

**Minnehaha Conservation District
December 12th, 2022, Monthly Meeting
USDA Service Center and Zoom
Board Meeting at 3:00 pm**

Pfeifer called the meeting to order at 3:05 p.m.

Supervisors present: Travis Entenman, Gordon Heber, Susan Kruse, Jim Pfeifer, and Jennifer Schmidtbauer

Supervisors absent: None

Advisors present: Rick Bonander

Advisors absent: Brian Alderson, Carl Eliason, Kelly Lyons, Mark McGee, and Allen Severtson

Others present: John Parker, Denise Fletcher, Mike Langner, Alina Krone-Hedman, Barry Berg, Mary Lou Lacey, and Brian Top

Agenda: With the addition of new business item #10 (State Loan), MSP to approve by Kruse and Schmidtbauer. All ayes.

Minutes of October 11th meeting: MSP to approve by Schmidtbauer and Heber. All ayes.

Treasurer's report: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve Nov. report by Kruse and Entenman. All ayes. MSP to approve Dec. report by Kruse and Entenman. All ayes.

Bills: Reviewed at meeting. MSP to approve and pay Nov. bills by Entenman and Schmidtbauer. All ayes. MSP to approve and pay Dec. bills by Kruse and Entenman. All ayes.

NRCS activity report by Dan Wehmeyer and Mary Lou Lacey:

WETLANDS: 22 certified wetland determination requests in progress

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP): Upcoming CREP signup with a 25,000-acre enrollment goal; Land must be open to public hunting (40 acre minimum); Increased rental/incentive rates

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSTWP): Batching date was December 9th; 3 applications received

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP): Batching date was December 9th; 24 applications received; Additional Inflation Reduction Act monies coming in January 2023

BIG SIOUX RIVER PROJECT RCPP: Signup deadline has passed; Received 9 applications (7 cover crops and 2 grazing)

Big Sioux River Project Report by Barry Berg: Working on leads in Brookings and Minnehaha Counties. One Ag. Waste System has been completed and another is finishing up. Hired a Watershed Program Specialist and an Agricultural Conservation Specialist, who started on Nov. 1st. Participated in Big Sioux River and Sustainability Summit last week. MSP by Kruse and Entenman to fund and approve checks for 5 projects, totaling \$10,532.76. All ayes.

Urban Educator Report by Alina Krone-Hedman:

Outreach: Had a table at the Big Sioux Water & Sustainability Summit on 12/08/22. A webinar with Millborn Seeds will be held in January 2023 about seed mixture creation. **City Partnership:** Planning to pilot 100 pollinator kits in March 2023. Community Garden and Education Demonstration Area contract was executed; plan for completion by June 2023. **NRCS Partnership:** Working on CCG Grant to continue Urban Conservation Education Coordinator position. Waiting to hear about application process for CIS process. **Other:** Continue working toward developing Urban Agriculture Coalition. Received funding for Shelter Belt Renovation and Wildlife Habitat grants. Working on upcoming annual MCD newsletter.

Public Comment Time – 15 minutes – Bonander mentioned that legislation is being developed concerning who can use eminent domain in the state, in response to the carbon capture pipelines projects.

Update from Supervisors - None

OLD BUSINESS

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

Bio-solids: Contract goes to the city this week for 2023 services. **Trees:** 30 acres planned; other estimates are out for signature. **Grass:** 100 acres planned (CRP and regular ground). Wildlife Habitat and Shelterbelt Renovation grants were approved, where customer pays 60% of cost and the grant pays 40%. **Gevik Site:** Parker and Cindy Zenk with the Soil Health Coalition are working on a plan for the native grass area and possible grants. Parker showed a power point presentation about a brush management project that was completed on a CRP site. He will investigate adding this service to the District's offerings.

NEW BUSINESS

1. National Association of Conservation Districts Annual Membership Dues

MSP to approve paying the gold level dues (\$775.00) by Entenman and Kruse. All ayes.

2. Election Update

Election will be held on February 14TH 2023 for two Conservation District Board positions, with three candidates on the ballot. The number of polling sites is unknown. Kruse and Schmidtbauer will maintain their positions until the election is held. Board positions will all remain the same until the election is completed in February 2023.

3. Joint Powers Agreement – Long Term Mitigation Agreement

This agreement covers a mitigation site in Brookings County. The district monitors it and treats weeds as needed, along with reports. MSP to approve the agreement by Schmidtbauer and Kruse. All ayes.

4. Equipment Repairs Report

Parker presented a report of vehicles owned by the District and various repairs needed on them. The mowers and drills need routine maintenance, plus new tires on the 15' John Deere drill. \$5,219.78 is the approximate total cost of repairs. MSP to approve the proposed repairs by Kruse and Entenman. All ayes.

5. 2023 Budget

Budget information will be completed later this week and reviewed at the next meeting.

6. Soil Health Conference – January 2023

This will be held January 24-25 in Sioux Falls at the Best Western Plus Ramkota Hotel. MCD will have a booth. To attend, contact Parker or Cindy Zenk at the Soil Health Coalition.

7. Water Festival – March 6-8, 2023

The festival will be held on the University of Sioux Falls campus, in person and virtually. 2,200 – 2,400 students will participate. The cost is \$25,000/year to host. Donation request letters will be going out. Volunteers are welcome. Set-up is on Monday afternoon, with students attending on Tuesday and Wednesday. Over the past 30 years, the festival has had over 70,000 students attend.

8. Employee Evaluations – January 2023

Forms will be sent out to the board to review before the next meeting.

9. Vehicle Information

Parker is collecting information about two new trucks that are available and will present more information on them later.

10. State Loan

A 5-year term loan at 3.25% interest is available through the South Dakota Department of Agriculture to finance the tractor, with no penalty for early payoff. MSP to proceed with state financing for the tractor by Schmidtbauer and Kruse and Entenman. All ayes.

Executive Session (if needed) - None

CONSERVATION PLAN SIGNING - None

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS – Hefty Seeds Day at Baltic will be held on December 14th. Parker, Langner and Top plan to attend.

MSP to adjourn at 4:19 p.m. by Kruse and Entenman. All ayes.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, January 9th, 2023, at 3:00 pm – USDA Service Center

Submitted by Denise Fletcher, Recording Secretary