
MINUTES FROM THE JUNE 17, 2015 BOARD MEETING

The regular monthly board meeting of the East Otter Tail Soil and Water Conservation District was held on Wednesday, June 17, 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 7:30 a.m.

Members Present:

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

Others Present:

Acting District Conservationist: Jon Frie
District Manager: Darren Newville
Administrative Assistant: Katelyn Haarstick

AGENDA

Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Steve Inwards to accept the agenda as presented.
Opposed: None, motion carried.

Approve Board Meeting Minutes: Motion made by Dennis Reynolds, seconded by Steve Inwards to approve the previous month's Board Meeting Minutes as presented.
Opposed: None, motion carried.

Treasurer's Report: Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Marion Gill to approve the last month's treasurer's report.
Opposed: None, motion carried.

Bills Paid and Bills Payable: Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Dennis Reynolds to approve the bills paid and bills payable as presented.
Opposed: None, motion carried.

COST SHARE

Water Plan Cost Share

3-WPCS-2015, Lawrence Dykhoff; motion made by Marion Gill, seconded by Steve Inwards to approve the request for payment for well sealing in Perham township, section 32. The total cost is \$565.00 with cost share in the amount of \$300.00.

Opposed: None, motion carried.

AGENDA CONT.

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

District Conservationist's Report:

There is still no work on a position posting for Bruce's job. Jon has a summer intern named Sara, she will be in the office this summer as a biologist trainee. Five more EQIP applications have been funded putting the total at nine EQIP and five CSP that received funding. Currently NRCS is spending a lot of time working on CRP. There is a possibility of a general CRP signup but nothing official yet.

County Commissioner Report: None

OLD BUSINESS

Department of Ag Update:

The contract for MDA has come in. They have gone through all but one step, should be finishing up with that step soon. The contract covers cost for Irrigation Clinics along with Irrigation Scheduling and irrigation staff.

TSA Update: There will be a meeting Tuesday, June 23rd after the Area Mtg in Bejou at 9:30 a.m.

EOT/Wadena Re-alignment process Sub-Committee Report:

Working on reviewing staffing plans. There will be a meeting next Monday, Jun 22nd to talk about budgeting, position descriptions and employee policy.

NEW BUSINESS

Meetings and Trainings for Approval:

Dennis, Marion, Lyle, Darren, Aimee, and Cassie will be attending the area meeting in Bejou on Tuesday, June 23rd.

Personnel:

Cassie Waltz will be starting June 22nd for the Buffer Technician position.

Irrigation/Nutrient Management position- currently looking for someone with an Agronomy background with irrigation experience as well.

Building:

Lease Amendment- There is a proposed lease amendment with USDA through January of 2018 with an increase of \$0.50 per sq. ft.

Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Dennis Reynolds.

Opposed: None, motion carried.

Landscaping Estimate- Received one estimate back to clean up the landscaping around the building and the flagpole. A motion was made to approve all landscaping minus the landscaping around the flagpole. Motion made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt.

Discussion: Will it cost more to bring landscapers back for the flagpole if we decide to do the landscaping later?

Opposed: None, motion carried.

District Vehicles:

Received quotes for a number of different vehicles. We need some type of truck capable of towing with 4wd and one other vehicle that would work well for shoreline visits and traveling scenarios. Motion was made to pass a \$45,000 budget to buy two vehicles. Motion was made by Steve Inwards, seconded by Marion Gill.

Opposed: None, motion carried.

*Lyle left the meeting at 8:55 a.m.

North Central Region Irrigation Project Team:

Request for support for a proposed regional USDA FIFA AFRI Grant to conduct a regional (several state) study to define the positive impacts of irrigation management practices on water quality. A motion was made to support the North Central Region Irrigation Project Management Team. Motion made by Marion Gill, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt.

Opposed: None, motion carried.

Awards-Conservation Cooperator Award:

A motion was made to nominate the County Commissioners for the award. Motion made by Marion Gill, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt.

Opposed: None, motion carried.

Promotional Items- Pens:

Board looked over the different pen choices and liked the Bellaire Pens. A motion was made to order 1,000 Bellaire pens from Victor Lundeens in Fergus Falls. Motion made by Marion Gill, seconded by Terry Greenwaldt.

Opposed: One opposed. Discussion: Are the pens a useful promotional tool? Is there something else that would be more useful?

Motion carried.

Meeting Adjourned: 9:29 a.m.

