

**Minnehaha Conservation District  
February 12, 2024, Monthly Meeting  
USDA Service Center  
Board Meeting at 3:00 pm**

Heber called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

**Supervisors present:** Rick Bonander, Travis Entenman, Gordon Heber, and Allen Severtson

**Supervisors absent:** Jim Pfeifer

**Advisors present:** Kathleen Mackeprang and Brian Top

**Advisors absent:** Carl Eliason

**Others present:** John Parker, Mike Langner, Denise Fletcher, Alina Krone-Hedman, Damon Brown, Dan Wehmeyer, Deron Ruesch, and Barry Berg

**Board Positions for 2024**

MSP to keep all positions the same as last year by Severtson and Bonander. All Ayes.

Board Positions: Chairman – Gordon Heber, Vice Chairman – Travis Entenman, Treasurer – John Parker, and Secretary/Recorder – Denise Fletcher.

**Agenda:** MSP to approve by Severtson and Bonander. All ayes.

**Minutes of December 11th meeting:** MSP to approve by Bonander and Severtson. All ayes.

**Treasurer's report:** Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve January report by Entenman and Bonander. All ayes.

MSP to approve February report by Bonander and Entenman. All ayes.

**Bills:** Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve and pay January bills by Entenman and Bonander. All ayes. MSP to approve and pay February bills by Entenman and Bonander. All ayes.

**NRCS activity report by Dan Wehmeyer:**

**WETLANDS:** 43 certified wetland determination requests in process. Dan Baukus is the new Compliance Specialist for Minnehaha and Moody Counties.

**CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP):** Sign up 61 is happening now, first come first served until they run out of farm bill acres. Currently 24.7 mil. acres enrolled; farm bill cap is 27 mil. acres. Deadline is July 31 to have an Oct. 1 start date.

**CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSTWP):** Planning and working through rankings. Approx. \$1.6 million for Big Sioux RU.

**ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP):** Starting to preapprove/approve/obligate applications. Approx. \$1.6 million for Big Sioux RU. \$50,000 for CIS – Obligated all funds (1 high tunnel, 2 cover crops).

**BIG SIOUX RIVER PROJECT RCPP:** Approx. \$637,000 remaining in the last year of the project. Deron Ruesch spoke about applications received, as well as batching and ranking deadlines. 1 or 2 outreach events will be planned this summer. Conservation plans to be signed: 1 high tunnel, 2 cover crops and 2 windbreak plantings/renovations.

**Big Sioux River Project Report by Barry Berg:**

**SRAM & RAM:** Working with DANR personnel on a few SRAM/RBI buffers; Working with several producers for SRAM/RAM buffers; Presented SRAM customer proposal to take some upland ground out of his SRAM contract.

**Other Related Items:** Presentations were made at various events by Amber Lively. Her last day of employment will be March 13<sup>th</sup>. Created Habitat Services of Buffer brochure and Comparison of Buffer Programs in BSR Watershed.

**Upcoming:** Q1 BSRP Steering Committee Meeting will be held on March 19<sup>th</sup>.

MSP to accept customer proposal to remove 5 acres from his SRAM contract by Severtson and Bonander. All ayes. MSP to approve voucher 19 totaling \$55,010.67 by Entenman and Bonander. MSP to approve and sign check for \$681.45 (pipeline) by Bonander and Severtson. All ayes.

**Urban Educator Report by Alina Krone-Hedman:**

**OUTREACH:** Spoke at UMURAI Conference on Feb. 8-9 in Oacoma, SD about urban agriculture projects. Will assist at Pheasant Fest on March 1-3 at the Denny Sanford Premier Center in Sioux Falls and the Sioux Empire Water Festival on March 12-13 at USF. Looking for volunteers at the Water Festival.

**CITY PARTNERSHIP:** Prairie and Pollinator Program – Currently working on next set for distribution. Community Garden and Education Demonstration Area – Continuing work to prepare for Spring. New Urban Agriculture Assistant, Damon Brown, introduced himself.

