



**TITLE:** REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD  
MEETING MINUTES

**DATE:** JANUARY 5, 2023

## 1. ATTENDANCE:

Chairman Stuart Christian called the January 5, 2023, meeting to order at 8:00 AM at the District Office. Other managers attending were Don Andringa, Clayton Bartz, Craig Engelstad, and Shawn Brekke. Staff members present included April Swenby – Administrator and Donna Bjerk – Administrative Assistant. Others in attendance included Zach Herrmann, Houston Engineering, Dave Landsverk, Sletten Township and Dick Kroening, Sletten Township.

## 2. APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to approve the agenda as presented, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

## 3. OATH OF OFFICE:

Shawn Brekke was sworn in and took the Oath of Office as a Manager of the Sand Hill River Watershed District. A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to accept Manager Brekke's Oath of office, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa **Carried.**

## 4. REORGANIZATION OF THE BOARD:

Annual reorganization of the Board was conducted. Chairman Christian turned the meeting over to Manager Andringa who asked for nominations for **Chairman of the Board**. Manager Engelstad nominated Manager Christian for Chair. Nominations were called for three times by Manager Andringa. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Stuart Christian for Chairman by Manager Bartz **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried.** Manager Andringa returned the chair to Chairman Christian.

Chairman Christian asked for nominations for **Vice Chairman** of the Board. Manager Engelstad nominated Manager Andringa for Vice Chairman. Nominations were called for three times by Chairman Christian. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Andringa for Vice Chairman by Manager Engelstad, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried.**

Chairman Christian asked for nominations for **Secretary of the Board**. Manager Bartz nominated Manager Brekke for Secretary. Nominations were called for three times by Chairman Christian. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Manager Brekke for Secretary by Manager Englestad, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa, **Carried.**

Chairman Christian asked for nominations for **Treasurer** of the Board. Manager Andringa nominated Manager Bartz for Treasurer. Nominations were called for three times by Chairman Christian. No further nominations were made. **Motion** to cease nominations and have the Secretary cast a unanimous ballot for Manager Bartz for Treasurer by Manager Engelstad **Seconded** by Manager Andringa, **Carried.**

Manager Andringa made a **Motion** for the following: That the Fertile Journal is designated as the official newspaper of the SHRWD. That the following financial institutions be designated as official depositories for SHRWD funds: Red River State Bank of Fertile and Bremer Bank, Detroit Lakes, MN. That the District's consulting engineering firm is Houston Engineering, PO Box 5054, Fargo, ND. That the attorney for the District is David Hauff, Firm of Anderson and Bottrell, PO Box 10247, Fargo, ND. That mileage for District business is reimbursable at a per mile rate coinciding with the allowable IRS mileage rate. That manager per diem is set at \$40 per hour with a maximum daily total of \$125.00 as prescribed by State law. **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to authorize Stuart Christian, Clayton Bartz, and April Swenby as the current financial and representative signers and keeping Donna Bjerck a financial signer for the Red River State Bank account, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to appoint April Swenby and Donna Bjerck as an authorized signer to the Business Rewards Credit card with FCCU giving Bjerck and Swenby the ability to use the assigned credit card on behalf of the district, **Seconded** by Manager Brekke, **Carried**. Credit card charges are always listed on the bills to be paid individually for the managers to review each month. Both meeting minutes and one signature are required for any future signature additions/removals to this credit card.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa authorizing the April Swenby and Clayton Bartz as authorized representatives regarding the Membership Savings account and credit card listing them on the entity authorization form, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad, **Carried**.

For informational purposes, Swenby reminded the managers of the following which are regulated by the credit card company:

5. One signature is required to withdraw funds from the Reward Savings account at First Community Credit Union.
6. One signature is also required to open/close any accounts with First Community Credit Union.
7. When new employees or new Treasurers represent the Sand Hill Watershed District, proper documentation will need to be reflected for the credit card.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad authorizing April Swenby and Donna Bjerck as authorized representatives regarding the Sam's Club Credit card listing both on the entity authorization form, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to set the regular board meeting for 2023 for the first Thursday of every month, **Seconded** by Manager Andringa, **Carried**.

## 8. MINUTES:

A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa to approve the minutes from the December 8, 2022, as presented, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

## 9. FINANCIAL REPORT:

Swenby read the Draft Treasurer's Report for December. A **Motion** was made by Manager Andringa approve the Draft Treasurer's Report for December, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.** Swenby noted that there are end of the year journal entries that need to be entered that will affect the fund balance report.

