

# SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

September 5, 2017

1. **Attendance:** Chairman Stuart Christian called September 5, 2017 to meeting to order at 8:00 AM at the District Office. Other managers present were Scott Balstad, JJ Hamre, Roger Hanson and Phillip Swenson. Two staff members were present: Daniel Wilkens – Administrator and April Swenby – Administrative Assistant. Others in attendance Roger Hemphill – MN DNR, Gerald Paulson and Glen Paulson– Bear Park landowner, Russell Gunufson – permit applicant, Lisa Newton – East Polk SWCD, Sarah Mielke – East Polk SWCD, Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering, Bill Downs – landowner, and Joyce Downs – landowner.
2. **Approval of the Agenda:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad to approve the agenda as presented, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried**.
3. **Minutes:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the minutes from the August 1, 2017 **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.
4. **Budget Hearing:**

The regular meeting was recessed at 8:30 AM. The budget hearing was called to order at 8:31 am by Chairman Stuart Christian. Chairman Christian opened the hearing for discussion. No one came forward with any comments or questions on the budget as advertised. The budget for 2018 was presented as follows:

<b>Income</b>	
REIMBURSED EXPENSE	1,800.00
Homestead/Ag Credit	7,500.00
INTEREST INCOME	9,000.00
TAX LEVY INCOME	<u>250,000.00</u>
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>268,300.00</b>
<b>Expense</b>	
WEB-SITE	600.00
MEETING EXPENSE	1,100.00
DUES-MEMBERSHIP	1,700.00
EDUCATION	2,500.00
STREAM DATA	3,000.00
TRAVEL EXPENSES	4,000.00
COMPUTER EXPENSE	5,000.00
BUILDING MAINTENANCE/OCCUPANCY	8,000.00
PAYROLL TAXES	10,000.00
OFFICE OPERATIONS	15,000.00
MANAGER EXPENSE	16,000.00
PROF SERVICES	24,600.00
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS	56,800.00
PAYROLL EXPENSES	<u>120,000.00</u>
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>268,300.00</b>

Manager Balstad asked for an explanation and purpose of the capital expenditures fund. It was explained this fund was established many years ago, to provide handicapped accessibility and bathrooms for the district office. It is a line item budgeted for planning purposes to accomplish our goal of handicap access and bathrooms.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the budget as advertised, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried**. The budget meeting was adjourned and the regular monthly meeting was reconvened at 8:40 AM.

5. **Treasurer's Report:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the treasurer's report for August, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

The managers reviewed their expense reports and reported on activities for the month. A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad, to approve and pay bills, excluding the SWCD balances which are listed for informational purposes only, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

## 6. **Engineer's Report**

**Climax Ring Dike:** Reitrock Paving is expected to start within the next week to redo the Hwy 220 asphalt patch.

Restricted use easements continue to move forward. Houston Engineering is working with Dave Hauff to determine the best route to proceed.

**Rock Riffles:** Grass and vegetation growth has been verified. Houston Engineering recommends disbursing the 5% retainage to Spruce Valley (\$13,688.85). A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad to authorize final payment to Spruce Valley for \$13,688.85, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried**.

Kittleson Creek outlet will be surveyed this week. The district is looking at replacing the outlet culvert from Kittleson Creek into the Sand Hill River.

**BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant Opportunities:** Herrmann was in a car accident during the week of the grant application submission deadline. Herrmann apologizes for being unable to submit the application.

### **Targeted Watershed Demonstration Program:**

**Sediment Control Basins:** East Polk SWCD held a public informational meeting August 16, 2017 at 9:30 AM in McIntosh.

**Polk County Flood Plain:** Approximately 29 structures were identified using aerial photography. Herrmann recommends investigation to see if a LOMA is a realistic option for each structure before reaching out to landowners.

**RCPP (Upper Detention Sites):** A public meeting was held August 16, 2017 at 1:30 at the Duane Knutson Community Center in Fertile. Jerry Bents attended in Herrmann's absence. Minutes were given to the managers and are posted on the district web-site. Herrmann suggests sending the comment forms to local agencies.