**NRCS PARTNERSHIP:** Waiting on application to open to apply for next cycle of the Urban Conservation Demonstration & Awareness Project.

**OTHER:** Took down Christmas tree at Good Earth State Park; MCD Youth Contests – Arbor Day Poster Contest, Arbor Day Creative Writing Contest and Resource Conservation Speech Contest. Newsletter – Distributed end of January.

**Public Comment Time – 15 minutes** - Krone-Hedman mentioned the deadline for tree ordering is March 8<sup>th</sup>. Deadline for the Leopold Conservation Award is March 6<sup>th</sup>. Check the district website for dates of events. Parker updated about the advisor situation. MSP to appoint Kathleen Mackeprang and Brian Top as advisors by Bonander and Severtson. All ayes. Parker mentioned that 10,500 copies of the 12-page newsletter were sent out @ 40 cents/copy. In the future we may look at sending fewer pages, with QR codes to scan and get more of the stories.

**Update from Supervisors** – Bonander mentioned a state senate bill that would take away local control and give it to the legislature. Heber attended a Jan. 8<sup>th</sup> Deer Management meeting in Pierre. There was lively discussion with many viewpoints. There is a need to reduce deer populations in East River areas along I-90. Some West River areas want to increase population. There may be a push to limit archery and muzzle loader tags. He also attended a Jan. 10<sup>th</sup> focus group meeting at the Brookings Research Farm, where oats research is occurring. July 9<sup>th</sup> is the date for the next field day at the farm. Heber will participate in the Research Farm delegation to Washington, D.C. during the week of March 4<sup>th</sup>. He passed around a flyer from a cedar tree removal service.

**OLD BUSINESS**

**1. Annual Plan of Work**

MSP to approve by Severtson and Entenman. All Ayes.

**2. Long Range Program**

MSP to approve by Bonander and Severtson. All ayes.

**3. Budget - 2024**

MSP to approve budget and send to the state by Entenman and Bonander. All ayes.

**4. Service Report (bio-solids, tree planting, grass planting, Gevik Site, Water Festival)**

Bio-solids: Holding until Spring. Trees: Approx. 39 acres planned so far. Grass: 400 acres planned.

Gevik Site: Meeting with Chris of Soil Health Coalition regarding plans for changes. NRCS will provide a burn crew and do a burn in April.

Water Festival: March 12-13 at USF with 2,486 4<sup>th</sup> grade students over 2 days. \$30,650 received in donations so far this year.

## **5. Employee Reviews**

Moved to the end of the meeting in Executive Session.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

#### **1. 2024 SDACD Membership Investment (SD State Association of Conservation Districts)**

MSP to pay the annual dues of \$1,000.00 by Bonander and Severtson. All ayes.

#### **2. Ag Day Celebration – SDSU College of Agriculture, Food and Environmental Sciences (CAFES) Contribution Request**

This celebration is held on April 17<sup>th</sup>. Conservation Districts contribute toward the event as sponsors. MSP to contribute \$100.00 to the event by Entenman and Bonander. All ayes.

#### **3. 2024 Elections**

Entenman, Heber, and Pfeifer's positions are all up for re-election this year. If interested, petitions will need to be filed with the County Auditor by July 1<sup>st</sup> at 5:00 p.m. Petitions must be notarized before signatures are collected and notarized again after signatures have been collected.

### **CONSERVATION PLAN SIGNING**

Heber signed conservation agreements presented by NRCS.

### **OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS** - None

**Executive Session (if needed)** – MSP to enter executive session at 4:50 p.m. by Severtson and Bonander. All Ayes. MSP to leave executive session at 5:20 p.m. by Heber and Severtson. All ayes.

MSP to approve raises for staff by Bonander and Severtson. All Ayes.

MSP to adjourn at 5:40 p.m. by Bonander and Severtson. All ayes.

**NEXT MEETING DATE:** March 4th, 2024, at 3:00 pm – USDA Service Center

Submitted by Denise Fletcher, Recording Secretary