

**Minnehaha Conservation District
July 10th, 2023, 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, Gordon Heber, Jim Pfeifer, and Allen Severtson

Supervisors absent: Travis Entenman

Advisors present: None

Advisors absent: Brian Alderson, Carl Eliason, Susan Kruse, Kelly Lyons, Mark McGee, and Jennifer Schmidtbauer

Others present: John Parker, Mike Langner, Denise Fletcher, Alina Krone-Hedman, Dan Wehmeyer, Casey Wenzlaff, Alex Wells, and Amber Lively

Agenda: MSP to approve by Severtson and Pfeifer. All ayes.

Minutes of June 12th meeting: MSP to approve by Bonander and Severtson.
All ayes.

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

Bills: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve and pay by Pfeifer and Severtson. All ayes.

NRCS activity report by Casey Wenzlaff:

WETLANDS: 34 certified wetland determination requests in progress.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP): 3 applications funded through the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) Carbon Smart Initiative Fund Pool.

EQIP RCPP: 4 Contracts for FY 2023 – grazing and cover cropping systems.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSTwP): Contract management only.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP): Working on Continuous CRP applications. No CREP offers; no Grasslands CRP offers. Working on status reviews for expiring contracts.

Big Sioux River Project Report by Amber Lively:

SRAM & RAM: No new contracts since June.

EQIP/RCPP: RCPP easement training on 7/12/23 via zoom.

Other Related Items: Working with producers for 5 alternative water facilities for grazing. Held Q2 Steering Committee on 6/27/23. Continued planning for SRAM and "This is our Water" meeting on 8/23/23. Will participate in Riverfest on 8/19/23 from 4:00 – 9:00 p.m. in Fawick Park, Sioux Falls.

Urban Educator Report by Alina Krone-Hedman:

Outreach: Will attend Bugapalooza on 8/19/23 and Pollinator Day on 9/02/23.

City Partnership: Approximately 85 pollinator kits were sold and distributed. Currently evaluating for improvements. Community Garden and Education Demonstration Area meeting being set up with the City of Sioux Falls Water Dept.

NRCS Partnership: Extension sent. Discussion had about future grant application regarding the Urban Conservation Demonstration & Awareness Project.

Other: NACD (National Association of Conservation Districts) Grant was received - \$56,000.00 for 1 year.

Public Comment Time – 15 minutes – Alex Wells was sponsored by the Board to attend the South Dakota Wildlife Federation Youth Conservation Camp in the Black Hills at Bob Marshall Camp. He presented a power point about his camp experience in June, listing activities he participated in, and courses completed. He had a fun time, learned new things, and made new friends. He thanked the Board for sponsoring him and mentioned that he and the others would like to attend again next year. Wenzlaff discussed high tunnels in Sioux Falls not being approved for various reasons, including required setbacks in municipalities. Krone-Hedman and Wenzlaff discussed a possible meeting between the City of Sioux Falls and NRCS to deal with the issue.

Update from Supervisors – Bonander mentioned that Navigator Pipeline Company has a hearing in front of the PUC starting on 7/25/23. 600-700 people held a protest meeting in Pierre on 7/06/23 against the use of eminent domain by the carbon capture pipeline companies. Heber suggested that the board advisor list should be re-worked, since advisors have not been attending meetings. Parker mentioned that the by-laws do not require a certain attendance level by advisors. Parker will research the by-law requirements. Heber also mentioned that the Board might want to place some of their funds in CD's (Certificate of Deposit) with higher interest rates. MSP to place \$50,000 in a 6- or 9-month CD by Heber and Severtson. All Ayes. Parker and board members will research lender opportunities.

OLD BUSINESS

1. Service Report (bio-solids, tree planting, grass planting, Gevik Site)

Bio-solids: Soil sampling is underway. **Trees:** 48 acres of trees planted and finished about a month ago. Fabric was completed 2 weeks ago. Research about fabric machines is being conducted with other conservation districts. **Grass:** 475 acres planted; finished 2 weeks ago. 15' and 30' drills are still busy with customers. **Gevik Site:** NACD grant will pay for some projects and improvements, including signs. Brush will be cut soon.

The Brule-Buffalo District purchased a drone. Our district could write a grant to purchase a drone as well. This could be used to survey completed projects and look for missed spots, etc. Also, a larger drone could be used to spray and seed. Parker will look further into the possibilities.

2. Property Insurance Review (waiting on return changes from June meeting)

Parker presented the new invoice from SDPAA (South Dakota Public Assurance Alliance) that shows changes that were made to the coverage. MSP to accept the updated policy by Pfeifer and Bonander. All Ayes.

3. Endowment Honoree

The District gave a \$100 endowment to honor Donald Threadgold, former Miner County Board member.

4. Research Farm Open House Reminder – July 11th, Brookings, SD

Heber mentioned that the Field Day starts at 10:00 a.m. A Poster Session, where he and others will present information, will be held. There will also be a walking tour and lunch. A focus group will meet in the afternoon.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Procedure for Meeting Payments and Mileage

Parker presented information received from the bookkeeper concerning the reimbursement for meeting attendance and mileage. She stated that per IRS regulations, meeting per diems and mileage from home to the meeting would be subject to income tax withholding. Mileage to other meetings would be reimbursed and not taxed. The board had previously voted to reimburse members for meeting attendance and mileage. Board members will submit a "Meeting/Mileage Expense Voucher" after each meeting if interested.

Executive Session (if needed) – None

CONSERVATION PLAN SIGNING

Board approved signing conservation plans. Heber signed conservation agreements presented by NRCS.

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

MSP to adjourn at 4:39 p.m. by Severtson and Bonander. All ayes.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, August 14th, 2023, at 3:00 pm – USDA Service Center
Submitted by Denise Fletcher, Recording Secretary