The managers reviewed their expense reports and reported on activities for the month. The following bills were reviewed:

Anderson, Bottrell, Sanden & Thompson	870.00
April J. Swenby	150.00
East Polk Soil and Water District	1,193.00
EcoLab	50.00
Fertile Hardware Hank	20.98
First Community Credit Union	417.36
Garden Township	1,500.00
Garden Valley Telephone Company	3,019.51
Houston Engineering	22,818.25
Liberty Township	1,350.00
MAWD	325.00
Otter Tail Power Company	506.08
Sletten Township	525.00
Stuhaug Sanitation	329.94
Todd's Landscaping	180.00
Wild Rice Electric	137.23
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b><u>33,392.35</u></b>

Swenby noted that on the check register, a check was issued to the RRWMB for tax levy reimbursement on 12/31/22 for \$367.31. That check was cut with a 2022 date, because it is a 2022 expense; however, it has not been mailed and should be included with the listing of bills to approve.

Swenby also asked to include an additional bill to CMGB Farms for 784.10. As a reminder, the county's system required them to charge 3.5% interest. In March of 2022, the board agreed to charge \$1.25% interest, and annually the district will reimburse him for the interest charged. For 2022, the difference was \$784.10.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Engelstad to approve and pay the bills with a total of \$34,543.76 **Seconded** by Manager Andringa. **The Motion was carried.**

## 10. SLETTEN TOWNSHIP:

Dave Landsverk and Dick Kroening came before the board with concerns about culverts and washouts from the April-May 2022 rains, and asked for clarification on watershed funding regarding increasing culverts beneath township roads along the Sand Hill River. Swenby explained that because this is not an assessed area and because statute designates the township as the responsible authority, there is not a funding source from the watershed to provide financial assistance, but stated that through the district permit process, we do provide sizing and if needed a hydraulic capacity report. This report will likely be required, but Swenby felt that this report is also an eligible FEMA expense. The board directed them to continue to work with FEMA to help with the concerns and cost. An additional partner may include Polk County for bridge funds.

Manager Englestad asked if the watershed district could provide any support to townships to help support the FEMA process. Swenby agreed it is an arduous process and takes up a lot of her time. She is still learning the process and their computer software for uploads, plus there are weekly meetings. Sletten Township has hired someone to take care of this for them. The watershed district, if this is a service that they'd like to provide and levy for, additional staff would need to be hired, as there are a lot of Townships in our district.

## 11. ADMINISTRATOR REPORT:

**MN Campaign Finance Agency:** Swenby reminded the managers to log into the MN Campaign Finance Agency site and review their statements of economic interest. This is an annual requirement. The deadline is January 30, 2023. A personal late filing fee may be imposed. Letters have been sent to the managers directly.

**One Watershed One Plan:** Swenby added reimbursable staff hours for the One Watershed One Plan. The district costs are from July 2022 through December 2022 were \$1,628.84 for staff time associated with expenses that are eligible. For 2022, the staff reimbursable rate was \$75.76. Reimbursable staff time includes any web-site modifications, relating to the public information of the One Watershed One Plan, meeting coordination for the public kick offs (mailing lists, food, etc.), and staff time to attend meetings if watershed staff took minutes (meeting time and time for drafting). A journal entry was made to transfer grant funds to the district Administrative Account. The Owl was considered a reimbursable grant expense, and therefore grant funds were used to pay for that.

The managers were given a draft vision statement, a goal development worksheet that the Steering Committee has been working on. Additionally, there is an agenda for the upcoming Advisory and Policy Committee meetings on January 10, 2023.

**FEMA Funding:** Scoping meetings were sparse in December but are usually held weekly. HEI has prepared a cost estimate to repair the channel to pre-disaster conditions. That will be compared to costs for mitigation. Scoping meetings will pick up again next week.

**Southern Boundary/Liberty Township:** In July 2022 the managers approved initial investigations on water management solutions on the southern border. Swenby met with Tara Jensen, Wild Rice Watershed District Administrator on December 19 along with Herrmann and the WRWD engineer to begin the discussions about the water issues between the two districts and how they can be better managed. Four options resulted as the outcome of the meeting. The landowners can form petition to form a legal ditch system that outlet's into the SH Ditch, petition for an improvement that would improve/extend the Norman/Polk Ditch, ask the Wild Rice Watershed District to explore the options using a project team to see if there are better solutions to the water issues, or apply for a watershed district permit to outlet private drainage into the SH Ditch as the current landowners are assessed into that system. Currently, the area in question is out of the Sand Hill River Watershed District (however, a small amount is assessed to the Sand Hill Ditch currently), and if the landowners are not interested in a petition for a legal system that outlets into our watershed (this would prompt a boundary change), there is little that the Sand Hill can aid, unless watershed district permits are applied for. Swenby met with the landowners, and they have opted to apply using the Sand Hill River Watershed's permit process to start with and are planning to explore the project team process with the Wild Rice Watershed District.

**Drainage Work Group:** The MnDNR is moving forward with legislation to pass "early coordination" Many special interest groups are opposing this effort, including MAWD and MN Counties. Correspondence was given to the managers relating to the opposition.

