

SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

October 3, 2017

1. **Attendance:** Chairman Stuart Christian called October 3, 2017 to meeting to order at 8:00 AM at the District Office. Other managers present were JJ Hamre, Roger Hanson and Phillip Swenson
Managers Absent: Scott Balstad. Two staff members were present: Daniel Wilkens – Administrator and April Swenby – Administrative Assistant. Others in attendance Gerald Paulson and Glen Paulson– Bear Park landowners, Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering, Bill Downs – landowner, and Joyce Downs – landowner.
2. **Approval of the Agenda:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the agenda as presented, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried**.
3. **Minutes:** Gerald Paulson expressed concern regarding the minutes and the conversation between Roger Hemphill and did not recollect conversations regarding the structure and it not being a result of overland flooding. He felt the minutes did not accurately represent the conversations that took place. Paulson remembers Hemphill stating that beaver dam removal is feasible in the area and that it should be done to improve the situation. Paulson would like to clarify the plan to proceed and recollect the plan being dam and debris removal for decreasing the water level and action should be taken immediately along with new drone footage. Wanting to clarify his opinion of the effects of the structure, Paulson agrees that the structure isn't the problem. In his opinion, it is the debris that has been allowed to remain in the channel that is obstructing the river. Paulson stated that the river has always been slow flowing.

Manager Hanson read the following excerpt from September's minutes: "the district is going to take the winter to develop a plan to remove possible obstructions based off the drone footage" and assured Paulson that a plan to proceed was decided upon by the board. Paulson stated that he did not get that from the minutes and he is thankful to hear that a plan is in process.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Swenson to approve the minutes from the September 5, 2017 **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

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

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

Harold Olson presented a bill for \$1,050 for dam removal in the Bear Park area. A **Motion** was made by Manager Hamre to authorize payment of the bill, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried**.

5. **Engineer's Report**

Climax Ring Dike: Reitrock Paving has completed the work 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. Houston Engineering continues to work on the operation manual.

Rock Riffles: A meeting will take place this afternoon to continue the conversations of prioritizing the additional funds.

One Watershed/One Plan: The district plans to write an application this winter for the plan.

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: A report draft is complete for the implementation plan.

Carlson Coulee: Construction is anticipated for 2018 and is on schedule. The district continues to work with East Polk SWCD in its efforts.

Polk County Flood Plain: Herrmann asked the district if they would like to proceed by contacting the landowners who own the structures found in the preliminary flood plain maps. Manager's Hanson and Hamre will meet with Wilkens and Herrmann to review the maps and specific landowners to determine if contact is necessary.

RCPP (Upper Detention Sites): Currently working on NRCS Review Point 1. Herrmann suggests reaching out to the townships and counties for problematic issues before the first project team meeting.

Dave Arends: Dave Hauff has not received a response from the complaint sent last month.

Project 5: Field review should be completed this fall. Houston Engineering will be coordinating with the viewers.

Ditch Inspections: Cleaning has begun on the ditch systems.

Ditch 80: Herrmann presented a map and discussed with the managers the new plans for lateral 2 based off landowner feedback from the most recent informational meeting. Construction is still planned for 2018.

Bear Park: Herrmann presented the drone footage of Bear Park on September 22, along with maps highlighting the areas that may have possible obstructions. Paulson stated his recollection was that the drone footage was to go back to the Harstad bridge. Herrmann stated his instructions were to go to the bridge at Rindahl, and in the future, he will start at the Harstad bridge.

Harold Olson verified that his crew blew three dams this past weekend; two downstream of the structure and one near the Harstad bridge. Before and after photos were not taken. Olson stated there are three left. Harold Olson will take before and after photos of the three dams that are left and submit them with their billing. A map was given to Olson with instructions.

After reviewing the footage, Paulson pointed out that the footage shows many areas that may not have a dam, but may have obstructions that are impeding flow. He requested that all the areas that have spots of low flow be reviewed and treat all the areas, not only just the areas of dams. He is confident that there are old beaver dams still in the channel of the river and felt it was unfortunate that the footage was taken after all the rain. Herrmann stated that their intent was to have the footage before the rain, and when the crew went out on September 19 the wind was so strong they had to reschedule for September 22.

Herrmann asked what the landowners did before the structure was built to remove obstructions, and Paulson stated that they took care of it themselves.

Paulson reiterated that it is the responsibility of the district to determine what is impeding flow. Paulson agrees with Herrmann to begin downstream to drain the water away. Paulson is frustrated and states that the only time action happens is the weekend before a regular board meeting. Paulson stated that he has done his part by following up with Wilkens throughout the month and asks for progress reports throughout the month. Paulson stated that conversations with Wilkens one week after last month's meeting indicate that he had not made progress towards action of removing obstructions. Two weeks after the last meeting, Paulson followed up with Wilkens again and recollected that Wilkens confirming that Olson's had removed one beaver but he had not followed up with other suggestions from Manager Balstad. Paulson stated he had another conversation with Wilkens on September 27 and Wilkens stated that he did not have any additional information. Paulson suggested hiring additional help for Wilkens. Paulson felt that this issue is a low priority for the administrator and asks the board to prioritize this issue with their administrator. Paulson was discouraged at the amount of progress that has been made since last April, even though the district has spent about \$4,000. Landowners should have the opportunity to use their land. Paulson has asked for a timeline for obstruction removal and accountability. Paulson suggests that the Managers take the advice of Manager Balstad and hire a timelier contractor.

