

SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

March 2, 1999 Meeting Minutes

1. **Attendance:** Chairman Hanson called the March 2, 1999 meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. at the District Office. Other managers present were Dan Wilkens, Harold Vig, and Jim Krogstad. Others in attendance were Naomi Jagol-Administrative Assistant, Jim Larsen-SHRWD Engineer, Dan Gronberg, Nate Dalager, Roland Gagner, Jerome Birkeland, and Rudy Applequist.
2. **Agenda Review:** No changes to the agenda were noted.
3. **Minutes:** Motion by Manager Krogstad to approve the minutes of the SHRWD regular Board meeting held on February 2, 1999 as mailed, Seconded by Manager Vig, Carried.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Wilkens handed out and reviewed the Treasurer's report. Bills that had been submitted for payment were then reviewed. Motion by Manager Vig to approve the Treasurer's report and pay the bills as presented, Seconded by Manager Krogstad, Carried.

Wilkens reported on the 1998 audit. He explained that two items were identified that needed correction. A Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) certificate of deposit was incorrectly recorded as a Sand Hill River Watershed District (SHRWD) investment by the Argyle State Bank. The District deposited the interest earned on the investment into the SHRWD account, which needed to be remitted to the RRWMB. The error occurred since both the RRWMB and the SHRWD had exactly the same amount invested with the Argyle State Bank. The second item identified were the funds levied for the Data and Acquisition account. These funds were incorrectly coded and were not allocated to the proper account upon receipt. This resulted in an overpayment to the RRWMB for their portion of the levy. The RRWMB will be returning the excess amount to the SHRWD.

Dan Gronberg, Climax, MN, introduced himself as a member of the Sand Hill Advisory Committee and stated that he was in attendance to observe the meeting.

| Payment Made to—Memo | Amount |
|--|-------------------|
| Naomi Jagol—sec. services & exp. 2/1-2/15 (\$1,097.79), 2/16-2/28 (\$735.13) | \$1,832.92 |
| Roger Hanson—meetings & expenses | 254.52 |
| Jimmie Krogstad—meetings & expenses | 393.71 |
| Harold Vig—meetings & expenses | 67.04 |
| Dan Wilkens—meetings & expenses | 425.75 |
| Al & Laura's—Supplies | 49.22 |
| Anderson & Bailly—Review Audit letter and prepare response | 88.70 |
| Bear Park Township—Beaver Control | 220.00 |
| Dahl, Hatton, Muir & Reese, Ltd.—Audit of 1998 books and records | 2,817.55 |
| Fertile Bakery—Meeting expense | 13.20 |
| First State Bank of Fertile—Soc. Sec./Med. Deposit | 464.82 |
| Garden Valley Telephone Co.—March phone bill | 221.68 |
| Houston Engineering, Inc.—Meetings & Special Meetings | 472.50 |
| Mac's Café—Noon meal | 34.60 |
| Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts—Annual Membership Dues | 922.57 |
| MN Assoc. of Drainage Inspectors—Membership Dues for 1999 | 150.00 |
| Otter Tail Power Co.—March billing | 283.25 |
| The International Coalition—1998 Annual Summit Conference | 100.00 |
| Tony Dorn, Inc.—Copier Maintenance | 85.35 |
| VISA Credit—Drainage Conference expense | 89.68 |
| MONTHLY TOTAL | \$8,987.06 |

5. Project Reports:

- a. Project #12, Co. Ditches 98 & 148: Jim Larsen reported that Lyle Wilkens and himself have begun discussions regarding the additional graveling that was needed for the project. Larsen explained that Lyle Wilkens stated that had he been able to do the extra work needed, it could have been done at a reduced cost than what was paid to another party. Larsen added that he would try to have this issue resolved prior to the next board meeting. Hanson noted that he does not anticipate the entire cost of the additional work would be remitted from Lyle Wilkens, Inc. since a portion of the work resulted from work in excess of the contract. The District is expecting a negotiated settlement from Lyle Wilkens, Inc.

6. Upcoming Meetings and Other Business:

- a. Sand Hill Ditch Erosion: Jim Larsen discussed presentations conducted at the dedication of the Ada High School. He stated that the Economic Development Director from Collin Peterson's office, Toni Mudan, along with John Steiner from Polk County Zoning discussed the funding assistance that is available following a flood.

Hanson requested Wilkens and Larsen to contact Glen Gullekson to discuss the options for repairing the ditch erosion along his property. Hanson noted the importance of obtaining Gullekson's input prior to pursuing the various alternative solutions.

Larsen stated that the weak area by Gullekson's has been identified by the City of Beltrami as an urgent matter. Larsen added that he would contact Jim Steiner from Polk County Zoning to inquire about the programs available prior to scheduling a meeting with Gullekson.

