appears that most of the complaints are unfounded as the work being done is ditch maintenance or has some type of prior approval. It is good that we have people call us as this does help us to catch those that are doing something outside of what is allowed in the various statutes. The Technical

Evaluation Panel (TEP) committee has also met to discuss some potential wetland banking sites.

8. **County Budget Request** – I submitted our draft proposed budget to the County. We are scheduled to meet with the Budget Committee on ~~July 31st~~
August.
9. **BWSR Ad Hoc Work Group** – I was invited to participate in this work group looking to make a recommendation on the process for SWCD's to request and report on the new State District Capacity Funding. We met on August 4th and will be meeting again in September.
10. **Soil and Water Conservation Society Conference** – I attended this conference in Greensboro N.C. The focus of the conference was definitely slanted toward Soil Health. It was good to see some of the things that are happening around the country that we can apply in Minnesota.

My Take a ways – I think we are doing a lot of great things but there are things we can do better.

Communication with producers about issues – How to balance environment and farm profitability. Think of each acre as franchise, put resources into acres that are most productive – limit expenses on acres losing money – these are usually the most environmentally sensitive or have the biggest environmental risk.

Farmer networks – need to do more and have them meet more frequently.

Validation of practices – field trials for everyone – need to move past just the most progressive producers.

Retailers/Coops we need to work more with them – We need to get Ag retailers to start thinking and talking about conservation. They can be a huge resource.

Precision Ag and precision conservation - these work well together.

Private Consultants/software products need to investigate the use for our programs and purposes – there are a lot of neat GIS modeling products out there.

Evolution of SWCD's – SWCD's are taking on greater roles in a lot of states. SWCD being place in a regulatory capacity is happening around the country.