**Project # 24:** The area north of Nielsville (near Bill Brekke's property) will be observed for the upcoming season. Sheet pile and rock can be added at any time if needed.

**Dave Arends:** Dave Hauff has completed a draft complaint and a copy was given to the managers.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad to approve and send the complaint to Davidson Trust, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried**.

Spokely Wash Plant: Manager Balstad has requested Wilkens inspect the wash plant and let Spokely's know they need to remove the sediment.

Ditch 80: Swenby reported that \$34,400 was received for the outlet pipes from MN BWSR from the MDM grant.

Herrmann suggests another meeting after harvest. Because dirt isn't being moved this fall, there is not a rush for another informational meeting. Herrmann suggests the afternoon of the November board meeting for another informational meeting.

## 7. **Dan's Monthly Report**

**RRWMB**: The RRWMB met on August 15 in Ada. Meeting packet was given to the managers.

The RRWMB also held an additional meeting in August to discuss the location of the RRWMB. The board has decided to have the location centrally located in the basin and coordination with the watershed district offices in either Ada, Fertile, or Thief River Falls.

**IRRB**: The IRRB meeting was held on August 29 and 31 in Gimli, MB.

**Drainage Workgroup**: The next meeting is scheduled for September 14 at the Farmers Union building by the capitol in St. Paul.

**Vesledahl /Morvig legal system**: A meeting was held August 17 at 7 PM at the Winger Community Center to discuss the transfer of the project and the process to make this a legal ditch system. Draft minutes were given to the managers. A follow up meeting is scheduled for September 21 at 7:00 PM at the Winger Community Center. Herrmann will develop numbers for the LeRoy Johnson site and will prepare information to send to BWSR and MnDOT.

**Erosion at Union Lake**: The SWCD has asked their engineers to review the area. East Polk SWCD suggests that work may be required on the upper end of the project. Wilkens has asked Lisa Newton, East Polk SWCD, to have their engineers contact him so they can schedule a meeting with the SWCD engineers, watershed district, and landowners to look at all options.

## 7. **Other Business:**

**Public Relations**: The managers reviewed possible public relations items. No new information was brought before the board.

**East Polk SWCD**: Newton presented an update on the Targeted Watershed progress. Two meetings have been held, with the second being better attended. Newton reported on the Macho project, which goes through three quarters with multiple individual structures.

Newton applied for another Clean Water Fund Grant for almost \$200,000, not limited to just sediment basins. The district continues to be committed to ¼ share.

East Polk SWCD needs a list for signups for buffer strips. Swenby will put a link stating "Need assistance with your buffer? Click Here" on our web-site for landowners and link it to the West and

East Polk SWCD web-site. Herrmann will create a boundary map for landowners to know which SWCD is in their boundary. There is a cost share available for legal ditch systems as well.

One Watershed One Plan application will be submitted in January.

Newton suggested monitoring water quality after the projects are constructed and would like to collaborate with the district for monitoring.

**Bear Park:** Roger Hemphill – MN DNR reported his findings at the Bear Park site. On August 9, he made a site visit and reviewed the drone footage from the spring of the year. Hemphill reported minimal flow. He reported an adequate channel and an adequate opening for flow. He reported that the river in this area will get out of its channel easily due to the flat slope and typography. Hemphill explained that in this area, high flow times make the river “self-cleaning”.

Hemphill reported that based on the drone footage there were two beaver dams. Hemphill felt the best way is to keep the river clear from beaver dams and suggested annual drone footage and annual kayak tours. Hemphill suggested that during dam removal, it is effective to remove all the debris as much as possible, being mindful of not disturbing the bed and bank.

This is not a ditch system and the request for cleaning is a permissible activity; however, the cost includes environmental review, surveys, plans, federal Corp regulations and site visits, and is not cost effective. There is also no guarantee that a permit will be granted, especially due to Corp regulations. Alignment and channel grade alterations will not be allowed with the permit.

Hemphill reminded the district that this is nothing unique to the Sand Hill River Watershed. The other watershed districts are experience the same thing.

