



**TITLE:** SAND HILL RIVER  
ADVISORY COMMITTEE  
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** NOVEMBER 19, 2020

**Attendance:** Chairman Scott Tollefson called the November 19, 2020 meeting of the Sand Hill Advisory Committee (SHAC) to order virtually via zoom (noting that the meeting was previously scheduled for November 16, but due to COVID 19 it was rescheduled for November 19 via zoom). Other advisory committee members present included Phillip Swenson, Allen Stromstad, Dale Balstad, Gerald Paulson, LeRoy Halstad, Aaron Iverson, Joan Lee, Aaron Habermehl, Danny Grunhovd, Roger Black, Rory Hamre, Jim Todahl, Lori Thronson, Troy Erickson, Jerry Jacobson, and Paul Stromstad. Others in attendance included April Swenby – Sand Hill River Watershed District Administrator.

**Annual Reorganization of the Committee:** Chairman Tollefson turned the meeting over to Joan Lee. Lee asked for nominations for Committee Chair. Committee Member Todahl nominated Committee Member Scott Tollefson as chair. Committee Member Lee called for nominations three times. Committee Member Paulson made a **Motion** to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Scott Tollefson, **Seconded** by Committee Member A. Stromstad, **Carried**.

The meeting was then turned over to Chairman Tollefson who presented the agenda.

**Agenda:** A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Jacobson to approve the agenda as presented, **Seconded** by Committee Member Hamre, **Carried**.

**Minutes:** A **Motion** to approve the minutes and dispense the reading from November 25, 2019 was made by Committee Member Swenson, **Seconded** by Committee Member Paulson, **Carried**.

**District Financials:** The Committee was given the October 2020 Treasurer's Report of the Sand Hill River Watershed and the 2019 audit report. There were no questions regarding the reports.

**Old Business:** The county reviewed the request that the SHAC had asked about last year regarding the processes for recommending, which asked that the County release the names of the candidates to the SHAC before the SHAC recommends. The County discussed the liability that this request might impose on them by setting a deadline for the general public but extending a deadline for the Sand Hill Advisory Committee. The Sand Hill Advisory Committee submits their recommendations to the county before their deadline in response to the county's advertisement for applicants and those recommendations are given an audience before the county. Likewise, any additional names that come before the county by other means, are also given an audience. The county then is given the task of choosing a board member. The Advisory Committee only recommends names to the County, the County chooses the names and this committee is one form of receiving names of interested parties. Appointment deadlines are on a timeline set by Mn Statute.

In December of 2019, the request to display the audit report on the district web-site was brought before the Sand Hill River Watershed District board of managers and the managers decided that they would not like to display the audit report on the district web-site at that time but would like to continue to distribute the audit report annually when the SHAC meets.

**Manager Appointment:** The terms of Clayton Bartz and Dan Vesledahl are up for reappointment beginning January 1, 2020. Manager Bartz is willing to serve another term. Manager Vesledahl would not like to serve another term.

Committee Member Paulson stated he observes the district and noted Bartz is willing and present. Committee Member Todahl agreed with the comments of Paulson. A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Paulson to recommend Clayton Bartz to the Polk County Commissioners, **Seconded** by Committee Member Todahl, **Carried**.

The members discussed the position of Dan Vesledahl. Many names were presented to the committee, Dale Balstad, Don Andringa, and Mike Gunderson. Swenby mentioned that Troy Olson and Paul Stromstad were also names that were brought to her attention, but they have not formally expressed interest. Committee Member Paulson stated that Mike Gunderson has withdrawn his interest. Chairman Tollefson discussed the geography and representation for all areas of the district. All are good candidates, but commented that representation being

geographically balanced was important. Committee Member Paulson preferred that the candidate be familiar with all stretches of the river, namely the middle section of the river. Committee Member Swenson would prefer Troy Olson. A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Swenson to nominate Troy Olson to the Polk County Commissioners, **Seconded** by Committee Paul Stromstad, **Carried**. Olson explained that he does not have a lot of experience with the watershed and at this point feels that if there is a better candidate and he would prefer to decline the nomination.

A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Iverson to nominate Dale Balstad to the Polk County Commissioners, **Seconded** by Committee Paul Stromstad, **Carried**. Committee Member Iverson stated that Dale Balstad has a bachelor's degree in applied economics, was a supervisor on the township, is an active farmer, and serves on many other boards.

A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Todahl to nominate Don Andringa to the Polk County Commissioners, **Seconded** by Committee Paul Hamre, **Carried**. The committee asked for background relating to Andringa and the reason his name was presented to the Committee. Swenby stated it is her understanding that the Andringa's name was presented to the committee as a candidate of interest because there has never been representation in the Climax area, and water that begins on the east end of the district results in the solutions needed on the west end. Additionally, there are some major projects that are in the hopper out in that area and the idea was that a manager serving on the board who knows that area and the landowners has been a noted benefit from those who suggested Andringa as a candidate. She also stated that the argument was made that the district currently has two candidates who represent the east (Bartz and Christian), one in the Fertile (being the middle) area (Engelstad) and one in the Beltrami area (Hamre).

Committee Member Paulson reiterated that he feels strongly that a candidate be within the area of Project # 1 (middle section) and stated that he does not necessarily follow the logic for the reasoning of others recommending Andringa. Committee Member Allen Stromstad commented that if Paulson lived out west where all the water is dumped, he may understand why the representation is needed. Committee Member Paulson agreed that he does not understand the position of the people who live out west, and likewise those that are out west do not understand those in the middle position of the district.

A **Motion** was made Committee Member Todahl to recommend both Andringa and Balstad as a recommendation to the County Commissioners, **Seconded** by Committee Member A. Stromstad, **Carried**.

Swenby will provide a map of the district to the county commissioners highlighting the residence/land ownership of both candidates in the district. Committee Member Commissioner Lee suggested that each candidate submit a letter of interest to the County Commissioner.

**Administrator Report:** Swenby presented a written report to the Advisory Committee that provided a summary of 2019 activities including 2019 construction project reports, ongoing district tasks, district building and handicapped accessibility progress, administrative changes such as insurance, bylaws, staffing, income and internal controls, technology updates, and upcoming projects and tasks for the future. There were no questions presented to Swenby about her report.

**Committee Member Comments:** Committee Member Paulson suggested that the county place ads in the papers that affect all areas of the district. A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Paulson that Polk County consider placing their ad in Mahnomon County and the Norman County newspapers, **Seconded** by Committee Member Grunhoyd, **Carried**. Swenby noted that Jerry Jacobson and Joan Lee were listening in on that advice and will discuss that at their staff/board level. Commissioner Lee sent a letter to the County Administrator to that effect during the meeting.

**Adjournment:** The next meeting of the SHAC will be at the call of the chair as needed. As there was no further business, a **Motion** was made by Committee Member A. Stromstad to adjourn, **Seconded** by Committee Member Swenson, **Carried**.