Meetings and Trainings

SWCS Conference – July 26-29, 2015 – Greensboro, NC (Darren Newville)

DNR Groundwater Workshop – July 29, 2015 – Otter Tail, MN

Leadership Training – August 12-13, 2015 – Grand Rapids, MN (Aaron Salo)

District Managers Report
July 15th, 2015
Submitted by Darren Newville

1. **Adaptive Ag Program** – Enrollment letters are going out this week. We also have two pilot fields that we are working with on nutrient management with thermal imaging and a program called Ensirca. We hope to expand this next year to 5-7 fields. The position announcement for the Irrigation/Nutrient Management Specialist was posted last week. The position will close on July 31st. I will be meeting with Luke Stuewe, MDA, later today to give him an update on progress.
2. **Township Private Well Nitrate Sampling** – RMB Environmental Labs is continuing to send sampling kits out. This will continue to happen at about 1,000 kits a week for the next 3 to 4 weeks. We continue to take calls from homeowners that have questions about the program.
3. **Shoreland Program** – So far 22 shoreland buffers or shoreland stabilization projects have been installed this year. Most of these projects are funded through the Community Partners Grants. Gabe and Aimee continue to meet with landowners about projects and have been making presentations for area Lake Associations as their schedule allows.
4. **Irrigation Scheduler** – Arnie and Aaron continue to run the scheduler routes. The Ag Weather Network website is up and running. You can visit it at www.agweathernet.com. Please take some time to look at it and let me know if there is something that doesn't seem to be working.
5. **District/ Farm Bill Technician Position** – Mitch has been focusing on the custom seeding program this past month. With some assistance from Aaron they made it to 23 sites and seeded a total of 495 acres using the Truax drill. The Haybuster has also been busy this spring and early summer with 27 different renters. We did have one major breakdown with the drill. The main torque tube cracked next to the pivot point. We replaced the tube (cost of about \$1,000) and its back out seeding again. Aaron noted that we received the Huebsch wellhead RIM easement was also finally paid out. With the spring planting completed Mitch will start focusing on CRP enrollments again.
6. **County Buffer Initiative** – With the new legislation on buffers there are a lot of questions coming in. One big question is if the map that DNR is required to produce will be different than the one we are currently using. Right now we are continuing with our plan with the goal of having letters to everyone who doesn't have a proper buffer in place to be notified by next spring. The WOT staff and I attended a regional Corn Growers Assoc. meeting last week in Fergus Falls that revolved around informing their members about the buffer legislation.

- 7. County Ag Inspector Program** – The CAI summer short course training and tour was held at Thumper Pond, in Ottertail over the past few days and is wrapping up today. Yesterday’s tour consisted of a visit to Wensman Seed, an RDO tour & lunch, a visit to North Central Reforestation, and sit visit to pasture to discuss management methods for weed control (buffalo & cattle). Aimee has also been receiving weed complaint calls and will be sending out some form 1 notices later this week.
- 8. Nitrate Sampling Clinics** – The Fergus Falls Clinic was held on July 9th. There were over 50 samples brought into be sampled. The Ottertail Clinic scheduled for July 21st.
- 9. DNR Groundwater Workshops** – The DNR working with MASWCD and BWSR have scheduled a series of groundwater workshops around the state. They will be hosting one of the workshops on July 29th at Thumper Pond in Ottertail. The day is split into two workshops – one for staff and one for elected officials. I would encourage all of you to attend and will be getting you more information as it is available.
- 10. BWSR Meeting** – John Jascshke held meetings around the state again recently to talk to lead SWCD staff members to discuss recently passed legislation to get input and provide information on where BWSR is with the new legislation.
- 11. Fairgrounds** – Most of the staff pitched in to move all of our stuff from the fairgrounds building early last week. We will move back in again shortly after the fair is over.
- 12. County Board Meeting** – Lyle and I attended the County Board meeting yesterday. Brad Mergens, WOT SWCD, and updated the Commissioners on the Buffer Initiative and other SWCD programs. Lyle and Rod Wenstrom, WOT SWCD Supervisor, present the Commissioners with this year’s Conservation Cooperator Award. We also discussed the County Geologic Atlas program and what it might take to have one completed in Otter Tail County.
- 13. County Feedlot Program** – Brad Mergens and I meet with the County Public Works Committee yesterday to discuss the possibility of becoming a delegated county. They requested that it be brought to the full county board at their next meeting. Brad will be making the presentation as I will be in North Carolina.
- 14. CWF Applications** – The 2016 CWF RFP is out. I held a meeting here July 1st with most of our neighboring SWCDs to discuss working together on an application revolving around groundwater. Discussions revolved around in season nutrient management tools, fertigation practices and adoption of technology. We are scheduled to meet again on August 5th.
- 15. SWCS Conference** – I will be gone the 27th – 31st attending this Conference in North Carolina.