**MAWD Strategic Planning Committee:** Swenby serves on the MAWD Strategic Planning Committee. Notes from the meeting that was held December 12, 2022, were given to the managers.

**District Christmas Party:** The Christmas Party is set for January 10, 2023, at 6 PM at the Erickson's Smokehouse.

**IRS Mileage Rates:** As of January 1, 2023, the IRS mileage rates are 65.5 cents per mile.

**Upcoming conferences:** The following conferences are scheduled: RRBC Conference, January 17, 18 & 19 in Winnipeg, Drainage Conference February 8 & 9 in Alexandria, Legislative Days

February 15 & 16 in St. Paul, FDRWG Annual Conference February 21 & 22 in Moorhead. The managers were asked to let Swenby know if they'd like to attend any of these events.

**Looking ahead:** When the district One Watershed One Plan is approved, it is also a good time to update our rules and regulations. Hermann and Swenby worked a bunch on it last year and had a draft looking for manager input. As Swenby looks ahead, it appears that February and March are a good time for managers to work on things like that, even though the district 1W1P plan will be approved late next fall or at the end of the year at the earliest. Swenby doesn't want to wait until the last minute to review that, because that will be harvest time. Swenby provided printed copies of the plans with suggested changes from staff and asked the managers to bring that back in February for her to compile their comments for the March meeting.

**Red River Basin Commission:** Swenby met with the RRWMB, Buffalo-Red, and the Red River Basin on January 4, 2022, to talk about funding commitments. Swenby explained the RRBC funding sources on all sides of the river. The Red River Basin Commission will develop a paper copy explaining the funding sources. Swenby stated that in February or March the RRBC will again be asking the district for another \$5,000 contribution to support their efforts. As a reminder, when the district belonged to the RRWMB, this contribution was covered by the tax levy and the RRWMB took care of paying for this support on our behalf.

## 12. ENGINEER'S REPORT.

**Project 27 – Union/Sarah Lake Outlet** Hermann discussed replacing sandbag levee on USFWS property to prevent overflows into Crooked Lake. He reviewed with USFWS for concurrence and is still working on providing assistance with documentation required to modify the structure.

**Sand Hill Ditch:** Hermann discussed 2022 Flood Damages Investigation. Hermann and Swenby continue to meet with FEMA officials to discuss damages on Sand Hill Ditch. Coordination with FEMA appears favorable for mitigation funding for a larger repair project. The first step is to complete a damages assessment. LiDAR drone survey has been completed. A damage assessment has been completed and provided to FEMA. Herrmann also provided this to the managers.

**Natural Resource Enhancement Projects:** Hermann discussed Project 17 Outlet Stabilization (Moen Erosion and Clean Water) (BWSR Clean Water Fund Grant). Herrmann would like to plan a meeting with funding sources and regulatory agencies and will work with Swenby to do this.

**MN 102 Boundary:** Hermann discussed MN Highway 102 Area Boundary Revisions.. The hydraulic modeling revisions based on plan revisions is complete. Herrmann will provide updated documentation to MNDOT and PCHD.

## 13. ACTION ITEMS.

There were no action items brought before the board.

## 14. OTHER BUSINESS

The managers received information from MAWD, Drainage Work Group, RRBC, and MN Counties.

**County Ditch 46:** Manager Andringa stated that he has spoken to landowners along Ditch 46 about an improvement and he has spoken to Rich Sanders. Manager Andringa reported that Sanders was receptive to the idea. Swenby has connected with Sanders and stated that she and Herrmann are meeting with him in the next week to discuss options and a path forward.

## 15. PERMITS:

Several permits were brought before the board.

- 2023-001: Polk County Highway Department, Hammond Township Section 34, Install Culvert
- 2023-002: Polk County Highway Department, Hammond Township Section 33, Install Culvert
- 2023-003: Polk County Highway Department, Hammond Township Section 32, Install Culvert
- 2023-004: Polk County Highway Department, Hammond Township Section 31, Install Culvert
- 2023-005: Stuart Christian, Liberty Township Section 30, 31, & 32, Drainage Mgmt.
- 2023-006: Raymond Christian Family Trust, Liberty Township Section 28 & 29 Drainage Mgmt.
- 2023-007: Dwight Christian, Liberty Township Section 30, 31, & 32, Drainage Mgmt.

A **Motion** by Engelstad to table permits at this time. More information is needed to determine approval. **Seconded** by Bartz. **The Motion was carried.**

## 16. ADJOURNMENT:

The next regular meeting will be held Thursday, February 2, 2023, at 8 AM. As there was no further business to come before the board, a **Motion** was made by Manager Bartz to adjourn the meeting at 10:38 AM, **Seconded** by Manager Engelstad. **The Motion was carried.**

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Donna Bjerk, Administrative Assistant

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Shawn Brekke, Secretary