

SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

November 9, 1999 Meeting Minutes

1. **Attendance:** Chairman Hanson called the November 9, 1999 meeting to order at 8:00 a.m. at the District Office. Other managers present were Bill Brekke, Harold Vig, and Stuart Christian. Others in attendance were Daniel Wilkens-Administrator, Naomi Jagol-Administrative Assistant, Jim Larsen-Houston Engineering, Inc., and Paul Engelstad.
2. **Agenda Review:** Stuart Christian requested that discussion regarding water monitoring for the Union Lake/Sarah project be added to the agenda.
3. **Minutes:** Motion by Manager Brekke to approve the minutes of the SHRWD regular Board meeting held on October 5, 1999 as mailed, Seconded by Manager Vig, Carried.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** Wilkens handed out and reviewed the Treasurer's report. Motion by Manager Brekke to approve the Treasurer's report as presented, Seconded by Manager Christian, Carried.

Wilkens reviewed the monthly bills received. Motion by Manager Brekke to approve and pay bills, Seconded by Manager Christian, Carried. For further reference, copies of the bills approved are attached hereto in the Treasurer's Report.

Manager Hanson noted that our new board member Bill Brekke, Jr. had not been formally sworn in to the Sand Hill River Watershed District Board of Managers. Brekke took his oath of office and was sworn in as a Board Manager.

5. Project Reports:

- a. Project #12, Co. Ditches 98 & 148: Wilkens stated that a dispute had occurred between two adjacent landowners in Section 18 of Hammond township. The dispute related to draining water north into the project. Wilkens explained that after numerous phone calls to each of the landowners, the situation was resolved.
- b. Project #13, Reis-Scandia: Manager Hanson stated that the county has mowed the project area and did an excellent job, however, several of the ROW stakes were mowed down in the process. Larsen estimated that it would cost approximately \$45 per stake for Houston Engineering to replace the stakes. Following discussion, the board agreed to forward a letter to Polk County Highway Department to inform them of the situation in order to avoid it happening in the future.
- c. Project #15, Ring Dikes: Larsen inspected the Stromstad ring dike and reported there is a low area on the inside of the dike, and also that in some areas the grass was not growing. The District discussed requesting the landscaper to revisit the project to remedy these areas. Larsen added that he would be visiting the project site following the board meeting. Larsen also stated that the documentation is being finalized regarding state reimbursement, the RRWMB cost share percentage, and the landowner portion.
- d. Project #5, Ditch 17-2: Wilkens stated that a complaint was received from Carl Swenson regarding the outlet of Ditch 17-2. Swenson stated that the outlet appeared to be plugged due to bank sloughing. Wilkens

stated that he had contacted Ray Christian, who had cleaned the ditch previously for the District, and they visited the problem site with Swenson. Wilkens noted that some minor sloughing is occurring, however, the high water problem was due to a beaver dam in the channel, south of Steve Gullickson's deer stand. Wilkens stated that he had gone out later that afternoon and removed the dam.

Wilkens stated that Swenson was also concerned about a high water problem, ½ mile west of his buildings. Wilkens explained that, following a review of the area in question, the ditch was not within the jurisdiction of the Sand Hill River WD, but rather a Norman County road ditch. Wilkens advised Swenson to contact the Norman County Highway Department for permission to clean the ditch.

6. Upcoming Meetings and Other Business:

- a. Minnesota Association of Watershed Districts: The MAWD meeting is scheduled for December 2-4, 1999 in Alexandria, MN. Jimmie Krogstad and Harold Vig were appointed voting delegates, with Dan Wilkens selected for media spokesperson. All board members and staff were encouraged to attend.
- b. 17th Annual Red River Basin Land and Water International Summit Conference: "*Our Basin Home: Managing Our Society Within Nature*," is the theme of this year's conference scheduled for January 11-13, 2000 at the Hotel Fort Garry, Winnipeg, MB. Wilkens encouraged the Board of Managers who plan on attending to notify the district office as soon as possible.
- c. The Red River Watershed Management Board (RRWMB) Annual Watershed Management Conference: Wilkens stated that the conference is scheduled for December 9th and 10th, 1999, at the Best Western Inn in Thief River Falls, MN. The purpose of this conference is to assist watershed managers in developing a better understanding of their duties and responsibilities as District Managers. Wilkens distributed the draft agenda for review by the Board. It is the goal, because of the importance of the training, that all managers and staff attend this conference.
- d. Polk County #14-Scandia Church: Manager Hanson reported that the Polk County Highway Department was informed that a culvert through Polk County #14, south of the Ruth Stromstad driveway, was plugged and the county proceeded to remove the obstruction. This culvert was plugged after a permit was issued to do so many years ago to bring the water back into the Sand Hill River rather than let it meander over farmland for 9-10 miles before entering the Sand Hill River. Hanson stated that when the permit was issued, several landowners and their attorneys were involved, at which time everyone involved agreed that it should be plugged. Roger Diesen, Polk County Highway Department (PCHD) engineer, has discussed the culvert in question with the district and agreed to plug it again should the District forward the original documentation to the PCHD. The District policy has always been to run water in grassed ditches rather than over bare farmland wherever possible and also to direct water into the Sand Hill Ditch, where appropriate.
- e. Ditch #122: Wilkens reported that Jim Todahl, Liberty Township, had talked to the landowner that had concerns about the ditch restrictor. Todahl indicated that he had visited with the county board regarding the situation and discussed the rationale behind Liberty township's decision not to follow the county ditch engineers solution to the problem. The township decided that the project would be monitored closely and should the restrictor causes any problems it would be modified to eliminate the areas of concern.
- f. Tax Issue: Wilkens discussed the issue of land sales to tax exempt agencies with Ray Bohn, Executive Director of MAWD. The recent discussion involved the possible sale of Tilden Farms to the Nature

