

**Minnehaha Conservation District
February 10th, 2020 Monthly Meeting
USDA Service Center
Board Meeting at 3:00 pm**

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

Supervisors present: Gordon Heber, Jim Pfeifer, Jennifer Schmidtbauer and Bob Woerman

Supervisors absent: Brian Alderson

Advisors present: Carl Eliason and Susan Kruse

Advisors absent: Jim Jackson, Dana Loseke, Kelly Lyons and Mark McGee

Others present: John Parker, Denise Fletcher, Mary Lou Lacey, Barry Berg, Brian Top, Hersh Smith, Lorri Lanpher, Peggy Bevier, Andy Gabbert and Drew DeGroot

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

Minutes of January 9th meeting: MSP to approve by Pfeifer and Heber. All ayes.

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

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

NRCS activity report by Mary Lou Lacey:

WETLANDS: We currently have 21 certified wetland determination requests in progress. Our determinations will now be completed by Andrew Champa, who works at the Canton office.

CONSERVATION RESERVE PROGRAM (CRP): We have been reviewing many applications to see if they are eligible for CRP. There have been many changes in practices and payment rates have dropped.

CONSERVATION STEWARDSHIP PROGRAM (CSP): All payments have been made; One last modification needs to be approved. Batching deadlines for renewals are in March.

ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY INCENTIVE PROGRAM (EQIP): We are taking applications; March 13th is the batching deadline.

AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT PROGRAM (ACEP): No updates.

Big Sioux River – RCPP Report by Barry Berg: We are working with producers interested in SRAM and RAM to prepare for the spring field season. RCPP TA (Technical Assistance) funding is spent. TA consultant position continues to be funded with Sioux Falls SRF-NPS dollars. Word on new RCPP proposal should come by March 31. Barry Berg presented at the HAB (Harmful Algal Blooms) Conference in Kansas City on February 4 – 6 about how successful the Big Sioux River Watershed project has been.

Public Comment Time – 15 minutes

Lorri Lanpher and Peggy Bevier spoke about Scout Troop 361 activity at the Gevik Site in the Wall Lake area, planting pollinator plots. This year they plan to expand plantings, as well as maintaining plots. They also wished to express that there is opposition from a large majority of residents in the area to the proposed bike trail around Wall Lake, due to no provision having been made for parking and maintenance of a trail. A petition against the project will be submitted in the future.

Andy Gabbert, Habitat Biologist for 6 counties through the Game, Fish and Parks Department spoke about his involvement with game production areas, private lands, and food plots. He is looking for ways to partner with other agencies. There is a big push to get more public access.

Update from Supervisors – No comments.

OLD BUSINESS

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

Bio-solids: There is no work this time of year. The District will continue to be a service provider in the future. Trees: 35 acres are planned. The newsletter goes out this week and will generate more business. There is some CRP work as well. Grass: There is some CRP interest. 250 acres are planned for the 26' drill and 600 acres planned for the 12' drill. Gevik Site: John discussed the Gevik site map that shows completed and proposed projects on the site.

2. CCG Grant

(Conservation Collaboration Grant) We are in the process of performing background checks and reference checks of the candidates for the Urban Educator position who were interviewed.

3. Employee Reviews – Were held until the end of the meeting.

4. Leadership

This meeting will be held March 2 -4 in Pierre for Supervisors and employees of the conservation district. The Big Sioux Nursery meeting will also be held there. Parker and Smith will attend.

5. Projected Budget for 2020 (Approval)

MSP to approve budget for 2020 by Pfeifer and Schmidtbauer. All ayes.

NEW BUSINESS

1. Water Festival – Approval of Volunteers

Water Festival will be held March 10th and 11th at the University of Sioux Falls. MSP to approve list of volunteers by Heber and Pfeifer. All ayes.

2. National Watershed Coalition Membership

MSP to not approve membership by Heber and Schmidtbauer. All ayes.

3. Soil & Water Research Farm, Inc. Meeting – March 18th – Nominee

Heber attended the last meeting on January 15th. The budget has been increased and they are trying to hire a scientist. The Research Farm works on soil and pest control issues. The group lobbies in Washington, DC every year. Heber will attend the lobby this year on March 7-12th. June 16-20 is the next field day event. MSP to nominate Heber as delegate for next term by Pfeifer and Schmidtbauer. All ayes.

Executive Session (if needed) – see below.

CONSERVATION PLAN APPROVAL

None

OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. Correspondence

Chairman Woerman called the Board into Executive Session at 5:05 p.m. to discuss employee reviews and potential pay increases. Chairman Woerman declared the Board was out of Executive Session at 5:35 p.m.

MSP to increase pay to District employees by Pfeifer and Schmidtbauer. All ayes.

MSP to adjourn at 5:40 p.m. by Pfeifer and Schmidtbauer. All ayes.

NEXT MEETING DATE: Monday, March 23rd, 2020 at 3:00 pm – USDA Service Center

Submitted by Denise Fletcher, District Office Assistant