

SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

February 6, 2018

1. **Attendance:** Chairman Stuart Christian called February 6, 2018 to meeting to order at 8 AM at the District Office. Other managers present were Clayton Bartz, JJ Hamre, Roger Hanson, and Dan Vesledahl. Two staff members were present: Daniel Wilkens – Administrator and April Swenby – Administrative Assistant. Managers Others in attendance include Gerald Paulson– Bear Park landowner, Bill Downs- Landowner, Steve Candor – American Crystal Sugar, and Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering.
2. **Approval of the Agenda:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the agenda as presented, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**.
3. **Minutes:** Gerald Paulson asked for a correction in the minutes stating that he'd like the statement in "years past" to be added referencing rude treatment towards Paulson. He stated he has not been treated rudely by this board since his regular attendance last April. A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the minutes from the January 2, 2018 meeting, adding Paulson's correction, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.
4. **Treasurer's Report:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to approve the treasurer's report for January, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

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

5. **Engineer's Report**

Climax Ring Dike: Most of the public declarations are put together. The document is complete for the SHRWD and City properties. Houston Engineering is still communicating with DOT and Polk County on areas of the levee or restricted use areas that they control.

The land that the district owns (where the 5 homes were) is in the process of getting legal easements which restricts use. The city will take over ownership of the land when everything is completed.

Rock Riffles: Herrmann gave a history of the project to inform the new managers.

The field survey is completed. The costs for the survey can be leveraged against the RCPP program. Herrmann will begin reviewing the field survey to determine where additional riffles could be installed. This information will be discussed with the MN DNR and West Polk SWCD to determine how to allocate funding between available grant dollars.

The amendments to the Lessard Sams Outdoor Heritage Council have been approved (concept plans for the Kittleson Creek outlet culvert and Sand Hill Lake Dam outlet). There doesn't appear to be sufficient grade to meet fish passage requirements between the Sand Hill Lake and Polk County Ditch 83. Houston Engineering is currently working through three design alternatives and are as follows:

1. Construct within available length between the Sand Hill Lake and Ditch 83. This provides a 5.1% channel slope and raises fish passage concerns with the MN DNR.
2. Provide a 3% channel slope and extend into Ditch 83. This results in an increase channel bottom to Ditch 83.
3. Provide a 3% channel slope and reroute Ditch 83 around the installed rock drop. This will preserve Ditch 83 capacity.

Ditch 83 is under the jurisdiction of the county and Herrmann has been in contact with them to coordinate these alternatives. The alternatives presented were designed to offer minimal impact to private landowners in the area.

Herrmann is considering option 3 as the best alternative but is still under exploration of all alternatives in coordination with the MN DNR.

Polk County Flood Plain: Wilkens and Herrmann will meet today to review the maps.

Upper Sand Hill Detention (RCPP): A draft planning structure document has been completed and submitted as NRCS Review Point 1. Herrmann provided a copy to the managers. Herrmann would suggest a project team meeting in March. Hydraulic modeling of the Sand Hill ditch will be used to reinforce the Purpose and Need for the project. Hydraulic modeling work will begin now that field survey has been completed. The survey data from the SH Fish Passage and Grade Stabilization project will be used as leverage against the RCPP grant requirements.

Project # 24: The official complaint will be filed by Dave Hauff and the Davidson Trust will be served. Hauff will notify the SHRWD once the Trust has been served.

Polk County Ditch 80: Houston Engineering is finalizing the plan and the Preliminary Engineer's Report based on the comments from the Informational Meeting.

Corp Drop Structures/Rip Rap: Herrmann has not been able to get in contact with the Corp contacts regarding Manager Christian's concern regarding the design of the channel and the angle towards the road of the drop structures.

6. Dan's Monthly Report

Calendar: Wilkens reviewed his written calendar for January and the proposed upcoming events for February.

IJC: There has been a lot of discussion on the algae bloom on Lake Winnipeg, which will ultimately affect practices in the Red River Valley. Wilkens presented meeting highlights to the managers.

RRWMB: The RRWMB met in Thief River Falls on January 16, 2018. Meeting highlights can be found on the RRWMB web-site at www.rrwmb.org.

RRBC: Ted Preister has been hired as executive director. The RRBC conference was held in Winnipeg on January 22-25th.

IRRB: Annual meeting held in Winnipeg on January 25-26th. Meeting highlights were given to the managers.

MAWD Legislative Breakfast: The Legislative Breakfast information was given to the managers.

MAWD Handbook: The MAWD handbook was given to the new managers.

RRWMB March Annual Conference: The RRWMB Annual Conference is held in conjunction with the RRWMB meeting in March 20, 21 and 22. Swenby, Wilkens, Manager Hanson, and

Manager Vesledahl plan on attending. Registration is not yet open.

Drainage Workgroup: The next meeting is scheduled for February 1 at the Farmers Union building by the capitol in St. Paul.

Vesledahl Wetland: A fourth informational meeting was held at the Winger Community Center at 7:00 pm on January 18th. Draft minutes were given to the managers. The next meeting will be March 15th at 7:00 PM.

Swenby explained that Scott Balstad had called with a suggestion for discussion. He stated his attorney told him that the watershed can use eminent domain, forfeiting the requirement of 60% petitioning requirement to make a legal ditch system.