Conservancy. The proposed land sale would involve approximately 24,000 acres that could be reclassified as tax exempt.

The Board also discussed the MnDOT purchase of the Vesledahl property near Winger, MN. Manager Vig had inquired whether the watershed district should present a resolution at the MAWD convention requesting that the law be changed in order to not allow land to go tax exempt without some means to preserve the local tax base. Vig explained that the reclassification creates an undue hardship on local government units which try to make up the shortfall. Wilkens stated that Ray Bohn had indicated that he has not been contacted by the Association of Minnesota Counties (AMC) regarding this issue. Wilkens noted that Bohn felt that the AMC should be the primary group to present this issue at the proper time.

- g. Deferred Compensation Plan: As part of the compensation package offered to employees, a deferred compensation plan was to be established for the employees. Wilkens explained that Polk County has a plan with the National Association of Counties which the District is eligible to join. The National Association of Counties requires a resolution to be adopted by the board to establish a plan for the district. **Motion** by Manager Vig to adopt the National Association of Counties Deferred Compensation plan for the District and establish the Deferred Compensation Plan for the voluntary participation of all eligible employees and elected officials of the District. The administrator is authorized to sign the appropriate documents, a copy of which is hereby attached to the minutes. **Seconded** by Manager Christian, **Carried**.
- h. Union Lake Sarah Water Monitoring: Dale Knotek requested Stuart Christian to discuss the issue of whether any funds were available to assist the Lake Improvement District (LID) with the water quality monitoring. Wilkens stated that he had discussed this issue with Gale Mayer (DNR) and he noted that the LID is responsible for gathering baseline information but felt that if the information had a wider scope than just this project, that the DNR or other entities that would be making use of the information should identify funding sources to assist the LID. Mayer indicated that he would explore the various funds available. Manager Christian reported on the water monitoring plans that the USACE, DNR, and MPCA have developed. Each plan is slightly different, which makes them difficult to follow for the laymen. The three entities are going to collaborate on the development of one document. Manager Christian also reported on the agencies' frustration that no one seems to be in charge of the project. The Board discussed the issue of delegating a project manager. Manager Christian reported that to date the pump has only been running at approximately half capacity due to the incapability between the pump and the tractor. The contractor is working on rectifying this situation as soon as possible.
- i. Notary Classification Renewal: Wilkens stated that currently both he and Jagol are notaries. The commission for each classification expires the end of January 2000. Following discussion, the board agreed that Wilkens should renew his notary commission.

Motion by Manager Vig to authorize Dan Wilkens to renew his notary commission, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke, **Carried**.

- j. Position Paper: Wilkens distributed a handout prepared by Don Ogaard, Executive Director of the RRWMB, which was forwarded to the individual watershed districts regarding the preparation of guidelines for the project teams. Following discussion, the Board concluded that no additions or revisions were necessary to the document.

7. Permits:

a. Four permits came before the Board for review and were approved as follows:

- 1999-30 Brekke Bros. Inc. – Clean existing ditch and construct new ditch in Hubbard township, Section 30.
- 1999-31 Paul Engelstad – Clean existing ditch and construct new ditch in Liberty township, Section 17.
- 1999-32 Lois Samuelson – Clean existing ditch in Hammond township, Section 18.
- 1999-33 Scott Searles – Install culvert in Scandia township, Section 13.

8. Adjournment: The next regular meeting of the SHRWD will be 8:00 a.m. Tuesday, December 7, 1999. As there was no further business to come before the Board, the meeting was adjourned at 9:50 a.m.

Robert Brekke, Jr., Secretary

Naomi L. Jagol, Administrative Assistant