- b. Early Coordination Conference: Jim Larsen stated that he had been summoned for jury duty on March 18th which would conflict with the first day of the conference. He inquired whether a manager could deliver the presentation should he not be able to reschedule the jury duty. Wilkens volunteered to conduct the presentation. Wilkens explained that each district has been allowed 20 minutes to present the two or three problem areas within their district. The Flood Damage Reduction Work Group feels that additional meetings might be needed throughout the year in order to keep projects moving in accordance with the mediation agreement. Wilkens added that since the spring conference has been altered to accommodate the mediation agreement, a separate training conference for watershed managers might be needed.

The board discussed which projects should be presented at the conference. Wilkens recommended including the Maple Creek outlet impoundment, the Winger Township wildlife restoration and impoundment, Rindal area impoundments, and the high water situation at Union Lake-Sarah.

- a. Maple Creek Outlet: This project could involve an off-channel storage site located NE of Beltrami to contain and hold floodwaters coming from Maple Creek.
- b. Rindal Area Impoundments: This project could involve one site south, and one site NE of Rindal to contain and hold floodwaters.
- c. Winger Township Wildlife Restoration and Impoundment: This project could involve restoring a wetland to contain floodwaters.
- d. Union Lake-Sarah Lake Level Stabilization: This project would develop a method to lower the high lake levels on these two lakes and maintain them at a reasonable level. Dale Knotek, Chairman of the Union Lake-Sarah Improvement District, reported on the history and recently completed feasibility study. Knotek stated that the study resulted in their board selecting an option which would involve pumping water from the SW corner of Union Lake 2,600 feet to a point that would naturally bring the water SW into the Sand Hill River. A 24" pipe was estimated to pump 20 cfs for 120 days which would

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bring the water to a manageable level. The estimated cost to install the project is \$600,000. Knotek requested the District to present the project at the conference on March 18th.

Motion by Manager Wilkens to include the Union Lake-Sarah proposal in the Sand Hill River WD's presentation, **Seconded** by Manager Krogstad. **Carried**

The following problem areas were prioritized for presentation at the Early Coordination Conference:

1. Maple Creek Outlet Impoundment
2. Rindal Area Impoundments
3. Union Lake-Sarah Lake Level
4. Winger Township Wildlife Restoration and Impoundment

Motion by Manager Vig to present the above problem areas at the conference, **Seconded** by Manager Wilkens. **Carried**

- c. **Polk County Informational Meeting**: Hanson requested Krogstad to report on the ditch hearing conducted on March 1, 1999 at the Fertile-Beltrami High School. Krogstad explained that the county commissioners presented the new system developed to maintain the county ditches. The County has appointed Roger Diesen, Polk County Highway Engineer, to be in charge of the ditch program. The County has also hired Wayne Mager as Polk County ditch inspector. Roger Diesen explained at the meeting that the system developed for Polk County would be similar to the one used in Marshall County which is where he was employed prior to Polk County. The new system requires a form to be completed by landowners prior to any work being done.

Following the presentation by the county commissioners, several individuals discussed the rationale for the Sand Hill River Watershed District to maintain the ditches along with the problems associated with the previous system.

At the conclusion of the meeting, a member of the audience inquired how the county commissioners felt about the proposal to turn all the ditches over to the watershed for maintenance. The commissioners responded that the District does an excellent of maintaining the ditches currently under their jurisdiction, however, they would be hesitant to turn over all the ditches at one time to the District. The commissioners added that they would be pleased to consider a petition from one ditch system at a time.

Gronberg inquired whether the process of turning over one ditch at a time to the District would be more costly than turning over all the ditches at once. Hanson responded that turning the ditches over one at a time would be very time consuming and would be at a greater cost than turning all the ditches over at one time.

Krogstad stated that he had discussed with the proponents the proposal of turning the ditches over to the District for maintenance, and they had indicated they would like to give the County a chance to implement the new system prior to submitting any petitions. Vig added that he was under the same understanding as Krogstad following a discussion with Warren Affeldt, the newly elected county commissioner in his area.

Hanson noted that the county gave a thorough presentation of the newly developed system, and also that the county has stated publicly that they are going to try to make this new system a success. Hanson added that most of the individuals attending the meeting were very optimistic about the new system.

- d. **1999 Annual Drainage and Wetland Conference**: The 12th annual conference was conducted on Thursday, February 4, 1999, at the St. Cloud Civic Center, St Cloud, MN. Manager Krogstad was in attendance.

Krogstad complimented Wilkens and Hanson on the excellent job they have done on updating the other board members on various watershed issues. Krogstad noted that following the conference, he realized the tremendous knowledge these two have obtained over the years and what an asset they are to the Sand Hill River Watershed District. Krogstad added that it was an excellent leadership seminar and he would highly recommend attendance at future conferences of this nature.