Hemphill’s opinion was that the structure did not have an impact on the upper end of the Sand Hill. He felt the concerns of Paulson’s are likely a result of the lay of the land and the typography, not the structure. Manager Hanson questioned whose responsibility it was to increase the flow of the river if the low flow is not the fault of the structure, and may be a result of farming practices and sediment. Gerald Paulson feels that it is the responsibility of the district and feels that Hemphill has provided solutions to the problem (cleaning out the old beaver dam debris).

Gerald Paulson presented photos of flooding taken June 19 and July 3 and Paulson verifies that the dams were blown prior to the July photo. By August, the river has been constrained back into its banks. Herrmann asked if what the district has done by blowing the dams in July, which resulted in the normal height levels in August, is satisfactory to Paulson’s and questioned if there is more that the district should have done. Paulson is not convinced that the dams have been blown completely. Paulson suggests asking for before and after photos from the contractors when they blow the dams. Chairman Christian confirmed that he had a direct call with Olson’s who verified that the dams had being blown channel wide. The district is willing to ask for before and after photos in the future. Paulson reported additional obstructions below the structure by Krogstad’s.

Manager Balstad asked if the landowners in the area can be assessed. Herrmann verified that it could be done, and explained the process of assessing the area. A petition is required and 60% of the landowners are required. This would likely never happen. Paulson felt that the removal of the debris is a responsibility of the district not the responsibility of the local landowners. Paulson stated all he and other landowners are looking for is beaver dam debris removal be complete. Manager Hanson asked Paulson to verify that the river flow was a problem before the structure was placed and Gerald Paulson agreed this is has been an ongoing problem long before the structure was built.

Herrmann suggested drone footage in the fall as the annual inspection so that the district has the winter to develop a plan to remove possible obstructions. A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad to obtain additional drone footage immediately while the water is low, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried**. Paulson suggested drone footage be taken below the structure by Harstad's and Krogstad's.

Wilkens has contacted a beaver trapper for the area by Harstad's and Krogstad's and when the beavers are trapped, the dams will be blown. Paulson suggested that nothing in the area has been occurring. Manager Balstad suggested talking to Rosebud Township and suggests they have a good trapper and suggested hiring a different contractor for blowing the dams. Speed for action has been a concern for Paulson's and Manager Balstad agreed that the district contractor's need to act more timely.

Paulson would like to apologize to Manager Swenson. Last month's minutes reported that Paulson reported Manager Swenson was untruthful. He did not mean it that way and would like it corrected as not his intentions.

Paulson acknowledged receipt of the letter asking for direct communication be through the district administrator. Paulson also stated that the letter would not restrict his right to communicate with people he would like to communicate with.

**Building Upgrades:** Swenby presented a bid for carpeting. Manager Balstad suggested fixing the vent before the carpet is installed. A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad to approve the carpeting and asked that the install be completed after the vent is fixed, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

8. **Permits:** Four permits were brought before the board.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad to approve the following permit after the engineer and administrator site visit approval, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried**.

**2017-13:** Russell Gunufson, Section 3 – Bejou Township, Install tile

A **Motion** was made by Manager Balstad to approve the following permits, pending site visits on US Fish and Wildlife, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried**.

**2017-14:** Norman County, Section 21, Install crossing

**2017-15:** US Fish and Wildlife Service, Section 17 – Heier Township, Restore drained lake

**2017-16:** Dahl Family Farms, Section 8 – Bejou Township, Install erosion control structure

**2017-17:** Rory Hamre, Section 6 – Reis Township, Install Culvert

**2017-18:** Rory Hamre, Section 18 – Reis Township, Install Culvert

**2017-19:** Brian & Brent Gullekson, Section 35 – Russia Township, Clean Existing Ditch

9. **Adjournment:** The next regular meeting will be held **Tuesday at 8:00 AM on October 3, 2017**. As there was no further business to come before the board, a **Motion** was made by Manager Swenson to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 AM, **Seconded** by Manager Balstad, **Carried**.