



TITLE: SAND HILL RIVER
ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ANNUAL MEETING MINUTES

DATE: NOVEMBER 18, 2024

Attendance: Chairman Scott Tollefson called the November 18, 2024, meeting of the Sand Hill Advisory Committee (SHAC) to order at Erickson's Smokehouse in Fertile, MN. Other advisory committee members present included Roger Black, Ken Pederson, Stephen Taylor, Zoe Keezer, Allan Stromstad, Paul Reese, Joan Lee, Philip Swenson, and Scott Balstad. Others in attendance included April Swenby – Sand Hill River Watershed District Administrator and Donna Bjerk – Sand Hill River Watershed District Office Assistant.

Annual Reorganization of the Committee: Chairman Tollefson turned the meeting over to April Swenby. Swenby asked for nominations for Committee Chair. Committee Member Swenson nominated Committee Member Scott Tollefson as chair. Swenby called for nominations three times. Committee Member Pederson made a **Motion** to cease nominations and cast a unanimous ballot for Scott Tollefson, **Seconded** by Committee Member Stromstad, **Carried**.

The meeting was then turned over to Chairman Tollefson who presented the agenda.

Agenda: A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Black to approve the agenda as presented, **Seconded** by Committee Member Stromstad, **Carried**.

Minutes: A **Motion** to approve the minutes and dispense the reading from November 13, 2023, was made by Committee Member Pederson, **Seconded** by Committee Member Swenson **Carried**.

District Financials: The Committee was given the 2023 Audit Report of the Sand Hill River Watershed. Swenby highlighted the fund balance report and the profit and loss report and encouraged the committee to call her any time if they have any questions. The committee reviewed the fund balance report which shows the ditch balances.

Manager Appointment: The term of Stuart Christian is up for reappointment beginning January 1, 2025. Christian is willing to serve another term and is currently the Sand Hill River Watershed District board chairman.

A **Motion** was made by Committee Member Balstad to re-recommend that Manager Christian be re-appointed. The motion was **Seconded** by Committee Member Pederson, **Carried**.

Administrator Report: Swenby presented a written report to the Advisory Committee that provided a summary of 2024 activities including 2024 construction project reports, ongoing district tasks, district building and handicapped accessibility progress, administrative changes and upcoming projects and tasks for the future. A lot discussion with the committee focused on the area of the Sand Hill Ditch redetermination and how it relates to county ditches and abandoned ditches. Committee Member Balstad asked if now would be an opportune time to establish a legal ditch system and Swenby confirmed that most parcels are being evaluated as they relate to the Sand Hill Ditch; and viewing teams have confirmed that should additional ditches need to be established or redetermined, it would be more affordable to complete the process. The committee also expressed interest in the district building project for ADA accessibility. Committee member Swenson stated that the cost to add on would have been the same amount and building new. Swenby couldn't expand on actual costs for building new vs. adding on because cost estimates were not obtained for building a new accessible building with the purchase of land; however, she confirmed that board did look into building new and explored various locations and ultimately decided to keep the historic building of the "old bank" due to the location being centrally located within the watershed and easily visible to the public. Past managers wanted to keep the existing space and preserve its historic features. Swenby also reminded the committee that the cost is not just for an addition as the cost includes minor HVAC improvements to the existing building, and large concrete outdoor accessible parking to the north. Consideration was also given to the remodeling that will be needed to tie the two structures together. The cost does not account for the reduction of sales tax on materials, and will be reflected when the project is complete. Committee Member Black appreciated that the board decided to keep preservation of the existing building in mind when they determined an addition was warranted necessary.

Committee Member Comments: Committee member Black asked if there is interest in Norman and Mahanomen County being represented on the Sand Hill Advisory Committee the way that Polk County is represented. Swenby

stated that Paul Reese is a member of the committee representing Polk County Commissioners as they are the county that confirms appointment for the Sand Hill River Watershed District. She explained that while Joan Lee is a Polk County Commissioner, she serves on this board as a Farm Bureau representative, which is required by statute. She stated that Norman County and Mahanomen County is represented via the SWCD's in each county. The Sand Hill River Watershed District board selects the membership for this committee, and she will ask the board to consider a selection from both Norman and Mahanomen County to serve on this committee.

Adjournment: The next meeting of the SHAC will be at the call of the chair as needed. As there was no further business, a **Motion** was made by Committee Member Stromstad to adjourn at 9:33 AM, **Seconded** by Committee Member Pederson, **Carried.**

Donna Bjerk, Administrator Office Assistant