- e. Seeking Signs of Success: Hanson inquired whether the survey should be completed when a full board is not in attendance. Krogstad suggested waiting to complete the survey until all managers are in attendance.
- f. River Watch: A River Watch forum was conducted at UMC on February 18, 1999. Those in attendance from the District included Hanson, Wilkens, and Jagol. Wilkens stated that the Minnesota Pollution Control Agency (MPCA) is trying to develop a uniform water quality data collection system throughout the valley and noted that the River Watch program could assist in accomplishing this objective. Hanson stated that the MPCA had indicated that data obtained from students would be considered credible. Wilkens added that state agencies are beginning to provide more equipment to assist with the program. Wilkens noted that lake sampling would be the next step in expanding the River Watch program.
- g. Polk County Hwy #41 Re-build: Wilkens stated that Polk County Highway #41 is scheduled for rebuilding in 2003. The District sponsored an informational meeting on February 17, 1999 in Climax, MN. The Polk County Highway Department (PCHD) explained the road could be moved north all the way along without disturbing the ditch. The landowners were not in favor of this approach since it would not improve drainage, which is desperately needed in this area.

Roger Diesen, PCHD engineer, stated that County State Aid Highway (CSAH) funds would pay for 90% of the dirt work. Diesen added that of the 11 bridges in the project, 10 are deficient and would be eligible for bridge replacement funds. Wilkens noted that there is currently no main artery to handle the water in this part of the district, which has a major flooding and erosion problems at the outlet.

Those in attendance discussed the legal aspects involved in establishing a better system in this area to handle the water problems. The PCHD indicated a decision from the concerned landowners would need to be received sometime this year so that the ditch could be re-built as part of the road project. Wilkens explained that the original specifications of the ditch could not be changed unless an improvement project was established.

The next informational meeting is scheduled for Monday, March 8th, Climax Community Center, at 9:00 a.m.

- h. 1999 MAWD Legislative Breakfast: The 1999 legislative breakfast is scheduled for March 12, 1999 at the Kelly Inn, St. Paul, MN. Manager Hanson and Manager Krogstad plan to attend.
- i. Minnesota Association of Drainage Inspectors: A meeting of the drainage inspectors is scheduled for March 18, 1999 in Wilmar, MN. Due to the conflict with the Early Coordination Conference scheduled for March 18-19, 1999, no one from the District will be able to attend.
- j. The Minnesota Center for Environmental Advocacy (MCEA): The MCEA has nominated the Red River Flood Damage Reduction Work Group for a national award stating that the mediation process along with the outcome achieved was a model of collaborative approaches.
- k. Vesledahl Project: Wilkens stated that he has discussed obtaining the services of Kurt Deter, attorney with Rinke-Noonan, to conduct a meeting with the affected landowners with Mike Kamnikar, MnDOT. He noted that Deter could answer questions that the landowners might have regarding the best approach to take

in order to insure their future ability to maintain the private ditch systems in the project area. Wilkens added that a meeting has not been scheduled to date, however, he would continue discussions with MnDOT regarding obtaining an attorney to assist the landowners.

- l. Ditch Maps: Wilkens explained the need for the District to complete the mapping of the ditch systems in the SHRWD. He stated that he would inquire with the Board of Water & Soil Resources (BWSR) regarding grant assistance to complete this project. He noted that the maps would be made accessible on the computer and would include the assessed area as a layer of information. The maps would be an asset to landowners as well as the district for information and permitting.
- m. Auditor Report: Wilkens referred to the discussion conducted earlier in conjunction with the presentation of the Treasurer's Report.

Wilkens stated that the auditor discussed his concern regarding the number of hours worked by Naomi Jagol. Wilkens explained that Jagol was hired as a part-time employee with estimated hours of 20 hours per week. Wilkens stated that Jagol's position has developed into a full-time position ranging from 40-60 hours per week. Wilkens noted that Jagol has been employed by the District for 3 years with no pay raises or benefits. Wilkens stated that the auditor recommended a comparative worth study be conducted for Jagol's position with similar county positions in order to establish a compensation package commensurate with the responsibilities associated with the position. Wilkens noted that he would forward Jagol's job description to Jack Schmalenberg, Polk County Coordinator, in order to conduct a comparative worth study and submit the results to the auditor for review. Once a review is completed, the auditor would forward his recommendations to the Board for consideration.

Wilkens noted that the auditor also discussed his concern over the number of hours worked by himself. Wilkens stated that the auditor indicated that he would be available to discuss his concerns with the board following the tax season. The auditor noted that he would offer various solutions to the board in order to remedy the situation.

Wilkens also discussed his concern regarding the increased workload experienced in the District. He noted that in addition to the increased workload of the District, his participation in the Red River Watershed Management Board and the Red River Basin Board has increased. He added that these organizations are all necessary elements in the scheme of water management in the basin. The board discussed Wilkens' current status as a manager and the possibility of changing to an Administrator position.

- n. Board Terms: Roger Hanson and Ervin Vigness terms expire on May 17, 1999. Wilkens stated that the Sand Hill Advisory Committee (SHAC) would need to prepare recommendations to the county board.

7. Permits:

a.) No permits came before the Board this month for review.

- 8. Adjournment:** The next regular meeting of the SHRWD will be 7:00 a.m. Tuesday, April 13, 1999. As there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 12:20 p.m.

Jimmie Krogstad, Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol, Administrative Assistant