The board can establish a project by unanimous resolution of the boards. Wilkens confirmed that Eminent Domain is not used for establishing drainage and has not been a practice of the Sand Hill River Watershed District. Wilkens explained that as he remembers you cannot use that statute if the primary purpose is drainage. Wilkens will review MN Statute.

Manager Vesledahl stated that he used the E-file Cabinet data storage to find documents to present to at the last meeting that BWSR and MN DOT didn't even know existed.

At the information meeting the, landowners asked Wilkens to address the option of landownership for the land that MN DOT and BWSR owns. Wilkens will talk to Dave Weirens regarding the findings regarding the transfer of land ownership.

Wilkens will continue to be in contact with our legislatures and will present information to them at the Legislative Breakfast.

A landowner meeting was discussed, and the managers discussed way to improve attendance with the landowners adjacent to the ditch. A tentative landowner meeting was scheduled for February 27. Manager Vesledahl will contact the landowners adjacent to the ditch.

7. Other Business:

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

CWF Grant Awarded: After Swenby took the Grant writing workshop in December, she applied for clean water funds to help clean the Sand Hill River from the West Mill location to the Lehman Bridge. The Sand Hill River Watershed District was notified this past week that they were awarded a Clean Water Fund grant for river clean up. The grant includes a crew of Conservation Corp representatives for a 30-day clean-up project.

Bear Park: Paulson thanked the managers for their prompt response this month regarding a reported beaver dam.

Paulson distributed copies of the condemnation Report of Commissioners which states the conditions of the easements. Paulson asked the mangers to acknowledge that this is not an agreement, it is a mandate. Paulson asked the managers to read a specific line item of the document and it reads as follows:

Petitioner is required to maintain the Sand Hill River free of beaver dams or other structures that impair the flow, between the point on the Section line between Section Two. (2) and Elven (11) of Bear Park Township of Norman County and the point on the Section line between Section Thirty-three (33) of Winger Township of Polk County and Section Four (4) of Bejou Township of Mahanomen County.

Paulson reminded the managers that last year they approved monitoring of the river. Paulson asked if there is an executed plan to monitor the river on a fixed schedule, namely drone flights. He suggested scheduled flights in early spring and in the fall. He'd also like the footage to begin west of the Bear Park structure, even though that area is not legally in the system.

Paulson stated that he has read all the past minutes of the Sand Hill River Watershed District. He noted that concerned landowners in the past have been told inconsistent things regarding this issue that disconnect from this mandate.

In responses to Paulson, Wilkens stated he feels that the district is on the right track by hiring Paulson's nephew for beaver trapping and counts on the beaver trappers to report back to the board. Paulson agreed that beaver trapping is important. Wilkens asked Paulson to pass the message onto his nephew to remain vigilant regarding trapping. Paulson stated that trappers do not patrol the river for dams or beaver, they act based off landowner reports. Paulson stated he still suggests drone footage bi annually. Swenby will research the actions the board put in place last year. The board will review this topic again next month.

RCPP/Upper Detention: Paulson noted that in his reading of past minutes, he noted that he read a lot of studies pertaining to water detention near the Bear Park Structure. Herrmann stated that right now, they are taking a watershed approach to determine all the flooding areas of the Sand Hill Watershed to highlight problem areas and determine solutions. Many areas such as Winger Dam and Garden Slough have been reviewed in addition to Bear Park. The first goal is to determine problems. Paulson asked if Bear Park was ever suggested as a holding site for water in the area. Herrmann has only been the engineer for a few years for the Sand Hill, but he believes that all areas have been reviewed.

Herrmann stated that the process requires the district to determine problems first.

Minutes: Paulson has read all the minutes on the district web-site and has feels that is there is not historical follow through from this board. He gave an instance that in 2015 in August, Goeken provided GPS coordinates for dam locations and again came in November of the same year. He noted that the board did not provide follow through. Paulson suggested that the board have a new business and an old business. Chairman Christian stated that they follow the old business is followed through using Wilkens report. Paulson suggested making it more evident to all that issues have been addressed.

Treasurer's Report: Paulson will continue to participate in the meetings and would request a copy of the Treasurer's report each month.

8. **Permits:** One permit was brought before the board. Steve Candor presented a permit for the managers to review. Wilkens explained that the district is researching the boundaries and the assessed area boundaries. Wilkens is researching the assessed area for Ditch 73. Candor reported that Richard Sanders has given him verbal approval. Herrmann stated that he recollects those ditches were recently re-determined. Hanson stated that the ditch is open currently and adding a culvert will make no difference, suggesting approval of the permit.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the following permit, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**.

2018-01: American Crystal Sugar – Section 15 – Scandia Township – Install a culvert

9. **Building upgrades and co-location:** Bill Downs and Gerald Paulson left the meeting as a courtesy as building estimates were being disclosed. The managers discussed the benefits of co-location with the Red River Watershed Management Board.

The managers discussed the option of getting a full return on their investment vs. making interest on their investment.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to offer co-location rent in the amount of \$700 per month for a term of ten years with 50/50 utility and services share, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried**. Shared services will be negotiated at the time an agreement was made to determine what services each entity needs and would like to share.

Bartz suggested that when bidding time for the building occurs, that the district get multiple bids.

10. **Adjournment:** The next regular meeting will be held **Tuesday at 8:00 AM on March 6, 2018**. As there was no further business to come before the board, a **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to adjourn the meeting at 12:03 PM, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**.

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant

JJ Hamre, Secretary