

Sand Hill River Watershed District

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Board of Managers

Bill Brekke, Jr.-Nielsville Stuart Christian-Erskine Roger Hanson-Beltrami Gordon Sonsteli-Erskine Harold Vig-Fosston
Daniel Wilkens-Administrator April Swenby-Administrative Assistant

SAND HILL ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 30, 2009

Attendance: Chairman Todahl called the March 30, 2009 meeting of the Sand Hill Advisory Committee (SHAC) to order at 8:05 a.m. at the Sand Hill River Watershed District Office in Fertile, MN. Other advisory members present were Bruce Stromstad, Steve Taylor, Scott Balstad, John Balstad David Johnstad, Jeff Voeller, and Rory Hamre. Riverwatch Team members in attendance were Ryan Breitbach, Matt Burke, Garret Espeseth, Tyler Schow and Wayne Goeken – Riverwatch Coordinator. Others in attendance were Craig Bunes – Polk County Commissioner, Mark Meister, RRWMB, Daniel Wilkens-Administrator and April Swenby – Administrative Assistant.

Annual Reorganization: The Annual Organization of the SHAC was conducted. Chairman Todahl turned the meeting over to Daniel Wilkens who asked for nominations for Chairman of the SHAC. Scott Balstad nominated Jim Todahl for Chairman. Nominations were called for three times by Daniel Wilkens. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Jim Todahl for Chairman by David Johnstad, **Seconded** by Rory Hamre, **Carried**. Daniel Wilkens returned the chair to Jim Todahl.

Minutes: A **Motion** was made by Bruce Stromstad to approve the April 7, 2008 meeting minutes, **Seconded** by Steve Taylor, with a few recommended changes, **Carried**.

Board Reappointments: Chairman Todahl stated that Gordon Sonsteli and Harold Vig are up for reappointment on May 17th of 2009. Todahl reviewed their role as a watershed board member. Todahl informed the advisory committee that he was assured they were fulfilling their duties as a Sand Hill River Watershed District Manager and their attendance is good. Both managers were willing to run another term. Todahl expressed concern that the Sand Hill River Watershed District board has members close to retirement and it is a possibility that many could seek retirement at the same time. The managers are knowledgeable, but it may be a good time to train someone in. Currently, there were no other recommendations for the Winger area. A **Motion** was made by Bruce Stromstad to recommend Gordon Sonsteli to the Polk County Commissioners for reappointment, **Seconded** by John Balstad, **Carried**. Harold Vig is in the Fosston area and is willing to serve another term. The group discussed the possibility of having Scott Balstad involved for training to avoid the possibility of having two new managers in one term. Balstad will keep up on the monthly minutes in preparation for a future board position. Chairman Todahl reviewed the letter he will send to the County Commissioners recommending Vig. Everyone concurred. A **Motion** was made by John Balstad to recommend Gordon Sonsteli to the Polk County Commissioners for reappointment, **Seconded** by Scott Balstad, **Carried**.

Other Business:

Polk County Commissioner Welcome: The group welcomed Craig Bunes as the new Polk County Commissioner. Swenby will add him to the Advisory Committee meeting list. Swenby will update the web site to reflect the changes in the advisory committee.

Riverwatch Report: The Win-E-Mac students reported high incidences of dissolved oxygen on the 3 sites that they monitor; however in September low oxygen incidence levels were reported. Turbidity has exceeded in the past three years. The group discussed the possible causes of high turbidity. The average depth of the monitoring sites is about 2 ½ - 3 feet, but can be as high as 5 feet. The group showed interest in nitrate & phosphorus testing. Goeken was hopeful that additional funding would be available to do additional testing by the year 2010. The Sandhill is one of the highest areas for sediment.

Chairman Todahl shared his experience with tile drainage and the benefits in decreasing turbidity.

Public Information/RRWMB: Mark Meister introduced himself as the Public information officer for the RRWMB. The RRWMB is committed to building credibility to the RRWMB and the individual districts and have hired Meister to be a media spokesperson to assist in that goal.

Johnstad added that it has been portrayed that farmers are the cause for the flooding on the Red and the cause for the recent 09 flooding. Meister informed the group that the RRWMB is committed to restoring that reputation in defending the farming community and their benefits. More information will be published and Meister did not feel that the decision makers are that naive.

Sediment Basin Projects: Wilkens told the group that Gary Lee- SWCD, gave the district board a list of proposed projects that he was working on. The projects included eight sediment basins, seven shore land restoration projects and seven rain gardens. The SWCD did not have the funding available to complete all the proposed projects at the district's agreed 25% cost share. Lee asked the managers if the district would be interested in cost sharing up to 75% on the sediment basins. The managers also discussed looking at each case on a project by project basis. In September of 2008, the district watershed approved to provide a 50% cost share to the Sediment Basins and the Shore land Restorations. The amount was not to exceed \$50,000 for the year 2008. These projects are reducing sediment on the river substantially.

Adjournment: The next meeting of the SHAC will be at the call of the chair as needed. As there was no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:45 AM.

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant