

SAND HILL RIVER WATERSHED DISTRICT

December 4, 2018

1. **Attendance:** Chairman Stuart Christian called the December 4, 2018 meeting to order at 8:00 AM at the District Office. Other managers present were JJ Hamre, Dan Vesledahl and Roger Hanson. Managers absent include: Clayton Bartz. Two staff members were present Daniel Wilkens – Administrator and April Swenby – Administrative Assistant. Others in attendance include Bill Downs and Joyce Downs – Landowner, and Zach Herrmann – Houston Engineering.
2. **Approval of the Agenda:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the agenda as presented, adding Joyce Downs Ditch #122 timeline to the agenda, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried.**
3. **Minutes:** A **Motion** was made by Manager Hamre to approve the minutes from the November 6, 2018 meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Vesledahl, **Carried.**

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to approve the minutes from the November 13, 2018 meeting, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried.**

4. **Treasurer's/Financial Report:** Swenby noted that November has not been reconciled as of the date of the presented report due to our early meeting date and not receiving the bank statement.

Daniel Wilkens read the Treasurer's Report. A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to approve the Treasurer's Report for November, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried.**

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

Anderson, Bottrell, Sanden & Thompson	125.00
City of Fertile	39.00
Erickson's Smokehouse	204.82
First Community Credit Union	73.80
Garden Valley Telephone Company	235.93
Heier Township	280.00
Houston Engineering	5,763.57
MAWD	570.00
Minkota Technologies	146.46
Otter Tail Power Company	315.16
Sarah Wise	88.00
Wild Rice Electric	130.88
TOTAL	<u>7,972.62</u>

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hamre, to approve and pay the above listed bills along with manager per diems, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried.**

Swenby has been working with the auditor to develop a way to keep record of the new levy and the funds allocated towards the levy. Beginning 2019, the Fund Balance Report will hold some additional funds to track the allocations designated for the new levy.

The web-site fund was separated out because the RRWMB reimbursed a small portion annually for web-site incurred costs. The district maintains their site in house and incurs very little costs. Costs

annually associated with the web-site include hosting, domain names, and the search box fee. Most of the costs associated with the negative balance listed is for the initial set up of the web-site and the digitization of the minutes, the GIS mapping system and the permit database. Swenby asked the managers to decide if the portion of the GIS mapping system and the permit database of the web-site belongs in the Admin fund or is more a Construction fund related expense. She enclosed a spreadsheet of the expenses associated with the permit database and GIS mapping system.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to transfer 80% of the balance from the construction fund to the website/admin fund and then zero out the remaining balance using the Admin fund, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**. In the future the web-hosting will be split 80/20 between the construction/admin fund.

The sub categories “Drainage Records Modernization” and “Overall Plan and Hydrologic Model” were created for grant tracking and accumulative total is no longer needed. A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to transfer money to/from the Admin account to zero out those balances, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

Project # 25 – TMDL is closed and Project # 19 – Union Lake Erosion Control. There is a negative balance for non-reimbursable expenses. A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to transfer money from the construction fund to zero out the TMDL and Project # 19 – Union Lake Erosion Control balances, **Seconded** by Manager Hanson, **Carried**.

5. Engineer's Report

Climax Ring Dike: The final submission was made.

Targeted Watershed Program: A series of small dams/riffles is planned to be constructed in the Carlson Coulee. Last February Herrmann sent the plans to DNR because it is a public water. Herrmann has been in communication with MN DNR fisheries regarding the need for the project and has provided them with the information they have requested. Herrmann is optimistic that bidding can be let this winter. Herrmann also felt that next fall is a good time line for beginning the installation of the riffles. Herrmann suggested blowing the two beaver dams that are in the area. He would also like to see trapping take place throughout the winter.

Fish Passage and Grade Stabilization: The Corp 408 permit has been issued. An agreement was signed with Spruce Valley. Herrmann has verified that all conditions are met.

Manager Vesledahl asked if the channel alignment questions at the two most westerly drop structures (west of Fertile) were answered. Herrmann will touch base with the Corp and MN DNR to find the status of these questions.

Herrmann is still working with the county to access bridge funds near the Kittleson Creek Outlet. Herrmann proposes letting bids this winter.

RCPP: Herrmann has resolicited comments on the Purpose and Need. The comment period closes December 7, 2018. Herrmann proposes a Project Team meeting in January 2019.

Sand Hill Lake Outlet: The MN DNR approached the landowner and he was not in favor of the realignment. Herrmann will find out who the owner is.

Project # 5: Herrmann has stated that the redetermination is complete. The next step is paying for

ROW. Wilkens would like to have the ROW markers installed and seeded this spring. The full width of the ROW will be enforced.

Ditch #80: Houston Engineering has been working with Davidson Construction to ensure the correct pipes are purchased and all specs are met for a 2019 construction.

Union Lake Sarah Pump: Herrmann is evaluating cost effective alternatives. The Ness survey is done. Herrmann is working on the legal exhibit.

Olson Dam: The channel was cleaned after last month's board meeting.

6. **Dan's Monthly Report:** Wilkens reviewed his written report for the month of October.

Calendar: Wilkens written calendar for November and the proposed upcoming events for December were reviewed.

Drainage Workgroup: A meeting was held November 8. Meeting highlights were given to the managers. The next DWG is December 13. Wilkens met with the BdSWD with Al Keen regarding a new option for viewing for repairs/maintenance. New processes for DWG for legislative presentation were discussed, included a minority report.

Vesledahl Wetland Banking Project: Jim Curran, MnDOT, called on November 16th and asked if the board still wanted to go forward with the land transfer. Wilkens suggested working with BWSR to establish the conditions. Curran and Wilkens discussed the 80 acres that earns income, with Curran verifying that some in MNDOT would like to sell it. Wilkens would like to land to go with the transfer to provide some income to maintain the project into the future. Wilkens contacted Dave Weirens at MAWD and he is working in house to get answers on the easements and transferring the 80 acres they own with the project. Wilkens asked him to push this forward, so we can have a landowner meeting soon. The landowners are asking for updates. One landowner/renter contacted Swenby about the process of proceeding forward with a petition.

Chairman Christian questioned the repercussions of the district taking over the land, and the consequences of no legal drainage system is implemented. He wondered what maintenance costs this would bring forth to the watershed without an assessed area, should a legal ditch system not be implemented. These are questions that will get answered in the process moving forward.

Olson Dam: Joe Miller installed the culvert in the township road and cleaned to the structure. It was supposed to be 2.5'-3' feet lower but ended up only 1' lower. The district will need to address this in the spring. The district will need to obtain a dam safety permit this winter for the structure itself.

MAWD Resolutions: Manager Hanson attended MAWD and gave his report.

PC #1 Bridge Replacements: Swenby contacted Rich Sanders to see if the watershed could partner for river recreation options during the PC bridge replacements on Polk County # 1. Sanders would like to discuss the options after the first of the year.

Ditch Inspections. Seeding did not take place this fall on the spoil. Berhow will seed in the spring.

LID: Wilkens informed the managers of a conversation with Brian Boll, regarding a ditch that passes through land he is proposing to purchase and there is not a current easement.

Christmas Party: The tentative date was set for December 16, 2018.

Beaver Bounty: A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to amend the beaver bounty program by increasing the beaver bounty to \$75 per beaver, reimbursing the townships \$65, with the township continuing to pay \$10 per beaver effective January 1, 2019, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**. Swenby will contact the townships and have new agreements signed.

7. **Other Business:**

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

Board Software: A **Motion** was made by Manager Hamre to purchase Board Effect for one year for \$1,900 for board meeting software and a 75" TV screen for projection, **Seconded** by Manager Vesledahl, **Carried**.

Rules and Regulations: To comply with MN Statute, the district proposed Rules and Regulations are out for review amongst agencies and transportation entities for 45 days. Any comments if applicable will be reviewed at the January 2019 meeting. A public hearing is tentatively set for February. BWSR has approved this timeline. Manager Hanson commented that the new rules are not "user friendly". Wilkens explained that the draft rules were set up by several attorneys and were designed to protect the district for the just in case "cases".

Logo: The district's logo was updated and will be implemented throughout the month.

Advisory Committee: The Advisory Committee meeting minutes were e-mailed to the managers throughout the month. The committee had questions about finances and the advertising for the Administrator position. A response was reviewed and approved to mail to the Advisory Committee members. Swenby suggested offering an audit report to the Advisory Committee members which provides details that a couple of the members might be looking for. Chairman Christian suggested sending an audit report to the advisory committee chairman right away.

Chairman Christian noted that two additional applicants did apply for the position but were after the deadline. One from St. Olaf college and the other from an SWCD in Southern Minnesota. This confirmed that the ad reached far and wide as per the intent of the advertising.

Rindahl Structure: South of Winger on the "Rindahl State Wildlife Management Area" a beaver dam was reported. Manager Vesledahl was asked to have the person reporting the dam contact the MN DNR.

Joyce Downs: Downs was invited to the table to discuss the timeline that Swenby drafted based off the minutes of the district. Downs stated that the timeline missed two things:

1. Downs stated that historically a ditch was proposed at one time from the township road to Tony Jagol. Wilkens remembered that this option was proposed but recollected that Jagol was not supportive of the idea.
2. Downs also recalled that the Jerde ditch was surveyed to the East. Wilkens stated that the area in question is a draw that repeatedly filled with snow and flushed quickly in the spring. It constantly caused severe erosion downstream. A small dam was installed with a pipe to regulate outflow. This project was not related to Ditch #122. Wilkens stated that there is a grass waterway to

handle the outflow in combination with the structure. Downs stated that a survey was done after that project. Wilkens recollected the survey was done to establish property lines as the project was constructed on the boundary between the two properties. Downs questioned what good surveying would do after the ditch was dug? Wilkens did not recollect that a survey was done after the structure.

Downs states that because of that structure, her water pools up just out of the woods as a small berm was left behind. The district can review the area in the spring by a site tour.

Downs asked if Wilkens got a permit to do dozing by the Nature Center in 2004. Wilkens remembers that the snowsled club built a trail but didn't note any dozing. Downs presented a letter from the AELC asking for a collection of debt of \$36,649.11 to "Dan Enterprises". Downs was told that this is not a Sand Hill Watershed, and Downs stated she remembers that Wilkens asked the district to pay for this debt in October or November of 2004, but it was never recorded in the monthly meetings of the district. Swenby pulled a transaction report from October 1, 2004 – January 31, 2005. There were no expenditures for this on the report. Swenby also did a search for that amount \$36,649.11 and there was not ever a check written for that amount from the Sand Hill. Chairman Christian suggested following up with the AELC to address her concerns.

Employee Evaluations: Wilkens evaluation was deemed unnecessary. Swenby and Herrmann stepped out for employee evaluations. The managers reviewed Swenby's performance.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Hanson to close the regular monthly meeting to discuss the hiring of the Administrator position, **Seconded** Manager Hamre, Carried. Wilkens left the meeting.

The managers discussed the applicants and their qualifications. The managers discussed the terms of the position that would be offered.

Administrator Position: A Motion was made by Manager Hanson to offer the Administrator position to Swenby **Seconded** by Manager Hamre, **Carried**.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to open the regular monthly meeting to discuss the hiring of the Administrator position, **Seconded** Manager Hanson, Carried. Swenby was called back into the meeting.

Salaries and benefits were discussed and compared with other watershed districts. Swenby's most valued request was flexibility. Office hours were discussed. Manager Vesledahl would like to see office hours. Swenby expressed interest in a schedule of 8-4 September – May, understanding that meetings happen throughout the work week, in addition to site visits/tours. Swenby agreed that office hours are a great goal, but it isn't always going to be feasible as the Administrator position will require outside of the office work for meetings and didn't feel it was cost effective to have a secretary in the office just in case someone were to walk in. In the past we have put a sign on the door, with a contact phone number so that someone can always be reached. Strict office hours may not be conducive to place with 1 ¼ employees.

The managers and Swenby discussed Administrator office hours June-August – 8 AM – 1 PM Tuesday – Thursday and trying to schedule outside issues outside of those hours/days. Swenby also suggested that she may like to start early in the mornings during the summer months as that works best for her family. Swenby asked the managers to consider allowing Swenby to work from home two days a week during the summer months so that she can better manage her family and balance her

career and indicated this was very important to her. Swenby will record time worked outside of the office to account for time worked. Manager Vesledahl would like to see summer office hours for the Administrative Assistant 8 – 1 Monday and Friday, as an example, to ensure that there is a time where visitors can stop by. Swenby and the board also discussed summer evening meetings and outside site tours outside of office hours. Manager Hanson stated that much of the Administrator position can be handled by phone, e-mail and computer, and it isn't unreasonable to allow such flexibility and to try working from home a portion of the time. Swenby being available is most important. Swenby stated that she'd like to keep the same policies as Wilkens and accommodate farmers and landowners according to their schedule, not a regular office hour schedule. The focus of the discussion was accountability for time when not in the office. The managers agreed to a flexible summer work schedule. It was suggested by Chairman Christian that hours worked at home and comp hours must be recorded and readily available to the managers.

The personnel manual states that full time is 33 hours – 40 hours per week. Swenby confirmed that she was aware that many weeks, the position will require over 40 hours a week, and agreed to what is necessary to get the job done.

A **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to offer Swenby a starting salary of \$60,000 with an annual benefit package of \$12,000, with the above flexibility, **Seconded** by Manager Hamre. **Carried**. Swenby's position is effective January 1, 2019.

Manager Vesledahl suggested Swenby implement hosted phone service immediately. Manager Vesledahl asked that Dan's e-mail contacts be transferred, and all e-mails be forwarded to Swenby's e-mail as of January 1, 2019. Swenby will contact Minkota to schedule the changes effective January 1, 2019. The phone number for Dan's cell phone was determined to be a personal number and did not belong to the district. Swenby will ask Wilkens if he would consider getting a new phone number and allow the current number to be transferred to the district office.

Discussions for hiring an Administrative Assistant will wait until January.

Manager Vesledahl discussed the option of using a straight PTO vs. vacation and sick leave, as many employees do not use sick leave. The managers will review the personnel policy later.

8. **Permits:** No permits were presented to the board.
9. **Adjournment:** The next regular meeting will be held **Tuesday, January 8, 2019 at AM (NOTE the DATE CHANGE)**. As there was no further business to come before the board, a **Motion** was made by Manager Vesledahl to adjourn the meeting at 1:38 PM, **Seconded** by Manager Bartz, **Carried**

April Swenby, Administrative Assistant

JJ Hamre, Secretary