The floor was given to Wilkens who stated that removing the beaver is the first order of business because if that is not done, the beaver will continue to rebuild the dams. Wilkens feels strongly that beaver trapping is the first order of business. Wilkens responded to Mr. Paulson's request regarding Manager Balstad suggestion to hire a local contractor in his area, but has discovered that the state fire marshal listed three licensed dam blowers, and Olson's is the only one in the area; the other two reside in Gully and Detroit Lakes. Wilkens assured Paulson that a plan is in place, and was stated last month. Glen Paulson stated his son may be interested in beaver trapping, and Wilkens asked Paulson to have his son contact him if he is interested. The district currently pays \$50 a beaver. Wilkens felt that with the wet conditions in this area, a backhoe is not feasible for beaver dam removal, and blasting is a more realistic and affordable option. Paulson stated that the district should consider blowing the beaver house the day after the dam is blown, and suggested we blow the beaver houses also.

Swenby will put the new drone footage on the web-site.

Paulson has asked the managers for a motion and a second for a plan to proceed and suggested, identifying the problem, removing the beaver, and removing the obstructions, all on a timeline. Paulson suggested asking Wilkens to contact the other two licensed dam blowers and ask them their timeline and rates. A **Motion** was made by Manager Swenson to authorize Wilkens to call the two licensed dam blowers suggested by the state fire marshal for costs and timelines and forward the information to the managers by October 13, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**. Wilkens will follow up with the Harold Olson next week to determine the status of the existing dams. Herrmann reminded the board that the beaver dam blowers may not have a quote available by next Friday and the board is only asking Wilkens to make contact and report back to them with his findings by October 13.

6. Dan's Monthly Report

Project Team: The district discussed the RCPP requirement of an active project team. A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to reinstate the Project Team, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried**.

RRWMB: The RRWMB met on September 19 in Fertile. Meeting packet was given to the managers.

Drainage Workgroup: The next meeting is scheduled for October 12 at the Farmers Union building by the capitol in St. Paul.

Beltrami Diversion: Wilkens met on site with Bucky Lindberg and applied for a permit from the Highway Department. Paul Engelstad will install a dry crossing as no culvert is needed.

Vesledahl /Morvig legal system: A third follow up meeting is scheduled for October 26 at 7:00 PM at the Winger Community Center.

LID Easement: Wilkens attended the September LID meeting and it was determined to levy \$15,000 for the next year.

Building Upgrades: Wilkens informed the managers that the Sand Hill may be included as a location for the RRWMB along with Wild Rice and Red Lake Watershed Districts. Wilkens asked for direction from the board for the space needed for an addition on the building. Wilkens has a quote for heating/cooling for a new addition. Currently a back-up heater does not exist due to new roof. Manager Swenson asked about the building next door and adding a walk way between the two buildings and use the existing handicapped accessible entrance there.

Wilkens stated that a public hearing was held for an ordinance change in September with the City of Fertile which allows the district to add onto the building.

Spokely Wash plant: Wilkens has contacted Spokely's. Spokely verified that he has contacted Stortroen's for cleaning many times. Bill Brekke called this morning to verify that action has not taken place and would like to inform Manager Balstad.

7. Other Business:

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

Ditch Levy: A **Motion** was made by Manager Swenson to table the ditch levy until November, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried.**

District TV: A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to upgrade the current district TV to a Bluetooth smart TV, **Seconded** by Manager Swenson, **Carried.**

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

A **Motion** was made by Manager Swenson to approve the followings, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried.**

2017-20: CMBG Land, Section 19 – Hubbard Township, Install new culvert

2017-21: Willard Swenby – Section 21 – Garfield Township, Install new approach with culvert

2017-22: CMBG Land, Section 27 – Hubbard Township, Install new culvert and approach

2017-23: Willard Swenby – Section 21 – Garfield Township, Install new approach with culvert

2017-24: USFWS – DLWMD – Section 17 – Heier Township, Restore drained lake/fill drainage

ditch

Herrmann discussed permit number 2017-22 and will do additional research to determine if the culvert was in the constructions plans of Project # 24. Darrell Chisholm, landowner, thought that this crossing was supposed to be included in the original project.

9. **Adjournment:** The next regular meeting will be held **Tuesday at 8:00 AM on November 7, 2017.** As there was no further business to come before the board, a **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to adjourn the meeting at 10:50 AM, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant

JJ Hamre, Secretary