

Sand Hill River Watershed District

PO Box 584 Fertile, MN 56540 (218) 945-3204

Board of Managers

Roger Hanson-Beltrami Jimmie Krogstad-Fertile Harold Vig-Fosston Ervin Vigness-Nielsen Daniel Wilkens-Fertile

SAND HILL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

February 27, 1997 Meeting Minutes

Following the meal at Mac's Cafe, Jim Todahl called the meeting to order at 7:25 p.m. Jim welcomed the committee members and thanked them for their attendance. Since committee members had inquired of Jim what the duties of the advisory committee are, a job description was prepared and presented. Next Jim introduced the advisory committee and board members. Jim noted the importance of continuity on the board to develop the knowledge needed to effectively execute the duties of the board of managers and specifically thanked Dan and Roger for their longevity on the board.

Jim turned the meeting over to Dan to review the rules and regulations of the District. Dan did not review them in detail, but rather asked the advisory members to look over the current rules and regulations and also the current rules and regulations of the Wild Rice Watershed District. Any questions or comments could be discussed at the next advisory committee meeting.

Dan reviewed the finances, specifically regarding the tax structure, budget, and fund balances. Don Bakken asked about the construction fund of the District and what percent of the total levy this is composed of. Dan explained that the levy is split into three parts. The first part is the administrative levy which is currently set at the maximum of .0002418, which amounts to approximately \$55,000. The other two parts consist of the Red River WMB levy and the construction levy. These two levies are determined by the Red River Board. The Red River legislation states that the RRWMB sets the levy and that half of the funds are retained by the District in a construction account for works in the District and half is forwarded to the RRWMB to be used for projects beneficial to the entire valley. This levy is currently at 75% of the maximum allowed. Al Stromstad asked about the high fund balance in the Administration Fund. Dan responded that this balance has accumulated over the years. Dan explained that it currently costs approximately \$80,000 for annual District operations. This last year the District brought in \$34,500 from taxes, \$34,000 from interest earnings, and \$16,000 from HACA for a total of \$84,500. Without the income from interest earnings on the fund balances, it would be very difficult to operate at the level of service the board feels necessary. Dan explained the role of the Red River Watershed Management Board which all the districts in the Red River Valley are members. This board was established in 1976 to address flooding in the Red River Valley. Its members consist of all the districts in the Red River Basin and operate by a joint powers agreement between them. Each district elects one board member to represent them on the RRWMB. Dan has been the SHRWD representative since the board's inception in 1976. Don Bakken inquired as to how the RRWMB funds their project. Dan stated that all projects are initiated in the local districts and are brought before the RRWMB by the district's representative. The RRWMB has a project evaluation manual which is used to determine eligibility and priority. The RRWMB also decides what portion of the project it will fund. The concept has always been that the local district tries to obtain available funds and only after all avenues have been explored is funding sought from the RRWMB.

The 1997 Summer Tour was discussed. The tour last year was so well received that the board decided to initiate a tour of the east half of the district for 1997. The advisory committee was asked to form a committee to finalize the details of the tour and determine points of interests.

Dan reviewed past office maintenance expense. He stated that the building was purchased in July of 1989 for \$20,000. Initially, the roof was repaired for \$350, ceiling insulation was installed for \$1,225, electric heat was installed for \$2,229, central air was installed for \$3,364, and the interior was painted for \$750. The total purchase cost and renovation of building was \$27,918. In 1996, the district replaced the windows for \$13,924, painted the interior for \$1,476, and installed vertical blinds for \$2,055. Jim Todahl inquired as to how these recent improvements effect the budget. Dan explained that each year when the district sets it's annual budget, a certain amount is set aside for office maintenance. After the initial purchase, no funds have been spent on maintenance for many years. Since these funds have been accumulating each year, more than enough money was available to fund these maintenance costs. The Board is also anticipating the following improvements: removing the center island to open up the meeting area, building a new Board table, replace Board chairs, wallpaper, carpet, handicap ramp, and sidewalk replacement.

Updates were given on the following projects by Dan:

- A)Beltrami Flood Control & Diversion - The public hearings have been held and the Project was ordered in. This Project will be funded two-thirds by the RRWMB and one-third by the SHRWD. The purpose of this Project is to cut-off approximately 9 or 10 square miles that would flow directly into the City of Beltrami and divert the water into the Sand Hill Channel above Beltrami. This would greatly reduce the flooding potential for the City of Beltrami.
- B)Reis/Scandia Township Ditch - The public hearings have been held and the Project was ordered in. This Project is funded jointly by local landowners and Polk County Highway Department as part of a road upgrade. The Project will take water from the Old Sand Hill Channel at the northwest corner of Beltrami, south a quarter of a mile, and then follow County Road #232 west to the Sand Hill Channel. This Project will greatly enhance drainage away from the City of Beltrami and improve drainage for area farmers.
- C)Co. Ditches 98 & 148 - This Project is a petitioned improvement project in the northwest corner of the district. The Project has been tied up in litigation for some time and is currently scheduled at the Court of Appeals for March 5, 1997.
- D)Sand Hill Ditch - The district is trying to obtain FEMA assistance to install drop structures in the channel east of Beltrami where severe erosion has occurred since construction. Dan explained that the COE proposed a solution a year ago that involved abandoning the Sand Hill Ditch and allowing it to go back to nature. This would absolve the COE of any future responsibilities and the Sand Hill District. The Board would not accept this solution and chose to proceed with seeking assistance to remedy the design errors in the initial construction.
- E)North Boundary Change Revisions - The SHRWD and the RLWD are currently in the process of updating their joint boundary. Initial maps have been prepared by the respective watershed engineers as a starting point. These maps have been sent to the 17 townships involved asking for their assistance to ensure that the proposed changes are accurate. During the spring melt, the Board will inspect the area in question and then proceed with the hearing process.
- F)County Road Reclassification - For many years, area residents have tried to reclassify the township road starting at County Road #41 at Highway #9 and continuing west to Climax, into a county road. A meeting was held last spring to explore the possibilities of getting this accomplished. The main obstacle appears to be townships exchanging roads with the county. By law, the county cannot add any new roads to their system without giving up some of their current roads. A committee has been formed to continue this effort.
- G)Ditch Maps - This district has been in the process of creating maps of all the ditch systems in the watershed district which illustrate the different assessment levels for each ditch. When completed, copies will be located at the watershed office and also at the County Auditor's office. Some additional research needs to be completed prior to having these maps printed.

Dan reviewed the public relations efforts of the district. Currently we have over 100 individuals on our mailing list who receive copies of the minutes each month. The Board is requesting input from the Advisory Committee as to how the District's image could be enhanced. The Board has discussed possible news releases as a way of implementing this effort.

New manager appointments were discussed. Two terms are up for renewal this spring. These include Jim Krogstad who indicated he would like to be replaced and Harold Vig who indicated he would like to serve another term. The Advisory Committee will bring recommendations to the County Commissioners after their next meeting.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Daniel Wilkens
Treasurer

Naomi L. Jagol
AdministrativeAssistant